

THE VIENNA DIALOGUE

Five PRO ORIENTE Consultations
with Oriental Orthodoxy

ON PRIMACY
FIRST STUDY SEMINAR
JUNE 1991

Booklet No. 4
Vienna 1993

Booklet No. 4
Vienna 1993

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ISBN: 3-901 188-04-5

Cover Picture Credits: Syrian Cross Plate, Paris, Louvre; Coptic Embroidery, Vienna, Museum für Angewandte Kunst; Romanesque Cross, Barcelona; Armenian Cross (Khatchkar), Sanahin; Ethiopian Cross, Pro Oriente, Vienna

Cover Layout and Design by Hedwig Bledl
Text Layout by Franz Gschwandtner

Printed by Ferdinand Berger & Söhne Ges.m.b.H., Horn, Austria 1993

Amba Bishoy

Metropolitan of Damiette, Barari and Kafr el Sheikh



Preamble

One of the most important results of the fifth theological consultation between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches in Vienna in 1988 was the creation of the PRO ORIENTE Standing Committee. This body, which since November 1989 meets twice annually, according to the communiqu, of this conference, is designed "to search out the most effective methods to implement these recommendations and encourage the continuation

of this work. Among its activities will be to gather from the churches those issues which they consider necessary for, or of vital importance to the dialogue between our churches and arrange for the proper discussion of these."

With the consent of H.H. Pope Shenouda III I have the privilege of representing the Coptic Orthodox Church. In this way a number of very positive initiatives have been undertaken in the course of eight meetings over the last four years. Thus the idea of holding regional symposia for the popularization of the results of the five Vienna consultations in the countries and languages of the Oriental Orthodox Churches was born: 1991 saw the Middle East Symposium of Deir Amba Bishoy/Wadi Natrun for the Arabic-speaking countries and in October 1993 we shall be in Kerala/India to do the same for Christians there.

Another initiative of this Standing Committee was the idea to organize in-depth studies of specific topics still obstructing the path to complete Christian unity before convening a 6th potential consultation.

The first of these study seminars was dedicated to the subject of "primacy in the different churches" and was held in Vienna from 29th June to 1st July 1991. I am wholeheartedly applauding this effort and pleased that the papers and the minutes of the discussions are now being made available to a wider public of ecumenical experts and others interested in working towards the coming together of Christians all over the world.

Cairo, 1st February 1993

بیشوی
مطارن دمیاط وکفرالشیخ
والبراری

Metropolitan Bishoy

The Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue

PRO ORIENTE Publications in English

- * First Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 1 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1972) 190 p.
- * Second Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 2 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1974) 208 p.
- * Third Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 3 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1976) 240 p.
- * Fourth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 4 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1978) 256 p.
- * Fifth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 5 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1989) 208 p.
- * Selection of the Papers and Minutes of the Four Vienna Consultations between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Edited by Stiftung PRO ORIENTE in Vienna (1988) 286 p.

Foreword by the Editors

In the fourth booklet of the documentations about the dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox and the Roman Catholic theologians we present the texts of the First Vienna Study Seminar of PRO ORIENTE from June 29th - July 1st 1991 "On Primacy". This is a series of documentations designed to spread among a wider public of interested Christians, be they theologians, members of the clergy or laymen, the good news of what has come to be termed the Vienna Dialogue which started with the five "non-official Ecumenical Consultations between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church" held in Vienna in the years 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978 and 1988.

Thanks to fortunate circumstances it was possible to gather together eminent theologians from the Coptic Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Ethiopian Orthodox and Syro-Indian Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church for over a week each time to discuss those problems which had led to the harmful split at the Council of Chalcedon and to consider ways of eliminating the factors dividing the two Church families ever since.

The most successful breakthrough happened at the very first consultation in 1971 which - due to the effective intervention of Amba Shenouda, who only a few weeks later was to become as Shenouda III the successor to St. Mark on the Throne of Alexandria - came up with the so-called "Vienna Christological formula": "We believe that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixtion, without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible."

This formula later came to be officially accepted in the Common Declarations signed by Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II on the one hand and Pope Shenouda III, the Patriarchs Yacoub III and Zakka I Iwas and other Heads of the Oriental Churches on the other hand. Over and above these Common Declarations officially signed by the Heads of the Churches, two bilateral processes of dialogue have emerged from the Vienna Dialogue: the Official Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church since 1973 and the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church of India since 1989.

The complete English texts of the papers and discussions of the Vienna Dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches are published in six volumes. The fifth volume also contains the communiqués of the Theological Dialogue between the Byzantine Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (see Minutes of the Fifth Vienna Consultation, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue Nr. 5 PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1989, pp 171-175).

In order to facilitate the reception of the results of these five rounds of consultations by

The Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue

PRO ORIENTE Booklet Series

* Booklet Number 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1990, 136 p. Available in English and Arabic, planned in Malayalam, Armenian, Amharic and German.

* Booklet Number 2, Summaries of the Papers; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1991, 74 p. Available in English and Arabic; planned in other languages.

* Booklet Number 3, Middle East Regional Symposium, Deir Amba Bishoy, October 1991; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 168 p. Available in English, planned in other languages.

* Booklet Number 4, On Primacy, First Study Seminar, June 1991; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 92 p. Planned in the above mentioned languages.

* Booklet Number 5, On Councils and Conciliarity, Second Study Seminar, June 1992; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993. Planned in the above mentioned languages.

* Booklet Number 6, Kerala Regional Symposium, Kottayam, October 1993; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1994. Planned in the above mentioned languages.

as many of the theologians, clergymen and laypeople of the Churches concerned we felt it necessary to condense the more than 1500 pages of learned thought down to a more readily accessible form.

The publication of this new series of booklets is one of the proposals made on the initiative of the Standing Committee of PRO ORIENTE which was proposed as a clearing house of ideas on this peculiar dialogue. In the Standing Committee of PRO ORIENTE the five Oriental Churches are represented by Their Graces Metropolitan Amba Bishoy of Damiette and Kafr el Sheikh, Secretary General of the Holy Synod; Archbishop Mar Gregorios of Aleppo; Archbishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, Patriarchal Delegate for Central Europe and Sweden; Archbishop Aram Keshishian of Lebanon, Moderator of the Central Committee of the WCC; Archbishop Gharima of Illubabor and The Rev. Dr. George K. M. Kondothra, Vice Principal of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey.

Booklet No.1 presents the official communiqués of the five Vienna Consultations and the texts of the official documents signed between the various Heads of Churches.

Booklet No.2 represents a compilation of the summaries of the papers submitted at the Five Vienna Consultations.

Booklet No.3 contains the results of another proposal of the Standing Committee to spread the achievements of the Vienna dialogue to the opinion leaders of the different churches concerned by organizing regional symposia. The first regional symposium took place from October 26th - 28th 1991 at Deir Amba Bishoi in Wadi Natroun on invitation of H. H. Pope Shenouda III in order to make known the christological consensus reached in Vienna among the Arabic speaking people in the churches of the Near East.

This booklet No.4 is yet the result of another proposal of the Standing Committee to make more profound studies on some of the subjects which have been taken up in the five Vienna Consultations and still need an analysis and further research. So as the topic of the First Study Seminar of PRO ORIENTE on Primacy as theoretically laid down and exercised in practice in different churches. It took place in Vienna from June 29th - July 1st 1991. After reviewing all the statements on primacy of the five Vienna Consultations two theologians, Father J.M.R. Tillard OP and Archbishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, systematically treated the issue in the discussions. The representatives of the different churches presented graphical descriptions of how authority functions in their churches. Then the agreement reached and the open points of discussion were stated in the final papers. This booklet is completed by the important statement of professor Ratzinger, now prefect of the Holy Congregation for the Faith, and by a selected list of literature.

By way of conclusion we would like to express our thanks to the Standing Committee of PRO ORIENTE in which initiative and ideas paved the way to this series of publications. Also to His Grace Amba Bishoy we are most grateful for having had the kindness to write the preamble.

The Phenomenon of Primacy in the Christian Churches along the Way to Ecumenical Understanding in Ecclesiology Considering the Scholarly Achievement of this Publication

Any observer of the last 30 years of theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is faced with two issues and problems dominating the discussion:

Christology and ecclesiology.

