

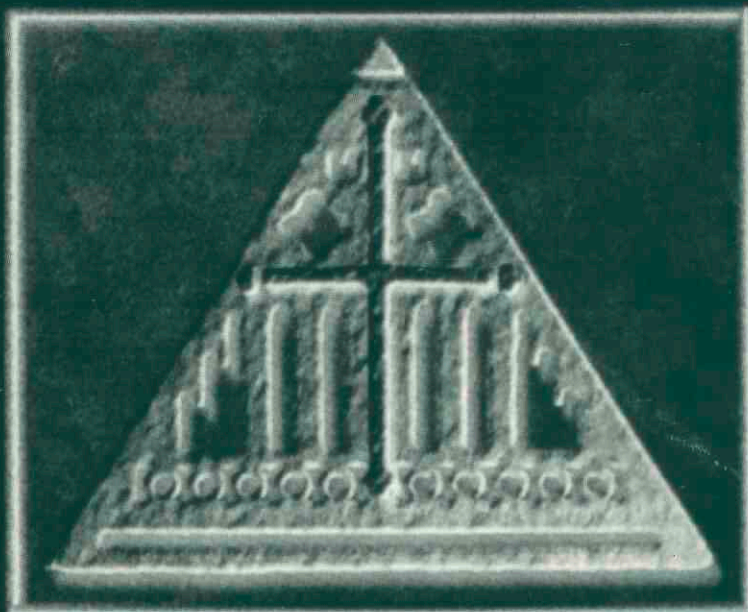


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MARTIEN PARMENTIER (ED.)

# THE ECUMENICAL CONSISTENCY OF THE PORVOO DOCUMENT



Papers read at a symposium  
held by the Anglican – Old Catholic Society of St. Willibrord  
at Amersfoort, Netherlands  
on 15 October 1997

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# The Ecumenical Consistency of the Porvoo Document

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Introduction

By Victor van der Veld

chairman of the Dutch branch of the Society of St. Willibrord

# THE ECUMENICAL CONSISTENCY OF THE PORVOO DOCUMENT

Since the signing of the Porvoo Agreement, which provided for full communion between the churches involved, the Porvoo Agreement has attracted some ecclesiastical scrutiny, including from the Old Catholic Churches of the Lipen of Leoben, which has shown its reservations. It is necessary to examine the Agreement of 1992...

For Old Catholics, especially, the issue of ecumenical relations is a sensitive one. The Porvoo Agreement is not an ecumenical document in the sense of the Porvoo Statement, which is particularly evident in the Porvoo Statement itself. Will the Agreement provide a basis for wider ecclesiastical communion with them?

*Papers read at a symposium  
held by the Anglican – Old Catholic Society of St. Willibrord  
at Amersfoort, Netherlands  
on 15 October 1997*



Edited by Martien Parmentier

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## Introduction

*By Wietse van der Velde,  
chairman of the Dutch branch of the Society of St. Willibrord*

In 1996, the Anglican Churches in Europe and various Lutheran Churches in Northern Europe signed the Porvoo Agreement, which provided for full communion between the churches concerned. At the heart of this agreement is the Porvoo Common Statement<sup>1</sup> with the theological justification of the agreement. The Statement has attracted wider ecumenical interest, including from the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, which have been in intercommunion, later renamed full communion, with a growing number of member churches of the Anglican Communion since the Bonn Agreement of 1931.

For Old Catholics, episcopacy has been a central concern in ecumenical conversations, so that the declarations of their Anglican sister churches on this in the Porvoo Statement were of particular interest to them. Would the Statement provide a basis for wider ecumenical conversations in this area?

This question was taken up by the Dutch branch of the Anglican–Old Catholic St Willibrord Society, a society founded in 1908 to strengthen bonds between the two churches. A symposium about it was organized in cooperation with the Committee for Faith and Church Order of the Dutch Old Catholic Church and with Professor Martien Parmentier, who had devoted a seminar to Porvoo in his course on ecumenical studies to students of the Old Catholic Seminary at Utrecht University. The meeting in Amersfoort (in the historic premises of the Old Catholic Seminary) on 15 October 1997 was attended not only by theologians of the Anglican, Lutheran and Old Catholic communities in the Netherlands, but also by members of other Dutch churches who were interested in questions of faith and order. Six students of the Seminary each prepared a introduction on views of episcopacy from a different church tradition, namely Faith and Order (World Council of Churches), Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Old Catholicism. Most of these introductions were worked into short papers. An epilogue was composed by Dr. Koenraad Ouwens, lecturer at the Seminary and a paper has been added about attitudes to episcopacy among the larger partners of the United Protestant Church of the Netherlands.

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<sup>1</sup> *Together in Mission and Ministry. Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches.* The Council for Christian Unity of the Church of England, London 1993.



## I. Porvoo and *episkope* - episcopacy

By Martien Parmentier, lecturer

### *Reason for this symposium*

As Wietse van der Velde said, this symposium on episcopacy resulted from an invitation from the Anglican-Old Catholic Society of St. Willibrord. The Society wished to review the implications of the Anglican-Lutheran agreement of Porvoo in a broad ecumenical circle. Together with this initiative, a seminar in ecumenics happened to be planned at the Old Catholic Seminary, in which the subject of *episkope* – episcopacy was studied. The six students participating were to investigate concepts of *episkope*, a general term referring to the ministry of oversight in the Church and of an *episkopos*, a specific term that indicates someone who exercises this ministry in a personal way. In the essays that follow, the six participants in the seminar briefly report their findings. The question they seek to answer is:

*“Is the view of episkope that is established in the Porvoo Common Statement, seen from the perspective of the ecclesial tradition I studied, sufficiently coherent, theologically elaborated and in agreement with the apostolic faith, for a mutual recognition and mutual commitment as proposed in the Porvoo Declaration?”*

We did not aim at the production of detailed theological treatises, but at a brief sharing of the results of a first acquaintance with a world still foreign to the students. But we hope that these contributions will stimulate the discussion about one of the most divisive ecumenical issues: the view of *episkope* in the various churches and in the various ecumenical agreements.

### *Many agreements shine in the starry skies of the ecumenical movement*

The ecumenical skies shine with ever more brilliant agreements. In the ecclesial field of Anglicans, Old Catholics and Lutherans we find the Bonn Agreement of 1931; the Porvoo Declaration as contained in the Porvoo Common Statement of 1992, between the British and Irish Anglican churches on the one hand and the Scandinavian Lutheran churches (except the Danish church, which withdrew) on the other; and the Concordat of Lutherans and Episcopalians in the United States, drawn up in 1991 and rejected by the Lutherans in 1997. Moreover we have the Lima texts on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (“BEM” for short) drawn up by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches in 1982; the Old Catholic-Orthodox dialogue which was completed in 1987; and the Meissen agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany of 1988.

The drafters of the Porvoo Statement, which interests us especially here, have read the Lima texts of 1982 very closely. Because Anglicans and Lutherans never hurled tokens of excommunication at each other, it was relatively easy to come to a common document, based on the Lima text. The difficult point of it all was and still is the historic episcopate. In imitation of Lima, Porvoo distinguishes between the apostolic tradition preserved in a church and the personal apostolic succession by bishops, preserved as a “*sign, though not a guarantee*”<sup>2</sup> that the apostolic tradition has been kept. This distinction is used here to allow churches with a non-episcopal or insufficiently substantial episcopal past to restore personal episcopacy without having to deny that they were Church in the past. Anglicans steer a middle course here. They found and find episcopacy indispensable, but not necessarily essential. On the one hand, those Lutheran churches that do not regard episcopacy as essential or even regard it as an *adiaphoron*, have difficulties with the episcopal model. On the other hand, Catholic and Orthodox churches continue to regard the personal ministry of episcopacy as essential to the Church.

### *Episcopacy: esse or bene esse?*

One of the constantly recurring questions is whether the episcopal office belongs to the *esse* or to the *bene esse* of the Church. Do we have something here that is essential to the Church, without which one cannot speak of “Church”, or does it belong to those things that further the well-being of the Church, that are dispensable if need be? In this, Old Catholics like Roman Catholics and Orthodox used to declare that there is no possible doubt that the episcopal office belongs to the *esse* of the Church. But in the last ten or fifteen years, this has not been emphatically repeated in Old Catholic circles, at least in the Netherlands. Anglicans are traditionally divided in this matter. At most, a small minority of Lutherans believes that the episcopal office belongs to the *esse* of the Church. And where does the distinction between *esse* and *bene esse* come from? It stems from the Anglican discussion about the historic episcopate. What is surprising is that the Roman Catholic response to Lima regards the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon as belonging to the *esse* of the Church. First of all, because the distinction between *esse* and *bene esse* is uncommon in Roman Catholic theology. Secondly, because the Anglican debate, in which it originated, used it about episcopacy without regard to the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon.<sup>3</sup> But in international ecumenism, it is no longer done to ask whether episcopacy belongs to the *esse* or *bene esse* of the Church, as I found out during a consultation on “*episkope*

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<sup>2</sup> Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, *Faith and Order Paper 111*, Genève 1982, n. 38, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> A.H.C. van Eijk, “Ordained ministry: divine institution and historical development: Reflections on a Roman Catholic response to the Lima Report”, *One in Christ* 27, 1991, p.358, note 5.

— *episcopacy*” in Strasbourg in April 1997. When I asked whether the ecumenical debate had now reached the point that episcopacy was no longer regarded as belonging to the *esse*, but to the *bene esse* of the Church, all the professional ecumenists present protested against my use of essentialist language.

### *Strength of the distinction between apostolic tradition and apostolic succession*

One question which could be asked about the Lima document and in its trail, Porvoo, is whether the distinction between apostolic tradition and apostolic succession is in harmony with the newer definitions of apostolic succession in the Catholic and Orthodox camps. Here, the pipeline theory has been renounced and the personal apostolic succession of bishops is embedded in the life of the ecclesial community. The pipeline theory is the theory that looks upon apostolic succession as a divine fluid that the apostles flushed down a chain of bishops through the centuries as through a pipeline. It probably had its heyday with the condemnation of Anglican orders by Leo XIII in 1896, is still known in Rome, but has come under heavy fire from later theological reflection. Newer Catholic and Orthodox theology links the bishop so closely to his church that, theologically speaking, church and bishop cannot live without each other.<sup>4</sup> The question is however, whether this does not mean that Lima’s strategy to move towards non-episcopal churches by making a distinction between apostolic succession and apostolic tradition, is not rejected implicitly. Perhaps Lima’s emphasis on the personal, collegial and communal aspect of the threefold ministry meets this problem part of the way. In any case, these three aspects (already discerned in Faith and Order’s first years<sup>5</sup>) have continually returned in ecumenical discussion on ministry since Lima. But the question posed by the Catholic and Orthodox camps remains: when the ecumenically expedient distinction between apostolic tradition and apostolic succession is made, does not the personal element of the succession receive insufficient attention? Nevertheless one could ask whether there will ever be an ecumenical advance if this distinction is not made and whether both sides are not divinizing historical coincidences, such as the preservation or non-preservation of the episcopal order in the storms of the Reformation, practically or at least theoretically. It would perhaps witness to more inspiration of the Totally Other One, if episcopal churches were to conceive of the *episkopos* in a less essentialist way and non-episcopal churches were to view episcopacy as a strong instrument to order the Church’s *epi-*

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<sup>4</sup> On the Orthodox side, J.Zizioulas, *Being as Communion, Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Crestwood 1985, p.198: “... the charisma veritatis of the bishop is not an individual possession transmitted through ordination but is tied up with the entire community. In episcopal succession, therefore, we have essentially succession of communities.”