In Christology the conviction of a far-reaching consensus of faith in the mystery of the incarnate Son of God is beginning to gain common acceptance, even though the terminologies used to explain this mystery are traditionally different and likely to remain so. In ecclesiology, however, a lot more discussion is needed. Before long we shall probably end up discovering that there need not be a consensus in this point and that, on the contrary, the existence and continuation of peculiar church structures and accordingly different ecclesiologies is no contradiction to the unity of the Church in the variety of independent local churches.

Ecclesiology is the theological exploration of the Christian Church. Now, in one respect, the Christian Church - the Church of Jesus Christ to be more precise - is an important matter of faith. On the other hand though, it is also a historical and empirical reality. Consequently, ecclesiology must draw a fine line between these two realities both being referred to as "church", without separating them. Quite a few ecclesiological misunderstandings are a result of this distinction not being made, which is in turn bound to lead to the separation of the churches.

All the divided churches accept the commonly received and practised creed of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbolum, thereby confessing their common faith in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church - (credo) et in unam sanctam, catholicam, et apostolicam ecclesiam. And yet, all these churches confessing the same faith in the Church of Jesus Christ are at the same time fully independent, with in some respects considerable structural differences. Moreover, they have different ways of theologically studying and describing their own churches and the one Church of Jesus Christ. This means that we find different ecclesiologies which quite often seem to contradict one another. However, it must not be overlooked that even these different church structures have quite a number of fundamental things in common, such as for example the three-rank ministry conferred by prayer and laying on of hands - deacon, presbyter, bishop - for leading the congregations and the principle of collegiality for this ministry. In addition, there also is the phenomenon of the individual bearer of responsibility chosen from among the collegial episcopate of a large ethnical or socio-cultural entity, who as a rule is called primate. It must, however, be born in mind that the primate does not have any other sacramental ordination than the rest of the bishops, although his authority as a rule places him face to face with them, as for instance in the convocation and chairing of synods.

First of all this documentation of the theological work of PRO ORIENTE is an editorial summary of all the dialogue activities between Catholic and Oriental Orthodox theologians dealing with the phenomenon of primacy in the churches as it has just been briefly outlined:

In the course of the five unofficial consultations, the so-called Vienna conversations - a number of papers were read on the subject and there are references in the reports and communiqués. - An entire study seminar of the Standing Committee centered around this topic. The intention was to make a comparison of the different concrete forms and explanations of primacy in the individual churches. For this purpose so-called organigrammes of the individual church structures proved quite useful.

Making material available which can and must be considered in future work is one of the reasons for the high scholarly value of this documentary compilation. But what is more is in fact that it clearly points out certain aspects which have so far been largely overlooked. After all it is not only the Church of Rome which boasts a primacy the ecumenically controversial primacy of the Pope of Rome; but almost every independent local church, in Orthodox terminology: every autocephalous church knows a comparable or similar primacy which is in a certain way a representation of the college of bishops and yet a distinct counterpart.

Regarding the Roman primacy we must then go on asking in how far we are dealing with the (Western) Roman form of this phenomenon of primacy and/or in how far there is a claim to a more far-reaching primacy over the Church as a whole and how this claim is justified.

Although there have been quite a few recent publications on the question of the Petrine office in the Roman Church - among them some reports of ecumenical congresses - studies examining the primatial structure of many local churches are rare, except for the excellent new works of Gisbert Greshake.

It is becoming apparent - and this is of major importance for the ongoing ecumenical dialogue - that it is not the primacy of the bishop of Rome within the framework of the Latin Church which presents a serious ecclesiological obstacle, for analogous primacies do exist in most of the local churches as well. The problem rather lies in Rome's claim to a jurisdictional primacy of divine right not only for the Latin church but also for the entire Church of Jesus Christ. This problem is further accentuated by the way in which the primacy of the Roman Pope is exercised by the Roman curia as a primatial body (appointment of bishops without consulting the local churches, disciplinary judgement of theologians who are raising critical voices, leading the Oriental churches in the same way as the Latin churches, etc.) without distinguishing or making known whether it is exercising primatial jurisdiction for the Latin Roman Church or for the Church as a whole. In linguistic usage of the curia as well as in most of the documents of the 2nd Vatican Council (1962-65) however, the term "universal church" (Latin: *ecclesia universalis*) is almost exclusively used for the Catholic Church, that is to say for those local churches who are under the jurisdiction of the Pope and recognize it as such.

The Roman Pope is not being denied to enjoy primatial jurisdiction within the Roman Catholic Church in his capacity as the Patriarch of Rome. However, and justifiably so, the question as to today's function and role of the special Petrine service of the Pope of Rome for the one Church of Christ must be asked, all the more so as no really ecumenical council has ever dealt with this question. After all there is today widespread consensus that the 1st Vatican Council (1870/71) was a council of the Roman Catholic Church and not a council like the seven Ecumenical Councils of the 1st millennium.

Methodically, that is to say in terms of plausible theological reasoning it has not

proved useful to start the discussion of primacy before dealing with the principles of collegiality and conciliarity in the church - both in the universal church and the individual local churches - for it is from the principle of collegiality that an important basis for a representative primacy can be derived. But the ecumenical importance of the whole issue of primacy is such that the discussion cannot be started early enough and carefully enough.

Obviously, at the present moment no "solution" can as yet be submitted, but it is possible to give an informative insight into the most recent state of the discussion in order to carry it forward on as broad a basis as possible.

The material presented in this volume largely consists of contributions to the dialogue, other impulses and preliminary results. It represents an interim report about the study project of "Comparative Christology and Ecclesiology of the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches" financed by the Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung in Österreich (FWF, Fund for the Promotion of Scientific and Academic Research in Austria) and carried out by the foundation PRO ORIENTE together with the author of this article. Our due thanks go to the FWF for its interest and generous support.

List of the Papers on Primacy of the Five Vienna Consultations

Franciscus Cardinal Koenig, Vienna: Roman Primacy as a Historical Development ("Wort und Wahrheit" Supplementary Issue = WW No. 5, p. 136)

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, New Delhi: Roman Primacy as a Historical Development (WW No. 5, p. 126)

Bishop Amba Gregorius, Cairo: The Ecumenical Council and the Ministry of Peter (WW No. 2, p. 130)

Prof. Wilhelm de Vries, Rome: Ecumenical Councils and the Ministry of Peter (WW No. 2, p. 146)

Prof. Wilhelm de Vries, Rome: Changes in Rome's Exercise of its Primacy as Exercised by the Ancient Oriental Patriarchs (WW No. 4, p. 68)

Bishop Mesrob Krikorian, Vienna: The Development of Primacy of the Head of the Armenian Church (WW No. 4, p. 82)

Dom Emmanuel Lanne, Chevetogne: The Connection between the Post-tridentine Concept of Primacy and the emerging of the Uniate Churches (WW No. 4, p. 99)

Prof. Hermann Pottmeyer, Bochum: The Historical Background of the First Vatican Council (WW No. 4, p. 110)

Prof. Dr. V.C. Samuel, Addis Ababa: The First Vatican Council Reviewed by Oriental Orthodoxy (WW No. 4, p. 117)

Archbishop Aram Keshishian, Beirut: The First Vatican Council Reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches (WW No. 4, p. 124)

Prof. Gisbert Greshake, Tübingen: The bearings of the Decisions of the First Vatican Council on Papal Primacy (WW No. 4, p. 136)

Bishop Amba Gregorius, Cairo: The Tensions between Theoretical Statement on the Primacy and the Effective Exercise of the Primacy in the Ecclesiastical Life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (WW No. 4, p. 154)

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, New Delhi: The Development of a Preeminence of Some Churches over Others and the Reason for This (WW No. 4 p. 15)

Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, New York: Problems and Exercise of Primacy in the Armenian Church (WW No. 4, p. 165)

Prof. Paul Werner Scheele, Paderborn: The Tensions between Theoretical Statements on Primacy and the Effective Exercise of the Primacy in the Ecclesiastical Life of the Roman Catholic Church (WW No. 4, p. 191)

Primacy-related Extracts from the Five Communiqués

*The Second Vienna Consultation:*¹⁾

"As regards the relation between the ministry of St. Peter and the Ecumenical Councils, as the Roman Catholics understand it, we have not reached a consensus on it though the principle of collegiality emphasized by the Second Vatican Council is appreciated as a move in the right direction according to which the role of the bishop of Rome is seen within the Council and not above it."

*The Third Vienna Consultation:*²⁾

"We recognize the need of structures of coordination between the autocephalous churches for the settlement of disputes and for facing together the problems and tasks confronting our churches in the modern world. (...) PRO ORIENTE, to which we owe so much, should be requested to take the necessary steps to prepare a fourth unofficial consultation in Vienna in the nearest possible future which will focus mainly on Papal primacy and jurisdiction - theoretical considerations and practical implications."

*The Fourth Vienna Consultation:*³⁾

"5. There was general agreement that in all our Churches three elements were integrally related to each other: primacy, conciliarity and the consensus of the believing community, though their relative importance has been differently understood in different situations.

6. While in the Roman Catholic Church, primacy of the Bishop of Rome is regarded as of universal scope, the Oriental Orthodox Churches historically practised regional primacy; but these have exercised and continue to exercise primatial jurisdiction also over a national diaspora widespread in many continents of the world.

7. In the view of the Oriental Orthodox Churches primacy is of historical ecclesiological origin, in some cases confirmed by ecumenical councils. In the view of the Roman Catholic Church, the historical development of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome has its roots in the divine plan for the Church. In both cases conviction about the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit was the basis for these views and yet provides the common ground for coming to mutual agreement in the future and for a common understanding of the Scriptural witness.

8. In the Roman Catholic Church there is a specific tradition concerning the basis and scope of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, which has received conciliar exposition and sanction. These formulations, especially those of the First and Second Vatican Councils, are to be understood in the context of their historical, sociological and political conditions and also in the light of the historical evolution of the whole

1) Booklet No. 1, p. 59 (Second Vienna Consultation 1973)

2) Booklet No. 1, p. 71f. (Third Vienna Consultation 1976)

3) Booklet No. 1, p. 86f. (Fourth Vienna Consultation 1978)

teaching of the Roman Church, a process which is still continuing. The Oriental Orthodox Churches have not felt it necessary to formulate verbally and declare their understanding of primacy though it is clearly implied in the continuing life and teaching of their Churches. However, in the light of the newly emerging global perspectives and pluralistic tendencies in the world community, all of our Churches have to undertake afresh a common theological reflection on primacy with a new vision of our future unity. In this respect the discrepancy between theory and practice in all Churches was commonly recognized. Efforts should be made to overcome misunderstandings in this regard and to arrive at common conceptions.

9. There was agreement that infallibility or, as the Oriental Orthodox Churches prefer to say, dependable teaching authority, pertains to the Church as a whole, as the Body of Christ and abode of the Holy Spirit. There was no complete agreement as to the relative importance of the different organs in the Church through which this inerrant teaching authority is to find expression."

*The Fifth Vienna Consultation:*⁴⁾

"On the Question of primacy, it was recognized that each Church has its own form of primacy. The responsibility of a Primate, be he Patriarch, Catholicos or Pope, is not understood in the same way in the different churches though all recognize that primacy is related to the conciliar life of the church.

In the Oriental Orthodox Churches, primacy is exercised within each church and not by one church over others. However, when primates meet in an ecclesial context, there is an agreed protocol of rank attributed to them. According to the Roman Catholic understanding, by virtue of his primacy within the communion of churches, the Bishop of Rome exercises a unique service ordered to maintain the unity of the churches.

It is clear, then, that here must be further reflection on the question of primacy, what it means, how it is to be exercised within a church, as well as among the many churches. To aid this reflection, it is proposed that there be discussions which will include the following questions:

1. authority in the Church as having its roots in the sacramentality of the Church;
2. personal and synodical authority in the Church beyond the level of the local bishop considered from the liturgical, canonical and pastoral tradition of each of the churches;
3. conciliarity as an expression of communion of churches in the light of the two previous subjects. With regard to an ecclesiological basis for the unity of the Church, the Consultation saw the need both for autonomy and decentralization of authority on the one hand, and for some central coordination on the other. The concrete theological and practical principles for working this out were not fully agreed upon but it is hoped that the studies mentioned above will make a significant contribution to further agreement on this matter."

4) Booklet No. 1, p. 102f. (Fifth Vienna Consultation 1988)

Primacy-related Extracts from the Summaries of the Five Vienna Consultations

*Alois Grillmeier SJ, 2nd Vienna Consultation:*⁵⁾

Another topic for a whole meeting in its own right was that of "The Ecumenical Council and the Ministry of Peter". This subject was treated by Amba Gregorios (Kairo) and W. de Vries (Rome). These papers and the discussions which followed revealed the amount of patience that was still needed for this kind of intercommunication. The Alexandrian representatives vigorously denied any special role of Peter in the New Testament or of the Roman Bishop at a council. Johannes B. Bauer however, pointed out in the discussion that it did make sense to show that those indications which we find in the New Testament were being carried on at the beginning of the second century. When dissident Judeo-Christians wanted to put the Lord's brother Jacob in Peter's place, they coined a saying of the Lord such as Logion 12 of the Gospel according to Thomas: "The disciples said to Jesus: 'We know that you will go away from us; who will be the greatest over us?' Jesus told them: 'From the place to which you have come, you will go to Jacob the Just, for his sake Heaven and Earth have been created!'" (ed. J. Leipolt, TU 101, 28). The Hebrew Gospel, which originated in the same circles, proves Jacob's claim to primacy by characterizing him, contrary to the historical facts, as a participant in Jesus' Last Supper and as the first witness and thus as the most important witness of the resurrection. (Ph. Vilehauer in: Hennecke-Schneemelcher, Ntl. Apokr. I (1968) 105 text loc. cit. 108.) If the "first appearance" of the Resurrected, in 1, Cor 15,5 decidedly attributed to Peter, is being implicitly denied to him and explicitly attributed to Jacob instead, this can only be bound up with the fact that, at that time already, Petrine preeminence was being vindicated with this passage. Another proof of Peter's authority as early as at the end of the first century is the flood of pseudo-epigraphic writings in his name, starting with the so-called First Letter of Peter. This letter was apparently written under Domitian and addressed to a large number of communities in Asia Minor, which had largely been evangelized by Paul, whose name, however, is not mentioned. The real author of this letter obviously pretended to be Peter, because, by using his name, he could claim to have a right to write even to those communities which he had not founded himself. The same is true of the Second Letter of Peter (I am grateful to Johannes B. Bauer for letting me have this summary of his contribution to the discussion). Moreover, one might just refer to the relations of St Cyril of Alexandria to Rome and his collaboration with the Roman Bishop in the case of Nestorius. At this point the "larger problem" of ecumenical dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches became evident which was also expressed in Paul Verghese's words: "The Oriental Orthodox Churches do not feel as split twigs, but as the original stem from which the Chalcedonian Church has departed."

5) "Wort und Wahrheit". Supplementary Issue No. 2. Vienna 1973. p.22-23

PRIMACY AS AN ECUMENICAL PROBLEM

The main topic of the fourth non-official Vienna Consultation between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church held between 11-17 September 1978 was the nature and scope of primacy in the exercise of church authority. Hence, it was not only universal primacy in the Roman Catholic Church that was discussed but also primacy as practised by the patriarchs in the individual Oriental Orthodox Churches, i. e. those churches who rejected the Council of Chalcedon 451: the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian and Syro-Indian (Malankara) Churches. Finally an attempt is made to draw a conclusion from the agreements and differences in the papers themselves and the discussion as far as it is available to me. Thus the papers not summed up are also taken into account to a certain extent. The non-Catholic papers on universal Roman primacy do in fact say quite a few things on the other primacies as well.

The two papers by Prof. H. J. Pottmeyer and Prof. G. Greshake on the First Vatican Council showed the basic conception of primacy as advocated by many Catholic theologians nowadays. And it were these two papers that were appreciated by the non-Catholic side in quite a few aspects.

Prof. Dr Herrmann Pottmeyer, Full Professor of Fundamental Theology at the University of Bochum: "From a primacy of jurisdiction to a jurisdictional primacy. The background to Vatican I" (4th Cons., p. 110-117).

Vatican I was shaped by the situation characterizing Europe in the 19th century and the result of a typically Roman theology. The Council replaced primacy of faith with primacy of law, the community of the Pope and the college of bishops with jurisdictional primacy.

For a hermeneutic evaluation of this council it is essential to note that while conciliar decisions may be determined by a particular intention and theology, this historical and theological framework of reference itself is not subject to definition.