<sup>5</sup> Cp. the contribution by M.Ploeger, below.

*skope*. In this context, a remark is needed about the word “guarantee”. Lima regards episcopacy as a “*sign, though not a guarantee*” that the apostolic tradition has been preserved in a church. In the Roman Catholic response to Lima, this was pertinently denied: episcopacy was called

“*a guarantee of the continuity and unity of the Church, if one recognizes in it the expression of Christ’s faithfulness to the Church to the end of time*”.<sup>6</sup>

As long ago as 1973, the Swiss Old Catholic theologian Kurt Stalder wrote that the apostolic succession by bishops in itself

“*is no formal guarantee of the truth. The fact that a bishop is the successor of his predecessor does not prove that he is a faithful witness to the truth. But if a bishop should have no successor, or if he should pass on something else than the Gospel to his successor, that local church is threatened or is already dead. Therefore there must be a proof of identity in succession and succession in identity, also historically*”.<sup>7</sup>

This Catholic position is a rejection of the automatism of the pipeline theory and of a kind of *ex opere operato* notion of guarantee. Moreover it hints that the historical reality of episcopal succession is not only a gift, but also a task (*Gabe* and *Aufgabe*), and that all bishops must have their periodical reviews, preferably well before the Last Judgment.

### *Full Communion: means or goal?*

Another item being kept on the boil is the question how much and what kind of doctrinal agreement there should be before full communion can be established. For years, there has not only been disagreement about the measure of doctrinal agreement required between churches, but also about whether such a complete agreement should be reached before the establishment of eucharistic fellowship or whether this agreement can wait until after its establishment. The Catholic and Orthodox camps see eucharistic fellowship as the goal and the Protestant camp widely regards it as a means. In the common statements of recent years this question plays a significant role. The United States Lutheran-Episcopalian Concordat was intended as a step on the road “Towards Full Communion”. By contrast, Porvoo *begins* with full communion and wants to

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<sup>6</sup> Max Thurian (Ed.), Churches respond to BEM VI, *Faith and Order Paper* 144, Genève 1988, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> K. Stalder, “Apostolische Sukzession und Eucharistie”, *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 63, 1973, p. 16-17.

solve remaining points later. In view of this difference, one would have expected that the Concordat would have been easier to accept than Porvoo. The opposite was true. Without doubt, this was because the Concordat was proposed to two churches in the same geographical area. Such an agreement is more difficult, simply because it meets more resistance than tourist ecumenism, of which both Porvoo and the Bonn Agreement of 1931 are examples.

### *Reception and consistency of the several agreements*

After theologians of different churches have drawn up a theological agreement, there are always two problems:

- Will the churches from which the fraternizing and sororizing theologians originate ratify the agreement? This is the problem of the reception process.
- Even if the churches accept the agreement prepared by theologians, the agreement is not automatically consistent with other agreements.

A big problem of present day ecumenism is that far reaching agreements are elaborated on paper, but that reception of these documents in the churches to which the drafters belong, which have initially given those drafters their assignment to seek such agreements, is an extremely tiresome business. Years pass and new problems appear that are experienced as divisive between the churches. Indeed the ancient ecumenical councils had a much easier arrangement: the agreements worked out by the bishops, that is by the church leaders themselves, were enforced by the emperor. Today theologians and church leaders are not necessarily the same persons and there are neither authoritative inter-church conciliar structures nor an executive agency to implement that to which the churches have agreed.

The mutual consistency of the several agreements is also a problem. For instance: Are the non-Anglican parties of Meissen really happy with Porvoo, which goes much further? Has Meissen been overshadowed by Porvoo? Since 1931 and for years, Old Catholics thought they had a unique relationship with the Anglicans, but the revocation in 1978 of intercommunion with the Episcopal Church in the United States by the Polish National Catholic Church on the one hand and the ratification of Meissen (1988) and Porvoo (1992) on the other have changed the situation radically. And then there is also the Old Catholic dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox, which has been completed (1987) but is as yet not ratified. There is also a problem of consistency among Old Catholics. In the third issue of the 1997 volume of the *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, the Swiss Old Catholic theologian Urs von Arx wrote that the German Old Catholic Church is especially, too specially, interested in the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue and exulted uncritically about Meissen and Porvoo in particular, though these documents presuppose eucharistic fellowship while full ecclesial com-

munion is still lacking. Von Arx believes that there is insufficient agreement in the faith while there is no agreement about the significance and binding character of the historic episcopate. He finds the Concordat more consistent and yet flexible.<sup>8</sup> But since then, the American Concordat failed to gain sufficient Lutheran votes.

Non-episcopal Lutherans in Europe in their turn will look at Porvoo in amazement and perhaps prefer the way chosen at Meissen. Finally Anglicans have indeed demonstrated an amazing adaptability everywhere in the world. Perhaps our deliberations can help us to get a little more clarity in the labyrinth called ecumenism.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> U. von Arx, "Der orthodox-alkatholische Dialog – Bemerkungen zu einer schwierigen Rezeption", *IKZ* 87, 1997, p.220 note 56.

<sup>9</sup> In what follows, each contributor is responsible for his own interpretation of these matters. None of us claims to express the official point of view of the Old Catholic Church.

## II. *Episkope* – episcopacy in the Anglican tradition.

By Ariadne van den Hof, student

### *Preface*

Discussing the Anglican views on *episkope* — episcopacy is not an easy task. Not merely because of the limited amount of space offered by this type of article, but especially because of the diversity and variety of liturgical and theological views within the Anglican Communion. In this article the emphasis will be on the situation in the Church of England, which in itself represents a multitude of views on theological issues. I will first discuss the historical developments of the episcopate in the Church of England,<sup>10</sup> before moving on to the ecumenical dialogue of Porvoo between Anglican and Lutheran churches. Last but not least I will look at the 1994 House of Bishops Occasional Paper Apostolicity and Succession.

### *Brief history of Anglican views of episcopacy since the Reformation*

As will be shown in this paragraph the Church of England, throughout its history, has made a conscious effort and gone to enormous trouble to retain the episcopacy, unlike most Lutheran Churches for whom the existence of episcopacy is a chance of history. The dialogue between Anglicans (not just the Church of England) and Lutherans is influenced by these differences.

The history of the Church of England as separate from Rome begins with the Tudor Reformation, when Henry VIII, out of political and personal motivations, removed the church from Rome's authority and was declared Head of the Church of England by parliament (1534). Within the next five years monasteries were dissolved, but apart from this little else was changed. The reformation of the Church of England took place under Henry's son Edward.

During the reign of the protestant Edward VI (1547-1553), Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Canterbury) started work on the Book of Common Prayer. The first, "conservative" and careful, version of the BCP was published in 1549. The second, more protestant version, was published in 1552. Though increasingly protestant the BCP still emphasises the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon, its early Christian roots and its continuation within the Church of England.

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<sup>10</sup> Cp. Christopher Hill, "Episcopacy in our churches, England", *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p.125-136.

Under Mary Tudor (1553-1558), England was again placed under papal authority. New bishops were appointed to replace those who refused to swear allegiance to Rome and who were burned at the stake, including Thomas Cranmer.

During the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) the English church became once again independent of Rome with the English monarch as the Supreme Governor rather than the Head, which term was considered offensive by some. An Anglican identity (was) developed, with the Anglican church being perceived as the *via media* between Rome and Geneva. Episcopacy was seen as based on both Scripture and Tradition and to be maintained for the welfare of the Church. Though the Puritan party saw no need for an unbroken historical succession, every care was taken to validate the consecration of bishop Matthew Parker by bishops consecrated in the time of Henry VIII (Matthew Parker was the first Anglican bishop ordained independently of Rome).

Again after the Civil War and the Commonwealth (1649-1660), care was taken that a valid episcopate was restored. The new Book of Common Prayer (1662) established the legal form of consecration of bishops. Since then, there have been no drastic breaks in church government, though the concept of episcopacy has evolved.

In the 19th Century, the Tractarian Movement (which resulted in the Oxford Movement) reacted against the established character of the church with bishops acting as civil servants, laying emphasis on the apostolic succession. The period also saw emphasis on the pastoral task of bishops and the office of suffragan bishop was re-introduced to alleviate the workload in large dioceses. With the removal of legal impediments against non-conformists, competition between the churches made the Church of England emphasise episcopacy, the more so when Pope Leo XIII declared that Anglican orders were "absolutely null and utterly void" (1896). The resulting hankering among Anglicans for a consecration recognised by Rome may have been one of the things that ultimately led to the Agreement of Bonn between the Church of England<sup>11</sup> and the Union of Old Catholic Churches (whose orders are recognised by Rome as valid). Anglican orders were recognised as valid by the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1922, followed by other Eastern Orthodox churches and the Dutch Old Catholic Church in 1925 (the Swiss and German Churches had already recognised Anglican orders).

Then came the great change of direction. Though the High Church wing seemed to have been holding fast to a sort of pipeline theory of episcopacy late in the 19th Century and early in the 20th Century, the Church of England has now ratified the Meissen and Porvoo agreements with churches whose episcopacy is of doubtful continuity.

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<sup>11</sup> Other Anglican Churches soon followed suit and signed an agreement of intercommunion, later (1958) to be called full communion.



## Porvoo

According to the Porvoo Common Statement,<sup>12</sup> apostolicity

*“... means that the Church is sent by Jesus to be for the world, to participate in his mission and therefore in the mission of the One who sent Jesus, to participate in the mission of the Father and the Son through the dynamic of the Holy Spirit” (§37).*

The primary testimony to the apostolic succession is the permanent characteristics (i.e. the apostolic tradition) of the whole Church (§39). Apostolicity is an expression of the continuity of Christ’s mission (§40). All members of the Church are called to participate in this mission.

*Episkope* (oversight) is a necessary witness and guarantee to the unity and apostolicity of the Church. It must be exercised personally, collegially and communally (§44). The diversity of God’s gifts requires co-ordination, so that the gifts can enrich the whole Church (§42).

*“Oversight of the Church and its mission is the particular responsibility of the bishop. The bishop’s office is one of service and communication within the Church.”*

It is a sign of the intention of continuity of apostolic life and witness (§44).

*“Apostolic succession in the episcopal office is a visible and personal way of focusing the apostolicity of the whole Church” (§46).*

*“Continuity in apostolic succession is signified in the ordination or consecration of a bishop” (§47).*

In ordaining a bishop within the apostolic succession the Church shows its commitment to continuity in its life and mission and strengthens its intention to make visible the characteristics of the apostolic Church.

The historic succession, however, is not a guarantee for the Church’s fidelity to every aspect of apostolic faith, life and mission (§50). Rather it is a

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<sup>12</sup> This section represents excerpts from Chapter 4.

*“permanent challenge to fidelity and to unity, a summons to witness to, and a commission to realise more fully, the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles” (§51).*

A church that has preserved continuity in its episcopacy *“is free to acknowledge an authentic episcopal ministry in a church”* that has preserved its episcopacy but with occasional priestly ordination, without being unfaithful to the apostolic calling of the whole Church (§52).