Subsequent interpretations of the Council were one-sided because these things were not sufficiently taken into account. Much of what was later attributed to the Council had never been defined by it and much of what it did not say explicitly should not be rejected for this reason.

The qualities given to Roman primacy by Vatican I were conditioned by the historical background and had pragmatic motives. Behind the definition were fears of the Church being threatened by the mood of the time. The French Revolution, anti-clerical liberalism, socialism and communism along with national church tendencies had given rise to this fear. The response was an exaggeration of the ideas of sovereignty and anti-revolutionary restoration. This mentality explains why the majority of the Council

⁶⁾ Booklet No. 2. Summaries of the Papers. Vienna 1991, pp. 33-49

Fathers refused to introduce any objective criteria for the exercise of papal jurisdictional primacy and the ministry of teaching.

As we know from more recent studies, the rationale furnished by the Council for its definition derived from the Scriptures and Tradition was not satisfactory. Evidence from the Scriptures and Tradition cannot be narrowed down to the interpretation given to them by Vatican I. While the Council did not deny the theological legitimacy of a broader and more original Tradition it did not allow for it.

The Council wanted to serve the unity of faith and the *communio*. Should a different order and a different practice of authority, not less legitimate in their foundation on the Scriptures and Tradition, prove to be more effective to serve the unity of faith and the community of the Church against a changed historical background, its very faithfulness to Vatican I would oblige the Church to abandon the church order demanded and backed by this Council.

Prof Dr Gisbert Greshake, Full Professor at the Institute for Dogmatic Theology and History of Doctrine at the Faculty for Catholic Theology, University of Vienna: "The bearings of the decisions of the First Vatican Council" (4th Cons., p.136-154).

Every conciliar decision is a response to a challenge posed by a particular historical situation and must therefore be seen in relation to it. There is the danger of neglecting other dimensions. The pronouncement of a council must rest within the overall context of faith. Otherwise the actual meaning of a religious truth would not become clear.

Conciliar pronouncements are couched in the terminology and thinking of their time. Formulae and ideas thus conceived are themselves not subject to definition.

The dogma cannot contain any conception fundamentally different from what has always been believed in the Church.

Every conciliar decision reveals its true portent only in the course of its history of reception following the council, which will reject any imbalance. This does not mean that it is only by their reception that conciliar decisions become binding.

It is a misunderstanding to believe, like Hans Kueng for instance, that the Pope can do anything he wants. It is true that the majority of the Council did not want to see any legal stipulations restricting the full authority of the Pope, especially as far as infallibility is concerned. On the other hand though, it accepted in principle the minority's objection against an absolute and personal infallibility of the Pope unrelated to the Church as a whole.

Papal infallibility is confined by revealed faith and inseparable from the infallibility of the Church. The Pope is not the source of church infallibility. He must be in consensus with the church as a whole. Only a retroactive or anticipative consent as a juridical condition of validity of the papal decision was excluded by the famous "*non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*" (but not out of the consent of the Church).

The full jurisdictional authority of the Pope is confined by the existence of an episcopate of divine right. "The bishops are not officials of the Pope but possess full authority by virtue of divine right. The Pope is tied to the community of the Church as a whole. In order to avoid one-sided emphases of that Vatican Council the Catholic understanding of the dogma must be placed in the wider perspective of the Scriptures and Tradition in general.

The speaker then went on to give a detailed explanation of the misleading formulation: "ordinaria. immediata potestas, quae vere episcopalis est" (ordinary, immediate authority, which is really episcopal). The principal shortcoming of Vatican I is the fact that its entire way of thinking and expression does not primarily look for orientation to the biblical authority of the shepherd but rather to the "wordly" model of the "suprema auctoritas" (supreme authority). An additional misunderstanding is due to the fact that today's effective exercise of the papal ministry is not only a manifestation of Petrine office but also an expression of a variety of other functions such as that of the bishop of Rome, the metropolitan of the bishoprics surrounding Rome, the primate of Italy and the patriarch of the West. The ministry of the successor to Peter as such ought to be dissociated again from all the rest. Then it would become clear that the recognition of this ministry does not amount to an incorporation into a centralized administrative machinery but must be seen as an enrollment into the unity of faith and the communio, the highest guarantor of which is the successor to Peter. The Pope is not a universal bishop with the whole world as his diocese. In this connection the speaker quoted Ratzinger "Unification with the Eastern Churches need not change anything at all in their concrete forms of life" (Das neue Volk Gottes, Düsseldorf 1970, p. 142).

In the event of unity of the churches at some point in future the councils of the churches hitherto not united would have to be subjected to mutual reception. While the decisions taken in the second millennium by a Church essentially restricted to the Latin West are infallible and irrevocable, the fact that they were taken in the absence of a considerable part of the episcopate permit later amendments which would have been unnecessary had there been an ecumenical council in the sense of the first millennium. This is why the process of reception is likely to entail amendments and modifications leading to an integration of the decisions into the faith of the Church as a whole. - These two Catholic papers dealing with primacy as defined by the First Vatican Council were followed by two non-Catholic ones dedicated to the Oriental Orthodox view of this Vatican Council. The speakers were Prof. V. C. Samuel, a representative of the Syro-Indian Church and Vardapet Keshishian from the Armenian Church. Both obviously had not had a chance to read the Catholic papers before drawing up their own. In this way the polemic was partly directed against opinions not held by their Catholic counterparts present at the consultation.

Besides discussing the topic proper, both non-Catholic papers also spoke about the authority of the patriarchs in the Oriental Orthodox Churches and about hierarchy as such.

Prof. Dr. V. C. Samuel, Bangalore, former Dean of the Holy Trinity Theological High School in Addis Ababa: "The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches" (4th Cons., p. 117-124).

The Oriental Orthodox have never come up with any official comment on this council; but an assessment in the light of their history is well possible. The speaker then started by outlining the Council's development and contents of its decrees. Talking about Tradition as an argument he pointed out that it would be unhistorical to maintain that the bishops of the entire planet had invariably turned to Rome whenever faith was threatened.

The speaker attributed the disapproving attitude towards the First Vatican Council on part of the Oriental Orthodox to their rejection of the Council of Chalcedon. It was through this attitude already that they came to oppose papal claims as well as conciliar authority, if this went beyond its proper limits. In Chalcedon it actually went beyond its proper limits by deviating from the truth. According to the speaker neither an individual hierarch nor the hierarchy sitting in council are entitled to pass a judgment on this issue, only the Church as a whole itself. In matters of teaching the monks, the lower clergy as well as the laity have a major say. It is therefore not possible for a patriarch to take a decision alone or together with the bishops. The Church in its entirety takes precedence. The hierarchy directs services and administers the sacraments. This is their only function. The language and intellectual world of Vatican I are totally alien to the Oriental Orthodox Churches. They have no room for a centralized church structure covering the whole world. Neither the role conferred on Peter nor the service the Apostles were entrusted with can find their expression in institutional patterns. It is the totality of the Church alone that matters. Vatican I has only widened the existing gap. In the Oriental Orthodox' view the Church does not need a unity defined in legal terms.

The Oriental Orthodox have yet to discover their true nature in order to be able to make a genuine contribution to the issues raised here.

It ought to be mentioned straight away that this radical statement on hierarchical authority in the church by an Oriental Orthodox representative was by no means shared by all theologians of this church present.

Vardapet Aram Keshishian, Antelias (Lebanon/New York), General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, member of the Commission for Faith and Church Constitution of the World Council of Churches: "The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches" (4th Cons. 124-134).

This paper consists of three parts:

1. Why was primacy defined at this particular point in time?
2. Criticism of the definition.
3. Some reflections for the future.

1. The definition was a triumphalistic reaction to the anti-clerical liberal mood of the time designed to offset waning papal power in the world with increased authority within the Church.

2. The language of "Pastor Aeternus" is at variance with that of the New Testament. While Peter to a certain extent does have a distinguished position in the New Testament he was not vested with any lasting authority that could be conferred on to successors. The bishops are not the successors to individual Apostles but to the college of Apostles. No patriarch is the successor to one Apostle nor to the disciple of one Apostle. Although the See of Alexandria is the See of St. Mark the Coptic patriarch is not St. Mark's successor.

Roman primacy developed on account of the political position of the city of Rome. The original pre-eminence of honour gradually turned into a primacy of jurisdiction. But this must not be understood as power over the Church. Any administrative centralism is inadmissible.

Infallibility is devoid of any foundation in the New Testament and can in no way be deduced from Tradition, at least as far as the first millennium goes. Vatican I does not provide any jurisdictional safeguards against possible abuse of infallibility. Hence, the consensus ecclesiae is of no avail. This is unacceptable to the Oriental Orthodox. According to their teaching even a council is not infallible in itself. It is only the Church in its entirety that possesses infallibility, a council only in so far as it is the mouthpiece of the Church.

The speaker then goes on to discuss the question of how papal jurisdiction relates to primacy. He gives a correct explanation of the "ordinaria potestas" (ordinary authority). Even if the Pope cannot simply abolish the episcopate, his power over it is completely unlimited. The universal Church is simply the sum-total of the local churches. The full authority of the Pope as defined by the Council is incompatible with the authority of the local bishops.

3. The Catholic model of church organization cannot be traced back to historical or theological foundations. According to the eucharistic ecclesiology of the Oriental Orthodox the local bishop has his authority by virtue of the community. The idea of a world-wide primacy must be rejected. The position of the catholicos or the patriarch is only that of a primus inter pares, that of the bishop of the first see. He has no jurisdiction over the college of bishops.

Contemporary Catholic theology ought to see as its main task to re-think Roman primacy and to determine its limits in a clear-cut way. Primacy can only be conceived as a primacy of service and not as one of authority. It is a factor within the Church and does not stand above it. All bishops have equal jurisdiction. There is no power above that of the bishops.

The Catholic Church ought to return to conciliar authority.

The ecumenically decisive question is whether the acceptance of papal power and his infallibility are an absolutely essential precondition for unity with the Roman Catholic Church. This claim is still being made and should be subjected to a critical review by Catholic theologians. There is the need to develop an ecumenical theology of the local churches. Vatican I represents a small step forward down the road to a rapprochement of the churches.

Prof. P. Dr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ: Professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, scientific advisor to PRO ORIENTE: "Changes in Rome's exercise of its primary between the 5th and 19th centuries and primacy as exercised by the Ancient Oriental patriarchs" (4th Cons., p. 68-82).

In terms of subject matter this paper occupies a central position between the two main topics of this consultation: Rome's primacy and the primacy of the patriarchs, hence leading on to the second topic.

The Catholic papers dealing with Vatican I sought to come up with a new interpretation of primacy by reviewing the understanding of this Council. This paper takes a different line: looking at the changes undergone by papacy in the course of history it seeks to prove that some claims were made at certain points in time only and abandoned later on and that bounds on full papal authority which had been respected

for a long time were broken down as time went on. Hence, it must be asked to what an extent papacy in its present concrete form is still based on divine law. In the discussion which followed this possibility to get closer to a solution of the problem was hardly seized upon at all.

The scope of the second part of the paper permitted only a few references to findings by more recent publications and editions of sources on the subject which are of potential use for a settlement of the problem. It was impossible to give an exhaustive and fully satisfactory presentation, one of the reasons being the fact that there are differing opinions on patriarchal authority among the Oriental Orthodox themselves. Each has its own traditional ideas about the ministry of the patriarch. What is needed in order to achieve a balanced judgement is a thorough and factual evaluation of the existing sources, critical also of one's own tradition. There is still a lot to be done in this respect. This part of the paper prompted a lively discussion.

Bishop Amba Gregorius, Cairo, Bishop of Cairo for Higher Studies, Coptic Culture and Academic Research, honorary member of PRO ORIENTE: "The tensions between theoretical statements on the primacy and the effective exercise of the primacy in the ecclesiastical life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches" (4th Cons., p. 154-165).

This paper too stands roughly in between the two main topics of the consultation. It represents a thorough and critical exploration of the basis in the New Testament of a potential primacy of St. Peter as well as of Roman primacy tradition in the first centuries and goes on to consider primacy as exercised primarily by the Alexandrian patriarch, the special position of whom the speaker attributed to the single fact of the political importance of the city of Alexandria.

He decidedly rejects the Catholic doctrine of a universal primacy of the bishop of Rome based on the latter's succession to Peter. The Scriptures do not know any pre-eminence of St. Peter. Christ conferred the same full authority on all Apostles. There is not the slightest hint of Peter having a special position. Referring to the Fathers, the classical text quoted by the Catholic side in support of such a special position receive a different interpretation. The Acts of the Apostles do not attribute a leading role to Peter. The clash with Paul, reported in Gal 2: 2-14, proves that Peter did not have any position of pre-eminence.

The history of the first Christian centuries does not point to any pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome. The speaker goes through the individual facts usually put forward by Catholic apologists in support of their thesis and denies their conclusiveness. In the first centuries the bishops were all equal in rank.

Firmilian of Caesarea's polemic against Stephan of Rome in the controversy over the baptism of heretics, however, shows that Rome at the time did make certain claims to leadership. The primates of the Oriental Orthodox Churches on the other hand, unlike the bishop of Rome, never claimed authority for themselves within the Church as a whole. And it was for political reasons that Rome finally exaggerated its demands ad infinitum.

As far as the Church of Alexandria and the other Oriental Churches go, the bishop of

the respective capital city gradually came to be recognized as archbishop or first leading bishop of the region. Thus he was only "first among equals". However, the powers attributed by the speaker to the archbishop of Alexandria - entirely in accordance with tradition - actually exceed this modest qualification. The archbishop of the capital is "Father of Fathers, Pastor of Pastors, the chief of our chief priests . . . the successor of St. Mark . . . judge of the oikoumene, the thirteenth of the Apostles of Christ" (4th Cons., p. 163). Since the speaker squarely rejects any primacy of St. Peter, the succession to Mark cannot possibly be of particular significance. Hence, he explains the mounting influence of the bishop of Alexandria exclusively by the city's political importance. The speaker's conclusion: All bishops are of equal dignity. The Primate among his bishops enjoys a primacy of honour according to the grandeur of his city and its historical importance. The primate, whether called bishop, archbishop, pope, patriarch or catholicos, is also on the same footing of honour among all primates in the whole Christendom" (4th Cons., p. 164).

In the event of the emergence of difficulties concerning the Church as a whole, jurisdiction falls invariably to the ecumenical council whose chairman is to be elected "from among the ranks of the primates equal in honour, as brother in Christ" (op. cit. as above).

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, New Delhi, Metropolitan of Delhi, Secretary of the Synodal Commission for Inter-Church Relations of the Syro-Indian Church, honorary member of PRO ORIENTE: "The development of a pre-eminence of some Churches over others and the reasons for this" (4th Cons., p. 15-22).

The metropolitan provided a historical survey up to the time of Justinian, including Rome and with special attention to the sees of the Eastern patriarchs. His key statement maintains that the pre-eminence of individual bishops over others has nothing to do with a possible apostolic origin of the sees and is entirely due to political factors. He describes the emergence of the primatial sees, the quality of their authority and their mutual relations.

1. Church structure

The Apostles set up colleges of presbyters with one member, the episcopos, taking the chair. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this pattern of church structure was adopted almost everywhere. The idea of an overall supremacy over a "universal Church" did not occur to anybody.

The local church fully embodied the Catholic Church. Within a short period of time local churches sprang up even outside the Empire, i. e. in Persia, Georgia, Armenia, Nubia, India and Ethiopia.

2. Did any of the Apostles or bishops have universal authority?

It is extremely doubtful whether the Apostles themselves at any time exercised supremacy over the Church as a whole. The last surviving Apostle, John, did not exercise any such authority.

Later on, Eusebius tried to draw up lists of bishops down to one of the Apostles for

certain pre-eminent episcopal sees. But he does not attribute universal jurisdiction to any one of the bishops.

Doctrinal disputes were settled through consultations among the bishops. This gave rise in some provinces to episcopal councils meeting on a more or less regular basis. Occasionally, there were calls on Rome to act as an instance of appeal, particularly in the West. But no universal full authority can be deduced from this fact.

3. The rise of the metropolitan sees

The speaker outlines the powers the metropolitan (the bishop of the provincial capital) has according to the apostolic canons, which he believes to have come into being prior to Nicaea, as well as according to the Canons of Nicaea and those of the Synod of Antioch (341). The synod is the supreme authority chaired by the metropolitan who, however, cannot act without all the others agreeing.