*“Resumption of the use of the sign does not imply an adverse judgement on the ministries of those churches which did not previously make use of the sign. It is rather a means of making more visible the unity and continuity of the Church at all times and in all places.” (§53)*

### *Apostolicity and Succession*

In 1994, the House of Bishops of the Church of England issued an “Occasional Paper” entitled *Apostolicity and Succession*. It builds on convergence that had been reached in various bilateral and multilateral talks, so trying to clarify the concepts of *apostolicity* and *succession*. From its outset, it accepts the texts of Porvoo. It tries to show the relevance of episcopacy without impeding dialogue with non-episcopal churches. No easy task. It starts by emphasising the need for unity in the Church, indeed that the one, holy and apostolic Church needs to be all four things at once. The Church cannot be apostolic without being one.

According to the Paper the office of bishop is not necessary for a Church to be apostolic. Neither does episcopacy guarantee anything. So *guarantee* must here be understood in *“the context of a system of symbols and symbolic language”* (p. 24). The episcopate should be seen as a declaration of intent. It is

*“a powerful sign of the community’s intention to remain faithful to the apostolicity of the Church throughout the ages, a means of upholding that intention and a sign which evokes in the faithful the confident assurance that the Church lives in continuity with its Lord”* (p. 27).

*“The historic episcopal succession is an expression first of Christ’s faithfulness to the Church, second of the Church’s intention to remain faithful to the apostles’ teaching and mission”* (p. 24).

So even if episcopacy may not be necessary for a Church to be apostolic and even if it does not guarantee anything, it is still important as a declaration of intent. The Church of England is walking a tightrope of placing value on its historic episcopacy, and of

wanting to work towards broader unity between the various churches. To that end, it is engaging in ecumenical dialogue with churches without a historic episcopacy.

### Conclusion

Tensions arising from the varied nature of the Church of England twice threatened to destroy its historic episcopacy in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Nevertheless great care was then taken to maintain or restore the succession. In view of this historical background the path taken by the Church of England towards Porvoo and Meissen represents a very different direction indeed, encouraged by the ecumenical movement and growing influence of the evangelical wing of the church. The paper of the English House of Bishops suggests that course is set to continue. This inevitably involves an adjustment of the historic episcopate, a course that will not be easy and may seem somewhat schizophrenic. But such balancing of conflicting ideas is characteristic of Anglican dialogue. Emphasis in other parts of the Anglican Communion has been on the historic episcopate more than on unity, in particular in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. The difference can be seen by the starting principle of two dialogues with Lutherans. In Europe, the Porvoo Agreement starts from intercommunion. In the United States, the Concordat set intercommunion as the goal, although the Concordat was not accepted by the Lutheran side.

### III. Roman Catholic positions on *episkope* – episcopacy

By Egbert van Groesen, student

#### *Introduction*

Since Vatican II, the climate in the Roman Catholic Church has favoured participation in the ecumenical movement, which originated at the beginning of the 20th century in various churches of Europe. Initially the Roman Catholic Church initiated bilateral conversations with another single church or family of churches, such as those with the Anglicans or with the Union of Utrecht. Though Roman Catholic theologians participated in conferences of Faith and Order, there was no official liaison between Rome and the World Council of Churches. Until 1987, WCC reports drew no official Vatican response. For the Lima report, the Secretariat for Christian Unity together with the Congregation of Faith sent an official response. Since the Porvoo Common Statement made fruitful use of the Lima terminology, that response to Lima is relevant and probably would not differ from any response to Porvoo.

#### *The dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium**

Vatican II laid down Roman Catholic teaching on the nature and essence of the Church in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* (promulgated 21 November 1964),<sup>13</sup> which forms the dogmatic basis for all ecumenical conversations between Rome and other churches. Chapter 3 deals with the structure of the Church's ministry<sup>14</sup> and falls into three parts.

The first part the Council defines the origin and basis of the Church's ministry. To protect the continuity of the Church, the Lord appointed twelve apostles to go out into the world, just as he had been sent out by the Father. Then he appointed Peter as chief of the apostles. The present college of bishops in communion with the Pope constitute their successors (thus the apostolic succession).

This office is viewed as a sacrament. The Holy Spirit was poured out over the apostles to adequately fulfil their task. Since then the gifts of the Spirit have continually been handed on by the laying on of hands. The sacramental aspect is strongly emphasised:

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<sup>13</sup> Norman P. Tanner S.J., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, London/Washington 1990, Vol. II, p.849-900.

<sup>14</sup> Tanner p.862-874.

the episcopal consecration is seen as a sacred character that is imprinted in a lasting way.

However a bishop does not function independently. He participates in a college, with which he must maintain unity. In a special way, he is united to the Pope. Without collegiality and obedience to him, a bishop cannot administer his authority. The primacy of the Pope as formulated in 1870 continues to be enforced in this document.

Bishops are assigned three tasks (Latin *munera*).<sup>15</sup> They control doctrine in their diocese, though always in communion with the Pope, who is always free to exercise jurisdiction over the whole Church. Secondly they sanctify the faithful by directing the administration of the sacraments as primary ministers thereof, in particular of the eucharist and must arrange for its celebration. Thirdly they have an administrative function, the day-to-day care of their flock.

The last two sections of the chapter define the two ways the bishop hands on his tasks: by ordaining priests and making deacons. This ancient way of operating needs to be maintained but for the office of deacon its independence needs to be restored (§29).

### *Response of the Vatican to the Lima report*

After the Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* and the ecumenical decree *Unitatis redintegratio* served as ecclesiological basis for ecumenical conversations, which the Vatican mostly conducted on the bilateral level. However the response to Lima<sup>16</sup> broke new ground. For the first time, the WCC was viewed as an official dialogue partner. The starting point of the response was remarkably positive, in particular on the description of the three-fold ministry and its significance with “*personal, collegial and communal aspects*”. However sharp criticism followed.

Questions were raised about sacramentality (p.6), a term that the authors of the Lima report had deliberately avoided. The Vatican requested further study of its relation to the ordained ministry. For Rome, the ordained ministry is and must remain a sacrament.

Rome questioned how “*apostolic tradition*” should be described. Though the basis for the tradition of faith is broader than just the bishops as successors to the apostles, Rome viewed a distinction between “*apostolic tradition*” and “*apostolic succession*” as

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<sup>15</sup> *Lumen Gentium* § 24-27, Tanner p.868-872.

<sup>16</sup> M. Thurian, *Churches respond to BEM*. Vol. VI, *Faith and Order Paper 144*, WCC, Geneva 1988, p.1-40.

impossible. The two belong together. A related matter was whether women could be admitted to the ministry (p.30).

Essential for Rome is the relation of the ordained ministry to the Church. For Rome, the ordained ministry is part of the *esse* of the Church and not just something commendable. The description of *episkope* as a sign was viewed as insufficient. "Guarantee" is the adequate description (p.33).

Rome sought clarity on the way ultimate authority should be described. The Lima report lacked every description of a universal ministry, thus placing the office of Pope in the discussion (p.31–32).

### Conclusion

In its response, the Roman Catholic Church indicated that the Lima report was too unsubstantial in its language as a basis for agreement. By contrast, Lutheran and Anglican churches have less problem with the avoidance of the term "sacrament" and with the definition of apostolic succession as a "sign", "challenge", "summons" and "commission" for the Church to maintain the apostolic faith.<sup>17</sup> The Roman Catholic Church still holds to ministry in a succession as sacrament and guarantee. Every ecumenical attempt to circumvent or moderate this viewpoint is likely to strand on a negative response from the Vatican.

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<sup>17</sup> Porvoo, §51.

## IV. *Episkope* – episcopacy in Eastern Orthodoxy

By Frans van Sark, student

### *Introduction*

In the Porvoo Common Statement, the Anglican churches with their claim to the historic apostolic succession, and thus, so to speak, a direct line back to the apostles, recognize that the Lutheran churches without that succession have preserved and transmitted the apostolic tradition. The Lutherans do not need to deny their past. In the words of the declaration,

“ ... we find that the time has come when all our churches can affirm together the value and use of the sign of the historic episcopal succession. This means that those churches in which the sign has at some time not been used are free to recognize the value of the sign and should embrace it without denying their own apostolic continuity. This also means that those churches in which the sign has been used are free to recognize the reality of the episcopal office and should affirm the apostolic continuity of those churches in which the sign of episcopal succession has not at some time been used” (§57).

To examine whether succession be also significant in relations with other churches, I will attempt to answer the following three questions. What is the view of *episkope*-episcopacy in the Eastern Orthodox churches? What are the consequences of that view for the unification of churches? Is it possible for Eastern Orthodox churches to recognize other churches along the lines of Porvoo in order to reach unity?

### 2. *Episkope* — episcopacy in Eastern Orthodoxy

Several matters are striking on reading about this subject in the writings of Orthodox theologians.

- They make no distinction between the office, *episkope*, and the person filling that office, *episkopos*.
- As a basis for that office, they refer to the Church fathers of the early centuries of Christianity.
- The Holy Spirit plays a large role in Orthodox ecclesiology.

In a historical sketch, Kallistos Ware<sup>18</sup> chose for the *monarchical* bishop of the 2nd and 3rd Century, clearly distinguished from presbyters and still presiding over only one congregation as the normal celebrant at the Sunday eucharist. His conception fits in with that of Ignatius of Antioch, whose eucharistic ecclesiology has enormously influenced modern Orthodox thinking about the Church, for instance that of Zizioulas to be dealt with below. Ware suggested small dioceses with 50 to 100 parishes. If the bishop is to unite the local community, only one bishop is needed, not two or three.

*"Ignatius would have been appalled — and with good reason — by the present condition of Orthodoxy in the Western world, where in most large cities there are not one but several Orthodox bishops each exercising authority over a fragment of the total flock. Instead of being a focus of unity, the bishops have become a sign of division"* (p. 9).

To assess the meaning of "bishop", Ware also quoted the ideas of Irenaeus of Lyon and Cyprian of Carthage. For Irenaeus, the bishop was in particular the teacher of the truth. In *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus wrote,

*"...We should obey those presbyters in the Church who have their succession from the apostles, and who together with succession in the episcopate, have received the assured charisma of the truth (certum charisma veritatis)"* (p.12).

This is the historic apostolic succession in its full sense. Ware concluded,

*"... Outward continuity in apostolic succession serves as the sign and guarantee of the inward continuity in apostolic faith"* (p. 12).

Ware added that succession is not a personal possession of the bishop, apart from the local community over which he presides (p.13). Ignatius and Irenaeus are complementary, in his view. Finally he urged more attention be given to the ideas of Cyprian about the collegiality of bishops, but also their independence (p.17-18). "Reception" of the councils by the whole Church is a major element in modern Orthodox ecclesiology (p.19).

John Zizioulas<sup>19</sup> indicated two approaches to apostolic continuity, one historical and one eschatological. The historical approach provides a direct line from God through

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<sup>18</sup> "Patterns of episcopacy in the early Church and today: an Orthodox view", in: P. Moore (Editor) *Bishops, but what kind?*, London 1982, p.1-24.

<sup>19</sup> *Being as Communion*, Chap. 5. Apostolic continuity and succession; Chap. 6. Ministry and communion.