Although he may claim a primacy of honour and rank as well as a certain supremacy over the whole province he is not supposed to meddle in the day-to-day administrative affairs of the local churches. In the election of the bishops he has the final say. Still, the metropolitans' rights have nothing to do with any apostolic succession.

4. The rise of the patriarchs

In Nicaea (Canon 6) the powers of three metropolitans, namely those of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, were extended beyond the boundaries of their own provinces, i. e. long-standing existing customs were recognized. The First Council of Constantinople (381) in Canon 2 characterizes the political dioceses of Egypt, Asia and Pontus as being important for church administration as well. The only bishop mentioned in this context is that of Alexandria who is in charge of administrative affairs in Egypt. About the Church of Antioch it is said, that the privileges recognized in Nicaea should be preserved.

Canon 3 of Constantinople deals with the pre-eminence of honour of the bishops of the Ancient and New Rome. In Chalcedon (451) the patriarchs' authority was consolidated unlike previously. The bishop of Constantinople was given the right to appoint the metropolitans of the civic dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thracia. Constantinople became the universal instance of appeal for the whole East. Chalcedon recognized Jerusalem's independence from Antioch.

The Codex Justinianus gave the patriarchates their final legal form.

The formation of primatial sees outside the Empire was not discussed by the speaker.

Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, New York, honorary member of PRO ORIENTE: "Problems and exercise of primacy in the Armenian Church" (4th Cons., p. 165-180).

1. The principle underlying primacy and the exercise of primacy

The Church is no amorphous collectivity of like-minded believers lacking an organic pattern of authority. Jesus Christ conferred authority on his Apostles in order to secure the future organic unity of his Church once and for all. He empowered the Apostles and their successors to teach, to bind and to loose and to establish a code of conduct for the faithful.

It is the hierarchic nature of this authority which calls for a magisterium. Christ intended the relationship between Peter and his fellow Apostles to be a model for the relationship between the primate and his college of bishops. The authority of the college of bishops exists *ex jure divino* (by divine right). But in order to maintain unity what is also needed is the primacy of one bishop.

This primacy is exercised on three levels: on the local, the national and the universal of ecumenical levels.

Eucharistic ecclesiology, widely advocated among today's Orthodox, does not eliminate the need of primatial authority either. The existence of such an authority within the Church is in accordance with the Lord's will and with apostolic tradition. There is the possibility of adjustments to suit the changing circumstances of the time. The East, unlike the West, developed several primacies. But as far as the principle of primacy is concerned West and East were in agreement. The church of the Reformation on the other hand rejected any hierarchic pattern of authority out of hand. Pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome was generally recognized as long as Rome dominated the world. When this ceased to be the case regional and national primacies came to be more important.

All churches have seen tensions between the theory and the exercise of the primacy leading to abuse. For the Roman Catholic Church especially the absolutistic misinterpretation of primacy by Vatican I must be mentioned. It was from Peter's position among the Apostles that the Roman ecclesiastical theory of primacy was developed. Peter, the head of the Apostles, went to Rome and the bishop of Rome became his successor. The Roman interpretation of Peter's position and that of his successors is primarily based on the reading of Mt 16: 18: It was on Peter personally - and hence on his successors as well - that the Church was built. According to Oriental Orthodox Church teaching, however, it is Peter's faith that is decisive and not his person. Historically seen, the apostolic origin of the primatial see is not essential for primacy. It is the political rank of the city that matters, as the Canons of Nicaea and those of the First Council of Constantinople and of Chalcedon state.

According to the Eastern Churches all bishops embracing the faith of St. Peter are successors to Peter and the other Apostles. No single bishop may be regarded as the sole guardian of Christian Tradition. In the Armenian Church Peter and Paul are venerated in the same manner.

2. Primacy in Armenian history

At the time of the conversion of King Trdat (313) Armenia was under Roman influence. The Apostle of Armenia, St. Gregory the Illuminator, was ordained by Metropolitan Leontius in Caesarea, Cappadocia. Caesarean influence in Armenia did not go much beyond the prerogative of confirming and ordaining the candidate for the primateship of the Church of Armenia.

The Armenian Church had to defend its independence against two major powers: against the Byzantine Empire and against that of the Persians. In 387 Armenia was divided between these two empires. The bigger part fell to Persia. As a result of the political circumstances the link with Caesarea was severed. In 388 the new senior bishop Sakak I was no longer ordained in Caesarea.

The Council of Shahapivan (444) proclaimed the full independence of the Armenian Church. It was also there that the decision was taken that no bishop might be ordained without senior bishop consent. In the 5th century the designation "catholicos" (= general head) came to be commonly used for the senior bishop. His authority was especially strong when the country was under foreign rule.

Between the 5th and 11th centuries the bishops of the Byzantine part of Armenia remained outside the direct jurisdiction of the catholicos. After the break in relations with the metropolis of Caesarea, the Armenian Church maintained ties of friendship with Constantinople and this continued until quite some time after the Council of Chalcedon. In 589 the bishops of Western Armenia even entered into a formal union with Constantinople. At that time the Byzantine part of Armenia had its own catholicos alongside the principal catholicos in the Persian part. The political opposition on account of Persian rule over the largest part of Armenia led to a final break in relations with Constantinople in 607 and to the definitive rejection of the Council of Chalcedon.

The Armenians never explicitly developed a theory of the ministry of the catholicos and primatial authority of the catholicos was not traced back to a possible apostolic origin. The catholicos received his authority by virtue of his election by the college of bishops. In the 5th century the attempt was first made to consolidate primatial authority by maintaining it going back to the Apostle Thaddaeus. The catholicos' powers were extensive. In compliance with canonical provisions he ordained the bishops, convoked episcopal conferences and presided them. The catholicos was an instance of appeal against episcopal judgement. He alone had the right to ordain the myron.

The speaker also touched on the relations between the Armenian Church and Rome as well as on the attempts of union in the Middle Ages. Throughout the first millennium there were no contacts whatsoever between Rome and the Armenian Church. When Catholicos Gregory III participated in the Latin synod held in Antioch in 1141 this was the first contact with the Western Church. At that time negotiations with a view to union were initiated, which through mediation of the Pope finally led to the installment as king of Prince Leo of Cilicia in Tarsus in 1199 and thus to a partial union. This carried with it strong tendencies of latinization which, however, were met with strong opposition in Ancient Armenia.

The Union of Florence (1439) did not find acceptance. In 1441 a decided opponent of the Union was elected catholicos in Etchmiadzin. The catholicosate of Sis, however remained in existence. A separate community of uniate Armenians was recognized by the Turkish government in 1830.

Vardapet Dr Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vienna, prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Austria., member of the PRO ORIENTE Theological Advisory Council, co-president of the ecumenical consultation: *"The development of primacy of the head of the Armenian Church" (4th Cons., p. 82-97).*

Initially the speaker had been asked to discuss: "The development of primacy in the Oriental Orthodox Churches." He had felt that this was too wide a topic not yet

sufficiently explored. Hence he confined himself to a presentation of the development of primacy of the Armenian catholicos. The term "primacy" is typically Catholic. The catholicos is the "first bishop in the church. In Nicaea already the bishop of a provincial capital, the metropolitan, was recognized as the head of all bishops in a province. As early as in the 4th century Armenia developed a national church. The metropolitan of Valarshapat (today's Etchmiadzin) became the head and leader of the Church and had primacy over all the other bishops in the country. Today he is also the head of all Armenians living in global diaspora.

The speaker began by giving a short survey of Armenian political history, ranging from the Kingdom of the Arsacids which existed up until 428, and that of the Bagratids, founded in 885 and coming to an end in the 11th century, to the Principality (from 1080 onwards) and then Kingdom (1199) of Cilicia, conquered by the Mameluks in 1375. It was at this point that the Armenians lost their political independence.

The election and ordination of the catholicos

The mode of election was subject to change as time went on. At first the catholicos were appointed by the king in consultation with the great of the realm. In the beginning ordination took place in Caesarea, Cappadocia (a practice which ceased in 388). For a few decades sons inherited the catholical see from their father. There were also cases of succession through designation by the predecessor. Starting in the 6th century and particularly from the 7th century onwards it became a common practice for all bishops to participate in the election. Participation of laymen (notables and princes) began after 1441, when the church centre was moved from Sis back to Etchmiadzin. But it was as late as in the 19th century that representatives of the common people were first allowed to take part in the election. A separate ordination of a patriarch can only be traced back to the 9th century: to the time of the foundation of the Kingdom of the Bagratids (885). In the 12th century anointment came into use, as a result of Latin influence. Ordination and anointment strengthened the status of the catholicos.