Christ to the present bishop. The second emphasizes the eschatological function of the apostles. Continuity is provided by the eucharist, as a continuity of communion and community. For Orthodox tradition, the decisive link between the apostolic college and the episcopal college lies in the ordination which ties the bishop to a particular community and, through his ordination, to at least two other bishops. In this way, he is tied to the apostolic college as it is expressed in his own church and in other churches (p.201-202). The bishop succeeds the apostles not as an individual but as spokesman of the community. Orthodoxy can never distinguish the right of jurisdiction from ordination itself (p.239). Synthesis of the two approaches means, according to Zizioulas, that the Kingdom of God is always present with a structure: there is no Kingdom of God without the Holy Spirit; there is no Kingdom of God that is not centered on Christ, surrounded by the apostles. Both approaches imply a structure of the Church and the Church found those structures in the eucharist, in which the bishop plays a central role (p.205-206).

It is hardly surprising, wrote John Erickson,<sup>20</sup> that eucharistic ecclesiology as developed by Zizioulas has been crucial in the joint international commission of Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches (p.7). As Erickson pointed out, in the Orthodox – Roman Catholic dialogue both the Munich statement of 1982 and that of Valamo in 1988 emphasize a pneumatologically conditioned christology for a correct understanding of ecclesiology and therefore of episcopally ordered ministry. "Because Christ's ministry is present to us only through the Spirit, ecclesial ministry is relational. The nexus of relationships established by the Spirit creates a new way of being, which transforms both the one ordained and those for whom he is ordained, making it futile to debate whether ordained ministry in the Church is functional or ontological in nature" (p.7).

### *Conclusions*

For Eastern Orthodox churches, episcopacy belongs to the essence of the Church. They emphasize the eschatological aspect of ministry. Though all the writers reviewed emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit, episcopacy within the historical succession belongs to the essence. The bishop is a guarantee of the truth.

Orthodoxy can only unite with churches that have maintained the historic apostolic succession without interruption. Though Orthodox churches have had conversations about unity with several other groups of churches, no unity has yet been achieved. John Erickson pointed to a reason for this.

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<sup>20</sup> "Episkope and episcopacy: Orthodox perspectives", lecture at Strasburg Consultation called by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, April 1997.

*"To the bewilderment and annoyance of many of their ecumenical partners, the Orthodox often have insisted that mutual recognition of sacraments and ministry is inseparable from mutual recognition of faith" (p.4).*

He meant belief in its totality, since agreements on only parts is not possible. Even though there is no essential difference in forms of ministry between Roman Catholic and Orthodox, mutual recognition is not yet possible (p. 4).

At present, Orthodox churches can neither recognize other churches along the lines of Porvoo nor unite with them in this way.

<sup>1</sup> This would not be possible in England and America

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## V. *Episkope* – episcopacy in Lutheranism

By Bernd Wallet, student

### *Sketch of the Lutheran view of ministry*

In 1983, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) produced a statement on *episkope*, apostolic succession and episcopal ministry entitled *Lutheran understanding of the episcopal office*.<sup>21</sup> In the Lutheran view, *episkope* belongs to the one ministry, under whatever name and under whatever church order.<sup>22</sup> Though apostolic succession was of material importance for the continuous succession of ministry of the Gospel in word and sacrament, that was not always possible in the time of the Reformation by consecration of bishops.<sup>23</sup>

The Porvoo Common Statement devotes much attention to the historical background of the participating churches, understandably for the Lutheran churches. Indeed they are unified in recognition of the Augsburg Confession and of one ministry of word and sacrament.<sup>24</sup> However the form of the one ministry is determined by historical circumstances.<sup>25</sup> It is of less importance *who* preaches than *how* the word is preached. The ministry is focused on the preaching of the Gospel. Human distinctions within the ministry, as between bishop and priest, are no basis for doctrine, here harking back to the Schmalkaldian articles and *De potestate papae* (both 1537), which both cited Jerome as teaching that the offices of bishop and “presbyter or pastor” are only distinguished by human authority. Whether a Lutheran church have a personally exercised episcopate and whether a historic succession be maintained in a particular church are no matters of doctrine.<sup>26</sup>

This approach implies that a theology of ministry and an ecclesiology are extraneous to Lutheran thinking. In contrast to Lutheranism’s main partners in dialogue, namely the Calvinistic churches and the Anglican churches, they have made no principle

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<sup>21</sup> LWF, Geneva. 1983, §4.

<sup>22</sup> §9.

<sup>23</sup> The Porvoo Common Statement §52, *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p.28.

<sup>24</sup> *Augsburg Confession*, §5, 28; LWF 1983, §6.

<sup>25</sup> LWF, §21, 22.

<sup>26</sup> LWF, §11.

choice for any particular church order. Rather they have tended to conserve late medieval structures. To talk of a Lutheran approach to ministry is questionable.

Little changed from the Reformation until the beginning of the 20th century. With the ecumenical movement in the 1920s, new questions were asked, especially in dialogue with Anglicans: Where is *episkope* situated? What does it represent? How do we estimate apostolic succession? The answer from Lutherans was usually to present their own accidental structure as their “vision”, with the admission that other models were possible.

### *Lutheran churches with a bishop*

To see the role history has played, let us briefly look at the role of bishops in different Lutheran churches.<sup>27</sup> They fall into four groups. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands stands alone, since it has always had a presbyterian church order.

In Germany and the United States, the Lutheran churches had no bishop but were led by an executive committee chaired by a “president” or “superintendent”. Recently they came to be called “bishops”, though the pastor concerned was not consecrated as bishop. Thus historic succession was lacking. For some, this was a problem in ecumenical conversations. The bishop shared authority with a synod and so the type of church structure is called synodal episcopacy. The bishop visits but ordination to the ministry is not his or her prerogative.

The state churches of Denmark, Norway and Iceland retained the medieval dioceses but the historic succession was broken, when Bugenhagen, the expert in church order and an ordained priest but no bishop, consecrated superintendents. Ever since, those churches have held to this presbyterian succession. Since 1685, the superintendents have again been called bishops. As well as being responsible for visitation, these bishops are responsible for ordinations to the ministry.

In the Church of Sweden and the allied churches of Finland and the Baltic States, *episkope* is exercised by bishops, though priests share in that authority. The bishop ordains and visits; the parish clergy confirm. The bishops stand in the historic succession. Exceptionally among Lutherans, they consider episcopacy an institution of the Holy Spirit, which must be maintained to the end of time. These churches have close affinity with the Anglican churches. Through the personal effort of Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, they played a role in initiating the ecumenical movement. Through

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<sup>27</sup> Data based on the essays in *Together in Mission and Ministry*.

him and through theological exchange with the Church of England, Swedish theologians have taken up consideration of the meaning of “ministry”.

## *Historic succession as crux in conversations with Anglicans*

### *The Niagara Report*

Bilateral talks with Anglicans achieved considerable agreement, resulting in intercommunion. Between different regional talks, great differences resulted from the variation in ministerial structure of Lutheran churches. Where there was no historic episcopate, there was no question of complete communion between churches. Because that question kept cropping up, an international conference was convened at Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, in September 1987.

The report of that conference emphasizes the mission of the whole Church (§15). Apostolicity is a gift of God to the whole Church. The ministry shares in that mission (§19-22). Apostolicity is a task that we must take up out of gratitude, though the Church always falls short in it (§76). Exercise of *episkope* must always set us to our task but in *episkope* we also fall short. This statement comes clearly from a reformed viewpoint. Moreover the report indicates that a “material rupture” in the succession of presiding ministers need not imply the loss of apostolic faith (§54). The pipeline theory is thus rejected.

Because there is such wide agreement on faith, both churches express willingness to change and reform their organization in favour of each other (§87). After the rather reformed statement about apostolicity, the report surprisingly proposes more drastic changes for the Lutherans than for the Anglicans. Henceforth the Lutherans should call their presidents bishops (§89) and they should install them according to the decisions of the Council of Nicaea (§91), thus consecrated by at least three other bishops. One of them should be an Anglican to express the full communion that has been reached. Though not stated in the report, this amounts to securing the historic succession, since Lutheran participation in Anglican consecration was not made obligatory, only recommended (§96).

For Anglicans, the most far-reaching requirement is outside their organization, namely the immediate recognition of the offices of the Lutheran churches whose ministers are outside the historic succession (§94).

### *The Concordat of Agreement*

The schedule laid down by Niagara was tested in the conversations between the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA) and the Evangelical

Lutheran Church of American (ELCA). Talks began from the position of intercommunion. The aim was to achieve full communion. However in August 1997, the Concordat of Agreement was rejected by the Lutheran General Convention. The two main objections were that acceptance would mean adding something new to the essence of the Church, namely the historic succession, and would mean that only bishops, not pastors, could ordain, so that bishops would gain too much power.

### *The Porvoo Common Statement*

In Europe, the talks led to agreement. According to the Meissen Common Statement drafted in 1988, closer cooperation is not blocked by the differences in value attached to historic succession, a practical and honest conclusion. Porvoo takes matters a step further towards visible unity by means of a consensus of agreements.

On *episkope*, Porvoo article 32k states that a regional ministry of pastoral oversight

*“is necessary as a witness to and safeguard of the unity and apostolicity of the Church”.*

This function belongs to the Church. In this, Porvoo shares in ecumenical consensus since Lima. *Episkope* is typified in a new way as a “ministry of coordination” (§42). Coordination of gifts and tasks is fundamental to the life of the whole Church. Who could be against it?

Article 32k calls the personal office of bishop a sign of the intention to ensure the continuity of the Church in apostolic life and witness, a “*sign of intention*”, not a guarantee. So it keeps close to Lima and Niagara. From Niagara, it takes over the importance of the apostolicity of the Church. Through the structure of the participating Lutheran churches, conversations could begin from the office of bishop, though not all bishops are in the historic succession, to which Anglicans attach such importance.

Porvoo takes that a step further. Continuity in apostolic succession is expressed in the consecration of a bishop (§47). The meaning of the laying on of hands is indicated by the intention expressed in the accompanying prayer. The ordination of a bishop involves doing what the apostles did and what the Church does through the centuries. In other words, it need not be understood purely historically; the intention of consecration is the crux. The sign of consecration is also effective in four ways (§48), including transmission of ministerial office and authority in accordance with God’s will and instruction.

Article 49 states that continuity of historic bishoprics is more than personal. This emphasis on continuity was a significant opening by Anglicans towards the churches of the Bugenhagen tradition.

For Porvoo, the consecration of a bishop into the apostolic succession is also a “sign” (§50). This position is clearly different from that of the Lutheran World Federation in 1983, which took consecration as a formal sign of the otherwise material succession, but not a sign in itself. In Porvoo, this is done though admitting that succession was no complete guarantee of faith and unity, but a permanent challenge. Moreover it is not meant exclusively. There are different forms of continuity (§52). At the time of the Reformation, churches in the episcopal succession could establish a relation with churches with presbyterian ordination. The Bugenhagen churches do not need to deny their past to take part in Porvoo, though they and others are invited to embrace the sign of historic succession, as a means of making visible the unity and continuity of the Church (§57).

### *Is the Porvoo Common Statement Lutheran enough for the Declaration to be accepted?*

Though the Lutherans view historic succession as a matter of indifference, Anglicans view it as one of the four essential traits of the Church. Porvoo provides a rapprochement: historic succession is taken as a *sign* of unity, without denying the past of the partners that are not in that succession.

The Church of Denmark took it differently and did not ratify Porvoo. On *episkope*, a consensus could be achieved but on succession it considered that many fine words had been spoken, though only those outside the historic succession were expected to change.

It is questionable whether Lutherans can accept bishops as a sign, since there is only one ministry. In the preparatory book for Porvoo *Together in mission and ministry*, the Anglican John Halliburton<sup>28</sup> analyses the intention of the Bugenhagen consecrations and concludes that Bugenhagen was indeed aiming to restore correct ordination. But one could just as easily conclude that he was breaking with the episcopal order and consciously introducing presbyteral ordination. In divine law, the ministry is one. Moreover the Church of Denmark held rigidly to being Danish. Perhaps it was showing the same response as in the Danish rejection of the Treaty of Maastricht.

The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church also rejected Porvoo, though because it did not attribute sufficient value to historic succession. In this, it broke with Lutheran tradition, since the Church of Sweden has never set such a requirement for other

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<sup>28</sup> “Orders and Ordination”, *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p.155–164.

Lutherans, though emphasizing historic succession in its own position. The ultimate consideration was unity of faith.

A new era requires new steps to be taken. Although according to Lutheran understanding its formulations seem to be far reaching, the Porvoo Common Statement continues to speak about the episcopal office way in a functional manner. It is splendid when a church has a bishop, but there is no room for ontological differences.

It is the historical situation after 1989 which has made Porvoo possible: national churches which have a common role in society, often with a common attitude in ecumenical affairs, recognize the essentials of faith in one another. Visible unity of the churches as proposed in the Porvoo Declaration then seems a logical step from the Lutheran side.



## VI. Comparison of the idea of *episkope* in “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” (1982) and the Porvoo Common Statement (1992)

By Mattijs Ploeger, student

### *Introduction*

In 1982, the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches (WCC) accepted a report on “*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*” (BEM) at its meeting in Lima, Peru. The BEM report or Lima report was circulated to member-churches of WCC with a request for official responses. Those responses were later published by WCC. The report became a widely recognized text and has served as a basis in bilateral conversations since. This is true of the discussions that culminated in The Porvoo Common Statement, especially in its approach to apostolic ministry.

### *The Lima report as a convergence text*

The Lima report was a result of long work in the Commission on Faith and Order. The World Conferences from the 1920s to the 1960s at Lausanne, Edinburgh, Lund and Montreal were all concerned with sacraments and ministry. After Montreal, emphasis shifted to shorter projects of specialist study and ecumenical discussion. The Lima report attempted to formulate convergence in those studies and conversations. It was presented as a convergence text, not as a list of issues nor a consensus for ecumenical communion, but something in between. It formulated those aspects of the discussion on which a certain degree of consensus had been reached.<sup>29</sup> So it does not contain subjects still causing serious dissension, for instance the role of the pope in the constitution of the Church. Though it reports continuing divergence for some issues, for instance for ordination of women, it can be viewed as a convergence text, certainly for the view of *episkope*.

### *The threefold ministry (Lima)*

Let me introduce the Lima view of *episkope* firstly from the viewpoint of the threefold ministry, secondly from the viewpoint of apostolic succession. Out of the

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<sup>29</sup> Margriet Gosker, *Het kerkelijk ambt in het Limadocument: een hermeneutische doorlichting en een kritische evaluatie van de Lima-Ambtstekst*. IIMO Research Publication 29, Utrecht-Leiden, 1990.

blue, the Lima report presents the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon as a promising ministerial form for any future united church.<sup>30</sup> I interpret this presentation as the Commission's proposal to the churches. I say *proposal*, because the report does not claim any historical or dogmatic justification for this choice. The report says only that many churches still possess this form and that those churches that abandoned this type of ministry should reintroduce it in adapted form. It stresses that no existing form of episcopacy is immediately acceptable as a model.<sup>31</sup> The report takes an approach inherited by the Commission for Faith and Order from the First World Conference at Lausanne in 1927, the three aspects of personal, collegiate and communal exercise of *episkope*. However at Lausanne, these three aspects denoted the three world wide types of ecclesiastical order: episcopalism, presbyterianism and congregationalism.<sup>32</sup> In Lima, the same words were used to describe the three offices within the episcopal system. Here we have an example of continuity and discontinuity in ecumenical history.

### *Lima on the apostolic succession*

After proposing the threefold ministry as a pattern for future conversations, the Lima report deals with the main ecumenical issue in this area, the apostolic succession. The report distinguishes between "apostolic tradition" and "apostolic succession". Apostolic tradition is the adherence of the Church to the original faith, since Christ and the Spirit are present in the Church. The report then goes on to state that apostolic ministry was always to be an aid in continuing the apostolic tradition. This distinction enables the report to diminish the emphasis on apostolic succession by subordinating it formally to the principal concern of apostolic tradition. In this way, it can acknowledge situations had arisen in history in which it was appropriate that the apostolic succession was abandoned in order to preserve apostolic tradition. Nevertheless the Lima report does recommend the "sign" of apostolic succession. After (re)introduction of episcopacy by all churches in adapted forms, this ministry should be continued by the laying on of hands and by invocation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Lima §3.22: "... the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also as a means for achieving it."

<sup>31</sup> Lima §3.24–25: "The traditional threefold pattern thus raises questions for *all* the churches" [my italics].

<sup>32</sup> J. Kronenburg, "Een 'episco-presby-gational' kerkmodel", M. Brinkman; A. Houtepen (ed.), *Geen kerk zonder bisschop? Over de plaats van het ambi in de orde van de kerk. IIMO Research Publication* 46, Zoetermeer 1997, p.258–265.

<sup>33</sup> Lima §39–40.

This act of ordination should be performed “as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the continuity and unity of the Church”.<sup>34</sup>

### *Comparison with Porvoo*

The Porvoo Common Statement builds on this convergence. Let me deal only with Chapter 4, on the issue of episcopacy and apostolicity,<sup>35</sup> where the references are indeed largely to the Lima report. Like the Lima report, it starts with a few paragraphs on “*The Apostolicity of the Whole Church*”, concluding that apostolic succession of the ministry serves and is a focus of the apostolic succession of the whole Church.<sup>36</sup> Again like Lima, it continues with a section on the tasks of ministry, with a further evolution of the keywords personal, collegial and communal (cp. §3 above) to describe the one bishop.<sup>37</sup> However the specific functions and the act of ordination completely agree with requirements laid down by the Lima report. Moreover the threefold ministry is not discussed at all. Though the report uses the typical Lutheran terminology of “the one ministry”, it does accept the threefold “expression” or “structuring”.<sup>38</sup> Porvoo is completely clear that apostolic succession is a “sign” and rejects the word “guarantee”. Instead the sign is described as a “challenge”, “summons” and “commission” for the Church to hold to the apostolic faith.<sup>39</sup> Mutual recognition of historic and non-historic episcopacy underlines its character as a sign,<sup>40</sup> and subordinates this sign to broader mutual recognition of the churches themselves, which is “theologically prior”.<sup>41</sup> An aspect that Lima could not mention is stressed by Porvoo, namely the succession of historic sees as an element in episcopal succession. Porvoo could do so, because historic sees are a reality in the British Isles,

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<sup>34</sup> Lima §38.

<sup>35</sup> Chapter One deals with relations between Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches, Chapter Two with the Church as a whole, Chapter Three with a credal agreement between the two groups of churches, and Chapter Five is the official declaration itself.

<sup>36</sup> Porvoo §40.

<sup>37</sup> Porvoo §32k and 44.

<sup>38</sup> Porvoo §41.

<sup>39</sup> Porvoo §51.

<sup>40</sup> Porvoo §52.

<sup>41</sup> Porvoo §53.

Nordic countries and the Baltic. In Lima, the emphasis on the whole Church might be taken as equivalent.

### *Porvoo's view of episkope – episcopacy*

This short study suggests that the concept of *episkope* in Porvoo fits in with the formulations of Lima. In tone and style, Porvoo lays more emphasis on the apostolic succession as a sign, whereas Lima tends to more objective wording.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless the principles stated in the Lima report, including threefold ministry, apostolic succession as a sign and the ministry's dependence on the whole Church, do form the basis of The Porvoo Common Statement.

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<sup>42</sup> Lima §3.15.

## VII. The Old Catholic Churches and *episkope* – episcopacy

### *Or: how essential is episcopacy for Old Catholics?*

By Lidwien van Buuren, student

In 1931 the Old Catholic churches entered into *intercommunion*, later called *full communion*, with the Anglican churches on the basis of the Bonn Agreement.<sup>43</sup> So the question, which underlies this article,<sup>44</sup> has been already answered in practise as far as the relationships between Anglican and Old Catholic churches go: they mutually recognize each others sacraments and their bishops take part in each other's consecrations.<sup>45</sup> In 1996 the Porvoo Common Statement was ratified by each North European Anglican and Lutheran Church, with the exception of the Church of Denmark. Taking these two agreements together, do they automatically add up to an agreement of "full communion" between Old Catholic and these Lutheran churches?

The answer to this question should be clear and well-founded, also because it is of consequence for the Old Catholic dialogues with other churches. This applies especially to the dialogue with the Orthodox churches, into which I will go in section 3. This further applies to the "intercommunion" into which the German Old Catholic Church entered with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany in 1985. An Old Catholic answer will also influence a possibly closer cooperation with Anglican

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<sup>43</sup> Cp. C.B.Moss, *The Old Catholic Movement*, London 1948, p. 339-350. For the Dutch text of the "Bonn Agreement" see *De Oud-Katholiek*, 47, 1931, pp. 253 ff. The agreement was prepared by a joint committee in Bonn in July 1931. It was ratified by the Old Catholic International Bishops' Conference in September 1931 during the International Old Catholic Congress in Vienna. In January 1932 the House of Bishops of the Church of England did the same; see *De Oud-Katholiek*, 48, 1932, pp. 59 ff. Since the Lambeth Conference of 1958, the term "intercommunion" has been replaced by "full communion". This, however, confounded the situation, because now the same term is used for the relationship between Anglican and Old Catholic churches as for the relationship between Anglican church provinces among themselves. See *De Oud-Katholiek*, 74, 1958, pp. 177-178.

<sup>44</sup> Cp. Parmentier, Chapter 1, above.

<sup>45</sup> Since 1977 the situation has become somewhat more complex, because the Polish National Catholic Church in the USA and Canada, a member church of the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht, broke the sacramental intercommunion in that year with the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Church in Canada. She took this step — without consulting her Old Catholic sister churches about it — because these Anglican churches had passed on to ordaining women to the priesthood.

churches on the European Continent, as advocated by the present Anglican bishop in Europe John Hind.<sup>46</sup> And more remotely it naturally influences dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church and with other churches of the Reformation.

### *The scope of the Bonn Agreement*

The Bonn Agreement is short in the extreme, consisting of only three points. The third states that intercommunion does not require

*“the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice (...), but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith.”*<sup>47</sup>

It is a minimum agreement that was not preceded by a systematic study of similarities and differences in theology, liturgical practice or doctrine. Perhaps that is a reason that this ecumenical relationship has taken shape mainly at the top with participation in each other's conferences, synods and episcopal consecrations and sometimes priests working in each other's churches. Locally, however, two separate jurisdictions remain and no Anglican and Old Catholic parishes have until now been united.