Appointment and ordination of bishops

Bishops had to be confirmed by the catholicos. With Nicaea serving as a reference, the word "metropolitan" was replaced with that of "catholicos" in the appropriate canons. Ancient Armenia had twenty bishops.

The catholicos usually had the right to appoint bishops. There was no such thing as election by a synod of bishops. The catholicos had the final say in matters of faith but acted in accordance with the other bishops. As time went on the ordination of bishops too came to be reserved to the catholicos, probably in the 14th century. Ordination of the myron could only be carried out by a catholicos.

The emergence of different primatial sees

As early as in 1113/1114 there existed an independent catholicossate of Aghtamar. It was only at the end of the 18th century that Aghtamar again recognized the catholicos of Etchmiadzin as its head. Aghtamar again disappeared in 1895. The catholicossate of Cilicia: The catholicos used to have his see at the place of the royal residence. The foundation of the Kingdom of Cilicia caused the catholicos to move to Sis (1293). A

general assembly meeting in Etchmiadzin in 1441 decided its return to this city. But Sis continued to have a catholicos of its own.

The patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople: In 1311, at the time of the Kingdom of Cilicia, the bishop of Jerusalem adopted the title of a "patriarch". This was directed against contemporary attempts made to latinize Cilicia. For the bishop of Constantinople the title of "patriarch" first appeared as late as in 1537 (the traditional date is 1461).

Development in the 19th century

In 1836 a constitution for the Armenian Church in Russia was worked out. Participation of laymen in the election of the catholicos was laid down in detail. The elective assembly proposed two candidates, with the tsar choosing the one to be catholicos. The Russian state which interfered strongly in church affairs limited the influence of laymen.

In Turkey a new statute for the Armenian Church was created in 1839 which increased lay influence curtailing the full authority of the patriarch. In this way the "General Assembly" became the highest authority in the Church.

In 1920 Armenia became part of the Soviet Union. Overriding authority is exercised by the "Supreme Spiritual Council". Since 1945 some of its members are laymen. The catholicos is elected by the "General Church Assembly" three quarters of which are laymen.

The conciliar structure of the Armenian Church

Right from the beginning a tendency in this direction can be observed. As early as at the time of Gregory the Illuminator distinguished laymen also participated in the election of the catholicos. In 354 Nerses convened a council in Ashtishat with strong lay participation which passed a number of social and ecclesial reforms. At the time, however, "lay representatives" were princes. This had its parallel in the social pattern of the period. Today the catholicos remains only the chairman of the democratic governing bodies and cannot take any important decision on his own. He has to respect tradition under all circumstances, particularly as far as teaching is concerned. Throughout history the vardapets or teachers have exercised strong influence.

Concluding remarks

All this does not mean that the catholicos has lost all importance in the Church. In matters of administration and discipline he has the highest executive authority. There are about seven million Armenians world-wide. At the congress held in Addis Ababa in 1965 the Armenian Church made an effort to strengthen ties with the other Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Preliminary Resumé of the Fourth Consultation 1978

In the following an attempt is made to draw preliminary conclusions from the talks briefly outlined here as well as from my - admittedly somewhat incomplete - notes about the discussion.

The first impression might well be that we are up against an impenetrable wall of outright rejection on the part of the Oriental Orthodox of any overall authority over the church as a whole. Nevertheless, these impressions are probably erroneous.

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios' words of conclusion were quite reassuring. He said in essence: We are grateful for the openness shown by the Catholic theologians. We must be patient and become one in the Holy Trinity against all odds. An indispensable precondition for this happening is a revision of certain forms of the Roman principle. The question is: What form of primacy can we accept as Orientals? We reject any universal jurisdiction. We feel that the Pope cannot be the only spokesman of Christianity. Nor does a universal council represent an alternative to primacy for us. Nor could the Pope be the chairman of such a council. After all the Metropolitan does think it possible for certain revisions of primacy to come about. - This points to the fact that the declarations given by Catholic theologians about potential concessions did make an impression on the Oriental Orthodox. We shall try to elaborate on this later on. However, there remains one hard question: Is the recognition of a papal primacy of jurisdiction and infallibility an indispensable precondition for unity with the Catholic Church? (thus Keshishian) The Orientals were relentless in the demand they addressed to the Catholics: We want the Catholic Church to regard itself as one of the local Churches and not as the universal Church (Mar Gregorios).

The Oriental Orthodox remain basically committed to their anti-primatial stance. The New Testament does not contain the slightest indication whatsoever for St. Peter ranking in any way higher than the other Apostles (thus Amba Gregorius). Keshishian put it in less harsh terms: While Peter does have a certain position of distinction there is no such thing as Petrine succession. The tradition of the first centuries does not show any trace of a primacy of the bishop of Rome (Amba Gregorius). Later on Rome's position as imperial capital gave rise to a certain pre-eminence of honour for Rome. Archbishop Nersoyan seems to make even bigger concessions: According to Christ's will the relationship between Peter and his Apostles was designed to serve as a model for the later primates and their fellow bishops. Pre-eminence of one bishops over the others is a necessity with a view to the maintainance of unity. For as long as Rome was the capital city, primacy on a universal or ecumenical level was a reality and found recognition. Nersoyan basically accepts the possibility of an ecumenical primacy. But even to his mind the absolutistic conception of primacy laid down by Vatican I must be met with unconditional rejection. Oriental Orthodox criticism of primacy as defined by Vatican I is directed at the lack of any juridical safeguards against potential abuse of the enormous powers conceded to the bishop of Rome. Church consent is completely irrelevant to the infallibility of papal teachings (thus Keshishian). That such assertions were the result of a misunderstanding, this is what Catholic theologians tried to bring home to the Oriental Orthodox. Such misunderstandings are comprehensible since the Second Vatican Council left unchanged those formulae of the First which had called themselves forth. The expression "ordinaria potestas" is correctly understood (by Keshishian for instance). At any rate there is outright rejection of universal church authority embodied by a single person. Only Archbishop Nersoyan seems to recognize such a possibility as has been mentioned.

Particularly the two papers submitted by Pottmeyer and Greshake on the subject of the First Vatican Council sought to dissipate misunderstandings and to pave the way for a new interpretation of the Council's definition without infringing on the essence of the dogma itself. These efforts were given due credit by quite a few Oriental Orthodox participants.

It is an absolute necessity to "disentangle" (as Scheele put it) the different, hardly any longer distinguished functions today effectively exercised by the bishop of Rome and to point out what of all this alone is acceptable to the Orientals. They are not dealing with the bishop of the city of Rome, nor with the metropolitan of the Roman church province, nor with the primate of Italy or the patriarch of the West. To them the Pope is merely the holder of the Petrine office. Recognition of Petrine succession does not mean integration into a centrally governed administrative machinery but into the unity of faith and the *communio*, the highest guarantor of which is the successor to Peter. In this connection Greshake quoted Ratzinger whose conception is apt to dispell unjustified fears on the part of the Orientals.

It is of major significance that according to Vatican II the Pope is essentially head of the college of bishops and therefore presides the Church not as a mere individual but as head of a church collective. Nor is the Pope simply above the council. If a Pope were to oppose a unanimous council decision in matters of faith he would - according to Greshake - make himself a heretic and thus cease to be Pope. Consequently, an infallible doctrinal decision of the Pope cannot lack the *consensus ecclesiae*. As everybody knows, the issue of the possibility of the Pope becoming a heretic was intensively discussed in the Middle Ages - particularly at the time of the Western schisma.

But the most important statement made by the two Catholic theologians on Vatican I certainly was that the decisions taken by this Council were to a certain extent conditioned by the spirit of the age and must be placed into the wider and more fundamental perspective of the Scriptures and Tradition. If unity with the Oriental Orthodox came about there would be the need for a new reception of Vatican I since a large number of bishops of churches today recognized as "sister churches" did not attend the Council at the time. While preserving the essence, such a reception could bring about important amendments (Greshake).