### *The Porvoo common statement and its view on the ordained threefold ministry*

By contrast, the Porvoo Common Statement is a document of about 30 pages based on joint texts on theology, liturgy and faith. The most relevant texts are summarized in Chapter III *“What we agree in faith”* and Chapter IV *“Episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church”*.<sup>48</sup> In course of time the consecrated (episcopal) office

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<sup>46</sup> This appeared from the Conference of Anglican and Old Catholic Bishops in Europe, Portugal, June 1996; cp. *De Oud-Katholiek*, 112, 1996, p. 107. See also resolution 4.6 of the Lambeth Conference 1998; cp. *Church Times*, 21 August 1998, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Moss p.347.

<sup>48</sup> Cp.: *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p. 16-29. Several bilateral and multilateral ecumenical dialogue reports of the 1970s and the 1980s had a strong influence on these texts, namely:

— “Pullach”: *Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations. The report of the Conversations 1970-1972 authorized by the Lambeth Conference and the Lutheran World Federation*, London 1973;

and "apostolic succession" were emphasized more and more, as possible stumbling-blocks in the conclusion of the agreement. Both Anglican and Lutheran churches recognize each other's consecrated ministry, not only as an inner call, but also as Christ's charge through his body, the Church. The parties commit themselves to welcome each other's episcopally ordained ministers to serve as bishop, priest and deacon in each other's churches without re-ordination. The Porvoo Declaration, at the end of the statement, has two points on *episkope* and the episcopal office:

"(v) we acknowledge that personal, collegial and communal oversight (*episkope*) is embodied and exercised in all our churches in a variety of forms, in continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry;

(vi) we acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry."<sup>49</sup>

In summary: "The threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also as a means of achieving it."<sup>50</sup> The threefold ministry may do this, but the Anglican and Lutheran churches apparently do not deem it strictly necessary. The unity can apparently be expressed and the ministry exercised in other ways. These ways, however, are hardly elaborated in the report, in contrast to the way the threefold ministry can function in a church. This represents an unevenness in the report. As I will try to show, the open choice concerning the ordained threefold ministry and especially the episcopal office leaves the report too ambiguous for Old Catholics.

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— "Lima (*BEM*)": *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982;

— "Helsinki": *Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue. The report of the European Commission* Helsinki 1982/London 1983;

— "Cold Ash": *Anglican-Lutheran Relations. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working group*. Cold Ash, Berkshire, England, end 1983 (London/Geneva 1983);

— "Niagara": *Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee, The Niagara Report, Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopate*, Niagara Falls, September 1987 /London 1988.

This last report in particular has thrown new light on old questions of faith and order. Cp. *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p.1 (ff.).

<sup>49</sup> Cp. *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p. 30-31.

<sup>50</sup> Cp. *Together in Mission and Ministry*, p. 20, quoting from *BEM*, §22.

## *The Koinonia-report and its view on the ordained ministry and apostolic succession*

The report *Koinonia auf altkirchlicher Basis*,<sup>51</sup> published in 1989, is a still more extensive document than the Porvoo Common Statement. It represents the fruit of a good 100 years of ecumenical dialogue between Orthodox churches and the Old Catholic churches of the Union of Utrecht and 14 years of work by a committee of theologians. This report too describes in about 70 pages similarities in theology, liturgy and faith<sup>52</sup> and expresses the joint conceptions of the consecrated ministry and the apostolic succession. An important difference, though, is immediately evident from the title of the relevant paragraph:

*“The necessity of apostolic succession.” In this report “apostolic succession is understood as the passing on of the grace of ordained ministry by the lawful laying on of hands, and in a broader sense, as apostolicity: the continuity and genuine preservation of faith handed down by the Apostles, as well as the continuous succession of the bishops from the Apostles onward. (...) The apostolic succession in this broader sense is essential and necessary for the life of the Church.”*<sup>53</sup>

In a recent article, Professor Urs von Arx wrote that the reception of the *Koinonia*-report in the Orthodox churches hangs in the balance because of the Old Catholic churches practising intercommunion with Anglican churches and more recently its tendencies to this with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany.<sup>54</sup> Orthodoxy expects a binding commentary from the Old Catholics on this matter. The problem has been around for some time and the International Old Catholic Theologians Conference proposed in 1988 to the International Bishops Conference of the Union of Utrecht that a commission be set up to resolve the matter. The desire was then stated to maintain the intercommunion with the Anglicans. However the commission has not been constituted so far. So the Old Catholics are still caught between a more liberal but hardly

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<sup>51</sup> Urs von Arx (ed.), *Koinonia auf altkirchlicher Basis. Deutsche Gesamtausgabe der gemeinsamen Texte des orthodox-alkatholischen Dialogs 1975-1987 mit französischer und englischer Übersetzung*, special edition of the *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 79, 1989.

<sup>52</sup> In the report these similarities are classified in seven chapters, under the titles: I Doctrine of God, II Christology; III Ecclesiology; IV Soteriology; V Doctrine of Sacraments; VI Eschatology; VII Ecclesial Communion: Presuppositions and Consequences.

<sup>53</sup> Cp. *Koinonia auf altkirchlicher Basis*, III, 7, p. 74-75; English translation: p. 200-201.

<sup>54</sup> Urs von Arx, “Der orthodox-alkatholische Dialog. Anmerkungen zu einer schwierigen Rezeption”, *IKZ* 87, 1997, p. 184-225; esp. p. 188, 190, 194, ff.



theologically grounded Bonn Agreement on the Anglican side and a theologically better grounded, but stricter Koinonia-report on the Orthodox side.

### *How essential are episcopate and apostolic succession for Old Catholics?*

Having considered the relevant views in these three documents I now can restate my question as follows. How essential and necessary are the episcopate and the apostolic succession for the Old Catholic churches? Are they part of the *bene esse* or the *esse* of faith and Church, and, if so, in what form?

Without claiming to have said the last word on the matter, let me try to summarize the Old Catholic view of *episkope* and apostolic succession. In the 1970s and 1980s, solid groundwork for this was laid by the studies of Swiss theologians like Professor Kurt Stalder<sup>55</sup> and Professor Herwig Aldenhoven<sup>56</sup> and I will rely largely on them.

New Testament and patristic studies by professor Stalder among others indicate that the office of bishop as we know it did not exist in that form in the early Church. *Presbyteroi* (= elders) was the general term for ministers, of whom some had the function of *episkope* (= primary responsibility, oversight, supervision).<sup>57</sup> Thus there can be no

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<sup>55</sup> K. Stalder, "ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΣ", *IKZ* 61, 1971, p. 200-232; K. Stalder, "Apostolische Sukzession und Eucharistie bei Clemens Romanus, Irenäus und Ignatius von Antiochien", *IKZ* 62, 1972, p. 231-244 and 63, 1973, p. 100-128. Both texts also published in his book *Die Wirklichkeit Christi erfahren. Ekklesiologische Untersuchungen und ihre Bedeutung für die Existenz von Kirche heute*, Zürich-Köln, 1984, p. 11-39; 40-76.

<sup>56</sup> H. Aldenhoven, "Das ekklesiologische und kirchenrechtliche Gehalt der Utrechter Union der Altkatholischen Kirchen", *Österreichisches Archiv für Kirchenrecht* 31, 1980, p. 367-400.

<sup>57</sup> Cp. Stalder 1984 (1971), p. 30: "Somit bestätigt sich hier unsere Auffassung neuerdings: 'presbyteroi' meint generell die Amtsträger. Ihre Hauptaufgabe ist das 'episkopos'-Sein. Sie brauchen aber deswegen nicht als 'episkopoi' bezeichnet zu werden, weil 'episkopos' nicht 'Amtsbezeichnung' ist, sondern eine Funktionsangabe." Even as regards Ignatius of Antioch, who in his letters at the end of the first century distinguishes between the functions of 'episkopoi', 'presbyteroi' and 'diakonoi', Stalder demonstrates that the claims as to his representation of the 'monarchical episcopate' are irrelevant and unprovable (pp. 36-39).

Cp. for example also Anne Jensen's well researched book on the positions of women in early Christianity, *Gottes selbstbewusste Töchter. Frauenemanzipation im frühen Christentum?* Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1992. In this profound study she establishes that in the early Church the "clerus" of martyrs (m/f) sometimes was held in greater esteem than the "bishops", while in the prophetic traditions it was disputed whether the authority of prophets was greater than that of other ordained "ministers"; cp. Jensen, p. 428.

question that the early Church knew apostolic succession in the strict sense: a consecration of bishops that by laying on of hands by other consecrated bishops could be traced right back to the apostles and Christ (= the so called "pipeline theory").

Though the New Testament testifies to a diversity of ministries, the Old Catholic churches do view one ministry as essential to the structure of the Church, namely the three-fold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. The Dutch Old Catholic archbishop Andreas Rinkel argued this point in a paper on the ecumenical movement and Old Catholicism in 1953.<sup>58</sup> The Swiss Old Catholic bishop Urs Kury focused in 1966 this one ministry to the "presbyter-episkopos".<sup>59</sup> The charge of the apostles to mission and the unity of the Church are concentrated in this ministry. The necessity of this ministry for the Church cannot be based on the first two centuries of the Church, but only on an understanding of what the Church is. The office of bishop serves the unity of the Church, because the bishop by his person represents the universal Church in the local church (namely his diocese) and vice versa the local church to the other local churches, by which he (or she) too gives form to the universal Church. In a local

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<sup>58</sup> Cp. A. Rinkel, "Interkommunion", *IKZ* 43, 1953, p. 215-216: "Das Amt ist Faktor und Kettenglied in Gottes Tradition, im Weitergeben Gottes, gleich fest und tief, wie die Kirche selbst, wurzelnd in und hervorspriessend aus der Offenbarung und aus dieser, durch die Kirche, seine Wahrheit und Wahrhaftigkeit, seine Autorität und Dauerhaftigkeit, seine Berufung und Aufgabe empfangend. Darum ist das Amt nicht lediglich eine Sache des 'Wohlseins' der Kirche, so dass ihr Werk flott und logisch und ordentlich verläuft, bei dem man aber das Amt schliesslich auch entbehren könnte. Nein, das Amt gehört zum 'Sein' der Kirche, zu ihrem Wesen als Kirche. Ohne Amt ist sie verstümmelt und nicht der vollkommene Leib ihres Herrn, der ihr Haupt ist und der seine Kirche 'mit Herrlichkeit bekleidet' hat, damit sie 'ohne Makel oder Rüge' sein sollte (Eph. 5:27)". Quoted by Aldenhoven, 1980, p. 419-420.

<sup>59</sup> Cp. U. Kury, *Die Alikatholische Kirche, Ihre Geschichte, ihre Lehre, ihr Anliegen*, Stuttgart, 1966, p. 300-301: "(...) Es ist der Herr der Kirche selbst, der in seinem Handeln an der Kirche — immer auf den Grund des Wortes der Apostel — von den freien, geistgewirkten Diensten und Charismen zu den (durch Handauflegung) gebundenen Ämtern fortschreitet. Dieses (...) hat deutlich den Sinn einer Zunehmenden Konzentrierung auf die für den Fortbestand der ganzen Kirche und die Erfüllung ihrer Sendung lebenswichtigen, im Apostolat begründeten Funktionen der umfassenden Wortverkündigung, der Sakramentsspendung und hirtentümlichen Seelsorge. Diese für die Kirche lebenswichtigen Funktionen werden mehr und mehr dem einen Amt übertragen, das mit der Leitung und Verwaltung der Gemeinde betraut ist und das von der Kirche denn auch als Gemeingut Aller autorisiert worden ist: dem Amt der Presbyterepiskopen. (...) Diese Konzentrierung (...) bedeutet aber nicht, daß die freien pneumatischen Dienste und charismatischen Begabungen außer Geltung gesetzt werden - auch wenn sie tatsächlich in der nachapostolischen Kirche bald in den Hintergrund getreten sind (...) Aber sie empfangen in dem einen Amt der Presbyterepiskopen, das durch seine umfassende Funktionen und seine förmliche Einsetzung als einziges in einem unmittelbaren und zugleich 'sichtbaren' Stiftungszusammenhang mit den Aposteln steht, ihre ordnende Mitte." Also quoted by Aldenhoven, 1980, p. 420-421.

church, there is one bishop, because the Church is one and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ.<sup>60</sup>

Alongside the one bishop is a college of presbyters, because the apostolic office is always collegial too. Priests at the head of parishes thus exercise a delegated episcopal function.<sup>61</sup>

Apostolic succession concerns not only the ministry, but also an event in which the whole community of the Church participates. This is another reason why the “pipeline theory” is rejected.<sup>62</sup> The oldest forms of consecration speak of the legitimate choice by the Church. The Church in all its members, bishops, priests and people, must be present to identify the ordinand as the person intended to be ordained as a bishop. And the bishop solemnizes the consecration, not as the bearer of some sort of magical powers, transmitted by the apostles, but by virtue of the will of the Church, which itself has had him (or her) consecrated for this purpose.<sup>63</sup> The bishop is consecrated in a celebration of the eucharist, because here what Jesus celebrated with his disciples is made present by the whole Church conducted by its bishop, in anticipation of Christ’s return.

Such an apostolic office and such an apostolic succession are essential for the Church, are part of its *esse*, because the ultimate decision of the Church for this office around the year 200 was taken in an analogous way and in the same spirit as the decision for the canon of the New Testament.<sup>64</sup> The apostolic succession is part of the preaching of the Gospel, which requires that the testimony of the leaders of the Church is transmitted to their successors.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Cp. Aldenhoven, 1980, p. 421-422, who refers to Küry, 1966, pp. 295 ff.

<sup>61</sup> Küry bases the essential necessity of the episcopate next to the presbyterate on the structure of the Church, which is always both total church and single parish. Cp. Küry, 1966, pp. 295 ff.; pp. 316 ff. Aldenhoven also discusses the problems resulting from this argumentation, because the distinction between diocese and single parish forms no part of the essence of the Church. Cp. Aldenhoven, 1980, p. 421-422.

<sup>62</sup> Cp. Rinkel, 1953, p. 222: “*Man denkt sich ein goldenen Kanal, für den weder im Neuen Testament noch in der alten Kirche eine Autorität zu finden ist und worauf sogar Rom sich nie berufen hat. Die Transmission wird nur eine Sache des Amtes; sie ist nicht mehr an die Kirche gebunden, d.h. an die rechtmässige Berufung und Wahl durch die Kirche. Hier droht der Weg der Magie und der gnostischen Theosophie.*” Quoted also by Aldenhoven, 1980, p. 422.

<sup>63</sup> Cp. Rinkel, 1953, pp. 222 ff.; quoted by Aldenhoven, 1980), p. 422-423.

<sup>64</sup> Cp. Küry, 1966, p. 305; quoted by Aldenhoven, 1980, p.421.

<sup>65</sup> Cp. Stalder, 1984 (1973), p. 53, about Irenaeus’ understanding of “apostolic succession”, viz. the admission of the for the Church fundamental and inevitable necessity of continuity and identity

## *Practical consequences from the Old Catholic view on episcopacy*

Thus since episcopate and apostolic succession are essential for Old Catholics, what practical consequences for the organization of their churches result from this? Because of the great importance attached to the local church, the local people choose their own bishop. Formerly that was the right of the clergy of the cathedral chapter on the basis of medieval law; now it is the responsibility of representatives of clergy and laity.

For the same reason, clergy and laity share responsibility for the administration of the Church and bishops do not speak unilaterally authoritarian, but in dialogue with their church, particularly during its regular synods, with representatives of clergy and laity.

Likewise at an ordination, the ordinand does not receive his office only from the ordaining bishop, but also from the whole local community of the Church, all those who are baptized in the Holy Spirit and thus share responsibility for him or her.

Bishops without a diocese, who are *in partibus infidelium* or even *vagantes*, are naturally out of line with this Old Catholic conception of the office. Bishops cannot live outside their dioceses and visit them only occasionally, as in former centuries. Such a misuse was rightly contested in France in the 17th Century by "Gallican" priests and bishops.

Old Catholic bishops seek the unity of the Church in regular mutual consultations in the International Bishops Conference of the Union of Utrecht. Next to this they keep pursuing further unity through general and provincial councils. In both types of *gremia* they represent their local churches. As a sign of this unity, they take part in the consecration of each other's bishops in each other's dioceses.

Primates and archbishops can coordinate or act as presidents in church provinces and in dialogues between church provinces and in ecumenical dialogues between churches. On these levels too, the preference is for dialogue and a striving for consensus over unilateral authority and certainly over an infallible doctrinal authority speaking *ex cathedra*.

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of the preaching of the Gospel. This understanding indicates how this fundamental requirement and thus this foundation was, is, and only can and should be realized, viz. by the transmission of the apostolic preaching, the apostolic tradition, from each leader in each church to his successor. In this process the continuity of the preaching takes place in the succession of the preacher and the succession of the preacher in the continuity of the preaching and both confirm each other in the accordance of preacher and preaching. Cp. also Aldenhoven, 1980, p. 423.

## *Consequences for a possibly sought intercommunion with the Lutheran churches*

It is clear now that on the basis of Porvoo alone, no complete intercommunion can be reached with Lutheran churches, because the report does not speak clearly enough about the necessity of the episcopal office for the Church.

Perhaps bishops are not necessary in churches that enjoy close relations with a state, in which the head of state can fulfil parts of the role of a bishop. However the Old Testament shows that good, just kings in this world are few and far between. Moreover such an official is not elected by the church and his or her attitude to the Gospel can be a problem. Such a state could also consider itself uncritically as already being God's kingdom here on earth. So separation of church and state seems preferable, with the church also financially as independent as possible.

Perhaps a chosen body of representatives of a local church could exercise *episkope*, mostly for a limited period, but there is another danger. Such representatives could be a sort of anonymous officials without voice or face, without *charisma*. Does not the cause of the one God require the complete dedication of one person, who is adequately trained in theology, who knows himself to be called and responsible, who puts himself under God's leadership, who takes God's affairs to heart, and who is prepared to open his or her mouth for it? This cause is the preaching of the Gospel, not something one puts upon a synodical council or its chairman for a certain period, to be passed on to another when the period terminates. This cause requires day-to-day application, study and devotion, and means an irrevocable reversal in a person's life.

That some Lutheran churches desire no bishop must derive from their origin in the Reformation, when there was a sharp reaction against the many misuses that had discredited the ordained ministry. The Church of Utrecht originated in the 17th and 18th Century, when the Dutch Catholic church was caught between a Spanish Catholic king, whose authority was fought against, a new Protestant government that did not permit its services to be held in public, and a pope, who refused to recognize a bishop it had elected. In that difficult period a bishop turned out to be of vital interest for the survival of the Church. This is clear too in Czechia in the 15th and 16th Century for the history of the Hussites. In both situations, the rights of the local church to elect its own bishop and to combat misuses in its ordained ministry were overruled by a pope. These finally are the historical reasons why for Old Catholics only an episcopate that is chosen by and has jurisdiction in its local church can belong to the *esse* of the Church. I don't exclude that from some of these conditions bridges to "full communion" can still be built between Lutherans and Old Catholics.

## VIII. Epilogue

By Koenraad Ouwens, lecturer

With the signing of the Porvoo Declaration bringing ecclesiastical union between Anglican and some Lutheran churches and with the Bonn Agreement bringing full communion between Old Catholic churches and Anglican churches, a question arises, which Lidwien van Buuren has posed in her paper: Does this mean that the Old Catholic churches can enter into full communion with the Lutherans or that this has already happened, since two parties hold this relationship with a third. Or to put it more simply: are the friends of my friends also my friends? Must they be? And if they are not, can they become so? Has the Anglican Communion with its flexibility and with its ratification of the Porvoo Declaration taken on the function of a bridge church between the *ecclesia catholica*, here represented by the Old Catholics, and the *ecclesia reformata*?

Major issue in this question is that of ministry and church organization. For Old Catholics, these issues are expressed in the threefold ministry, viewed as apostolic, and in the church organization concentric (and not pyramidal) around the bishop. They are closely interrelated and are viewed as belonging to the *esse* of the Church. Whether rightly or not, Old Catholic theologians are in general agreed that the nature of the ministry is essential and is sacramental, and that its nature is anchored in the idea of *episkope*.

In this conviction, the Old Catholics approach the Eastern Orthodox and in some way are closer to them than the Roman Catholics, for whom eucharist and ministry were peripheral until the Second Vatican Council and still tend that way. For Eastern Orthodoxy, an agreement such as Porvoo is unthinkable, since recognition of the ministry of another church and eucharistic community would imply consensus in faith.

The Old Catholics have two agreements: with the Anglicans since 1931 and with the Orthodox churches since 1986, the conclusion of the dialogue at Kavala, though this has yielded no practical results as yet. A question shrouded in mist needs to be answered: Are ministry and church organization matters of faith? Any answer must not cause open doors to close but must not be allowed to detract from the apostolicity of the Church, from the idea that *episkope* and the offices of bishop, priest and deacon belong to the essence of the Church.

There is a need to examine the relationship between *episkope* and *episkopos*. Rightly Lutherans view *episkope* as primary and the form in which *episkopos* exercises supervision of a congregation as varying with time and place. Many instances in history confirm this view. Old Catholic theologians have elaborated the view of the episcopal office as an *episkope* exercised by some *presbyteroi*, though they admit that

this concept cannot be based on the Church of the first two centuries. This conception could serve as a starting point for dialogue between Anglicans, Lutherans and Old Catholics on church ministry. A meeting point with Orthodoxy might be the idea that the episcopal office serves the unity of the Church, since the bishop represents the local church to other churches and represents the universal Church to the local church. This representation ties up with the eucharist as *sacramentum unionis*, in which the bishop celebrates the one Church of the one Lord Jesus, looking forward to his coming again.

Relevant is the title of Kurt Stalder's book on ecclesiology: *Die Wirklichkeit Christi erfahren* ("Experiencing the reality of Christ"). How ever real his presence in the Church, Christ's presence must never be limited to the Church, as though he is nowhere present outside the Church. In this there is always a certain tension, since the Lord is no longer physically present with us, the Kingdom that he proclaimed is not fully realized, even in the Church, and he has not yet come in glory.

In Orthodoxy, this tension is expressed as that between historical reality and eschatological hope empowered by the resurrection of Christ. Liturgy joins the past in the form of tradition and the future in the eschatological form of breaking of bread until he comes, joining them in a today in which the dimension "time" has ceased to exist. The eucharist puts into effect the unity that arises when the participants unite in one faith. The common problem in this approach is hermeneutical, since the content of a certain faith is often confused with the expression of it. The temptation is certainly present here of turning the Christian faith, which can only be expressed in one valid form, into a closed system. The more so by one of the strongest aspects of Orthodox ecclesiology, its iconic nature, which views the organization of the Church as an earthly representation of a heavenly ideal, which in turn reflects the multiplicity and the unity of the Trinity.

By contrast, Anglicans and Lutherans lay emphasis on the incarnation, in which the divine has taken on human apparel. Thus they can fully esteem historical reality and take church reform positively as a logical, necessary and unavoidable fact, which the Church of Rome has been hard to take through the centuries. Christ's presence is here expressed not so much in the liturgy but in the preaching of the word of God, in the commission to the Church to take the good news to the world.

While Old Catholic theology emphasizes ministry as part of faith for historical reasons, Lutheran and Anglican theology allows an open view, which must be explored jointly to decide what belongs to the *esse* and what to the *bene esse* of the Church. The Declaration of Porvoo tends towards viewing *episkope* as belonging to the essence of the Church, though legitimately taking on different forms. Continuing study of the structure of the church's ministry on the Old Catholic side should allow sufficient convergence for a tripartite declaration elaborated on the basis of Porvoo.

## Appendix: United Protestant Church in the Netherlands

By Christopher Rigg, student

Though not considered during the seminar, an old and a new element in the ecclesiastical scene in the Netherlands needs to be considered. The old element is the formation and evolution of the Reformed churches in the country. The new is the advanced stage of movement towards unification between the two main Reformed churches and the Lutheran church, the present stage called *Samen op Weg*,<sup>66</sup> and already past the point of no return towards the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands.<sup>67</sup>

The tumultuous Reformation in the Netherlands was intermixed with the fight for freedom from Spanish rule. Just as civil politics rejected emperors and kings for a republican constitution, so the new Protestant Church<sup>68</sup> rejected all that smacked of hierarchy, especially bishops. All ministers of the church were in essence equal. There was initially considerable independence of provincial churches, with only occasional national synods that gradually unified the official doctrines of the member-churches. The National Synod at Middelburg (1581) established the norm of a fourfold ministry: Minister of the Word, "Doctoren",<sup>69</sup> elders and deacons. It stipulated that Ministers of the Word should be instituted with laying on of hands by "at least two or three" ministers from the same *classis* (district synod). In contrast to the continuity of priesthood at the Reformation in England and more like the situation during the Commonwealth, the old priests had usually been ejected (or worse). For most Dutch Protestants, the "National Church" is viewed as starting in the 1560s. As in England, ancient churches have lists of former ministers with their dates but I have come across only one small village church where the list goes back beyond the Reformation.

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<sup>66</sup> Literally translatable as *together on the road* but representable as *the Uniting Churches in the Netherlands*, analogous to the intention of *the Uniting Church of Australia*, a process that is incomplete and that is open to other partners.

<sup>67</sup> In Dutch, *de Verenigde Protestantse Kerk in Nederland*.

<sup>68</sup> In that period, usually just called *de Nederlandsche Kercken* (*the Netherlands Churches*) that held to *de Ghereformeerde Religie* (*the Reformed Religion*) or *het Ghereformeerde Geloof* (*the Reformed Faith*) but sometimes *de Ghereformeerde Kercken* (*the Reformed Churches*). The English name *Dutch Reformed Church* presumably arose in the 17th Century.

<sup>69</sup> Defined as having the function of expounding the Scriptures and of defending pure doctrine against heresy and error. Whether the ministry meant only university teachers or senior parish ministers is not clear. Acts of Middelburg Synod, §2–13 in *Documenta Reformatoria* 1, Kampen, 1960, p.200–201. Only a threefold ministry has survived.



Curiously the difference in church order seems to have been little hindrance to communication with England. During the return to Roman Catholicism under Queen Mary, many refugees established congregations in the Netherlands and northern Germany, using forms of prayer close to those of the prayer book of 1551, even including a prayer for their sovereign Queen Mary and her consort Philip of Spain. Several English bishops participated in the Synod of Dordt (Dordrecht) in 1618–1619. There they played an active part in condemning the Remonstrant views of Jacobus Arminius and helped to sway the Dutch settlement towards a “high” Calvinist view, in particular on Predestination. In the 17th Century, the English (Reformed) Church of Amsterdam was frequently attended by the Stuarts up to the time of William and Mary. Together with some of the other refugee congregations, it was granted a seat in the Dutch national synods and still has one. Unfortunately with the Restoration, the English-speaking community of Amsterdam became split between Presbyterians, who held power in the church there, and Episcopalians, who eventually established the “Episcopal Church” of Amsterdam, which now a chaplaincy within the Diocese in Europe.

From that time until 1965, there seems to have been no high-level conversations between the Dutch Protestant churches and the Church of England. Despite the more similar church order, even the Church of Scotland had little official communication until the establishment of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

During the 19th Century, Dutch Protestantism suffered similar schisms to those of the Church of Scotland. Major issues in the arguments were the extent of state involvement in church affairs, the effect of the Enlightenment, for instance in Biblical interpretation, and the extent to which the codes of belief from the 16th and 17th Century were still normative for the Church. The two largest churches are the *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* and the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*.<sup>70</sup> Historically they are Calvinistic in creed but since World War II they have taken into their midst some of the movements known longer in other countries, such as modernism, liberalism, evangelicalism, the charismatic movement and the liturgical movement. The United States has had a particular influence because of the movement back and forth of migrants from the Netherlands. Perhaps more recently, proximity and exchanges with England have brought an interest, even a love, of Anglican worship and spirituality.

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<sup>70</sup> Traditionally the former was known in English as *the Dutch Reformed Church* but bears no relationship with the church of the same name in South Africa. In the report of the talks with the Church of England, it is called *the Netherlands Reformed Church*. The Dutch name dates back to its reconstitution after the Napoleonic Period and the intention may indeed then have been *the Netherlands Reconstituted Church*, with a status similar to the Church of Scotland of that time. The latter can be called *the Reformed Church(es) in the Netherlands*, perhaps with the plural to emphasize its more congregational church order.

The third Protestant church negotiating in the final stages of establishment of the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. It has always been a small body alongside the Calvinistic churches and is concentrated in centres dating back to the Hanseatic League. In contrast to the Calvinistic churches, it retained a liturgy that would sound reasonably familiar to Anglicans. However in contrast to its sister churches in Germany and Scandinavia, it has a presbytero-synodal system of church government (§3.2), which undoubtedly simplified early negotiations on *Samen op Weg*. Negotiations broke down with the small Remonstrant (Arminian) Church, which was too permissive and liberal for the traditional wings of the Calvinist churches.

From time to time, voices have been raised in the Reformed churches for a return to a ministerial pattern closer to that of the Early Church, most recently in the book of Brinkman & Houtepen.<sup>71</sup> More viable than taking bishops into their system is the proposal to take on the concept of ἐπισκοπή into their synodo-presbyterial system. Though this might be acceptable to the traditionally more centralized *Hervormde Kerk*, misgivings have been expressed by members of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* about the loss of powers from the congregations to district and national synods in the draft ordinances of the United Protestant Church.<sup>72</sup> Opinions might have been otherwise swayed if the Church of England showed as much interest in its sister churches in the mainland of Europe as it did in 1618.

Representatives of the Netherlands Reformed Church and of the Church of England met at St Augustine's College, Canterbury, in April 1984. This was the first meeting between the two Churches since 1965, when their representatives met in the Netherlands.<sup>73</sup> The lack of any information about the subject of discussions in 1965 and the single-page report on the 1984 meeting suggests the low priority given to these conversations. Relevant to our subject is the following:

The Conference also discussed the Ministry section of the World Council of Churches' report, "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry". The Dutch Reformed Church had been surprised at the emphasis on episcopacy in the report. Both delegations

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<sup>71</sup> §4.3 and fn.23.

<sup>72</sup> *Ontwerp-ordinanties behorende bij de ontwerp-kerkorde van de Verenigde Protestantse Kerk in Nederland*, Zoetermeer, 1997.

<sup>73</sup> §99 of *Anglicans in dialogue: the contribution of theological dialogues to the search for visible unity of the churches in the 1980s*. Board for Mission and Unity, London, 1984. The report on "Conversations between the Church of England and the Netherlands Reformed Church" is on p.41–42 under the wider heading on p.40 of "Informal conversations between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Netherlands Reformed Church".

recognised that changes would be necessary in their existing patterns of ministry if unity were to be achieved.<sup>74</sup>

By contrast, a Church of Scotland response to the Lima report<sup>75</sup> viewed the section on the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon as

*“admirable both in its lucidity and attempt to find a unifying path ... whether this is confined to the local eucharistic community, as in the earliest period in the New Testament (followed in Presbyterian churches) or interpreted in terms of several local communities in the developing catholic tradition.”*

The 1984 report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission<sup>76</sup> follows this same line that ἐπισκοπή in its New Testament sense can be expressed in the modern Church either in a local church with

*“a collegial association for the pastor, and pastoral assistants to carry out the ministry in the world”.*<sup>77</sup>

The point is later elaborated:<sup>78</sup>

*The bishop [in the early Church] was the shepherd and leader of the local community; he presided over the celebration of the Eucharist. He was surrounded by a college of presbyters who with him had the responsibility of teaching, preaching and leadership. He was assisted by deacons who gave special attention to the diaconal witness of the community. ... the bishop's office gradually became a regional one. It is evident that by this shift of responsibilities the balance between personal and collegial dimensions of the exercise of the ordained ministry was destroyed. The question therefore arises for both our communions: how can this balance be restored at all*

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<sup>74</sup> *Anglicans in dialogue*, p.41, §101.

<sup>75</sup> J. Torrance, “The Lima report: a Church of Scotland perspective”, *One in Christ* 20, 1984, p.12-18.

<sup>76</sup> *God's reign & our unity: the report of the Anglican Reformed International Commission 1981-1984*, London/Edinburgh, 1984, especially §91-97: “Patterns of ministry”.

<sup>77</sup> *God's reign*, §91, p.58.

<sup>78</sup> *God's reign*, §93, p.59-60.

*levels of the Church's life? As the churches of our two families try to answer this question, the movement towards unity will become easier.*

This question needs to be addressed by churches in the Netherlands, in particular during the formation of the United Protestant Church.

A further issue for mutual recognition is the way in which ministry has been passed down. If, as in the Anglican-Reformed conversations, *episkope* be accepted as part of the office of a local minister of the word, Reformed ministers can be viewed as validly episcopally ordained if, for instance, the conditions of the 1582 Synod of Middelburg be met (§2). A tale, possibly not apocryphal, by Professor Reid (Church history) of the University of Aberdeen in his evening class of 1964-1965 may illustrate that the apostolic succession should not be taken too seriously in ecumenical conversations:

*At the ordination of a new minister in the west of Scotland, a retired minister at the fringe of the circle of ordaining ministers could not reach to share in the laying on of hands. He raised his walking stick and placed it on the head of the ordinand and invoked the words, "Timmer tae timmer."*

My fellow students have rejected the "pipeline theory". For episcopacy and ministry, the present intention should be the main criterion of validity, not any of our history with all its burst pipes and its untrained plumbers.

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