It is also significant, as Lanne emphasized, that the Catholic Church has already come to recognize the Eastern Churches as sister churches. Hence, restoration of unity cannot be regarded as the return of wayward children to the abandoned parental home. What the non-Catholic side welcomed most of all were the clarifying words by Catholic theologians on the right conception of primacy. Mar Gregorius for instance termed it to be of paramount importance what Greshake said on the necessity of the mutual reception of councils. Krikorian expressed himself in the same sense. According to Prof. V. C. Samuel the statement by Catholic theologians that the decisions of Vatican I belong into a specific historical context gives hope for agreement. Amba Gregorius expressed his joy over the Catholic side having stressed that papal infallibility was Church infallibility. The only guarantee for this, however, was Christ, which we as Catholics may well admit.

The second topic of the consultation deals with the Oriental Orthodox primacies. In

this connection both the Catholic side (de Vries) and the non-Catholic side pointed to the impossibility of a complete presentation of this comprehensive issue in the absence of appropriate preliminary work. Only part of the sources are available in print. In addition they would have to be the subject of a critical assessment first. Only to give one example, there is a big question-mark over whether certain collections of canons give a genuine picture of the state of affairs or not. All too often they are contradictory. Likewise, the collection of synodal acts must be critically reviewed. De Halleux, in his paper on "Autonomy and centralization in the ancient Syrian Churches Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon", expressed serious doubts about the historicity of the presentation of the Synod of Markabta (424) proclaiming full independence of the Persian church. Particularly epistolary literature remains to be exploited to a greater degree. So there is for instance a very useful as yet unpublished presentation of the patriarchs' rights according to the letters of Severus of Antioch (512-518), submitted to the Oriental Institute in Rome by Hanna Ibrahim (now Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo) as a licentiate work. De Vries exploited this work for his paper as well as a number of more recent studies on the Oriental Orthodox patriarchs' rights. The picture remained fragmentary - and the author is fully aware of this fact. Given the difficulties suggested, Krikorian refrained from giving a complete presentation of the topic put to him and confined himself to the development of primacy regarding the Armenian catholicoi. The parallel paper of Archbishop Nersoyan tied happily in with what Krikorian had to say. The other Oriental Orthodox offered only a short exploration of the origins of the pre-eminence of individual churches over others, thus Mar Gregorios and Professor Bebawi.

As to the patriarchs' authority, the Oriental Orthodox (even members of the same church) held widely differing views. There is only one thing they are agreed upon, i. e. on the rejection of the apostolic origin of patriarchal authority. Nersoyan and Krikorian assumed the Armenian catholicos having high authority over the other bishops. A democratization of the system occurred as late as in the 19th century. They seek to establish that traces of movement in this direction can be found in early history. Nersoyan emphasized the fact that the Armenians have never produced a theory of the rights of the patriarchs. Vardapet Keshishian, however, while belonging to the same church categorically denies any jurisdiction of one bishop over others: "Regarding the sacraments and jurisdiction there can be no power exceeding that of the bishops."

Prof. V. C. Samuel of Bangalore denounces any hierarchical authority in the Church. Only the Church in its entirety holds authority. The patriarch can neither take any decision on his own nor together with the bishops.

Nevertheless, the speakers generally do attribute genuinely supradiocesan rights to the patriarch. Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios for instance acknowledges that Canon 6 of Nicaea and even more so the Canons of Chalcedon allow for such rights. But there is a general tendency to play down the authority of the patriarchs. Prof. Bebawi even began his paper with the following proposition: "The East has never recognized the pre-eminence of one church over another." However, talking about the old canons, which he recognizes, he inevitably ends up making qualifications after all. When Canon 6 of Nicaea for instance speaks about the authority of the bishop of Alexandria

over certain territories what is meant is only a certain right of supervision over the true faith. There is no evidence of powers in excess of this.

Occasionally, Oriental Orthodox participants in the consultation did admit the de facto high - though probably abusive - authority of the patriarchs. Mar Gregorios said at one point in the discussion that Eastern patriarchs had sometimes acted more authoritarian than even the Popes. He also reminded the fact that they had comprehensive civic functions when living under Islamic domination since they then were ethnarchs at the same time.

The whole discussion of this matter proved the relative lack of agreement among the Oriental Orthodox on this issue and the great need there still is of an unbiased in-depth study of the sources in order to come up with a balanced judgment. Cherished traditional conception must be subjected to a critical investigation against the background of these sources.

H. B. Biedermann OSA - 4th Vienna Consultation: 7)

The Fourth Consultation focused on the question of primacy within the Church. Papers and discussions tried different approaches to grasp or at least determine more accurately its nature. Apparently the intention was to give a chance to the different traditions, to put forward their understanding of this institution in order to be able to pinpoint underlying agreements and disagreements. From among the Oriental Orthodox only the Armenians fully took up the challenge by producing two detailed contributions: "*The Development of the Primacy of the Head of the Armenian Church*" (Vardapet Krikorian) and "*Problems and Exercise of Primacy in the Armenian Church*" (Archbishop Nersoyan), 4th Cons., pp. 82-97 and pp. 165-180. Apart from that there were occasional references in papers submitted by representatives of the Syro-Indian and Coptic Churches but no formal description of primacy in their own Churches. Quite understandably, they did not want to give a theology of primacy in their own Churches. Indeed, such an undertaking must seem unnecessary and impracticable to them; for primacy as held and practised by their patriarchs and catholicoi is no theological but a purely historical church institution. Nevertheless, even in these Churches primacy is an undeniable reality which did have a certain effect on their course in history and continues to do so to this day. It may therefore be assumed that they reflected on the issue at different points in time, that they considered its justification and jurisdiction. The Roman Catholic participants would probably have been sincerely interested in getting to know such theoretical considerations as well as experiences of primacy as it is practised today. Moreover, this could have served as an inspiration for the discussion of Roman Catholic theology of primacy.

7) Booklet No. 2. Summaries of the Papers. Vienna 1991, pp. 51-55

There may be a feeling that the different approaches to an understanding of primacy will have been pointed out clearly by the three introductory papers all devoted to the same topic of *"The Emergence of a Pre-Eminence of Individual Churches over Others and the Reason for this Development"*. But this is true only to a limited extent. On the one hand, the Oriental Orthodox explored the Canons of the 4th and 5th centuries, repeatedly interpreted in our context, more closely in the light of their own tradition (*Metropolitan Mar Gregorios*, New Delhi; 4th Cons., pp. 15-22), a procedure which undoubtedly has its justification. However, as Sardica (today Sofia, Bulgaria) and the synod named after this town in the process was shifted to Spain this geographical "translatio" almost inevitably had to have its influence on the interpretation of the Canons mentioned. The negation of jurisdictional "prerogatives" for Rome as well as for Constantinople based on Canon 3 of 381 seems to be preconditioned by the line of argumentation at this point already and it is too narrow a historical view which says of Justinian that he gave "the patriarchates their final legal form" in his Codex. Besides it is understandable that overall the decisive weight is placed on the synods. - On the other hand, the same school of thought strongly emphasized the difference between faith and practice, dogma and custom and referred primacy to the sphere of practice and custom alone (*G. H. Bebawi*, Cairo; 4th Cons., pp. 33-38). This fundamental attribution quite naturally also determined the interpretation of the historical course of the church and the canon drawn upon. - For one more time the same period was run through from a Catholic point of view (*J. Speigl*, Würzburg; 4th Cons., pp. 22-32), this time taking in Western sources to a greater extent. The importance of the veneration of the Apostles and the related question of the principle of the succession of the Apostles in Rome as well as the weight for the origins and subsequent evolution of Roman Catholic primacy of the interrelations between the imperial church system of the East Roman-Byzantine emperors and the concept of Church as advocated by the bishops in Rome came under review.

It is a good question to ask at this point whether the subsequent discussion led to a mutual rapprochement of positions on the subject of pre-eminence, its origins and the reasons or factors by which it was prompted. The minutes are not yet available and I hesitate to give a reliable answer on the basis of my own notes. My impression, however, tended to the conclusion that this was not the case, an impression which was then reinforced by the discussion of another paper submitted by *W. de Vries* (Rome) entitled *"The Changes in Rome's Exercise of its Primacy between the 5th and 19th Centuries and the Primacy as Exercised by the Ancient Orthodox Patriarchs"* (4th Cons., pp. 68-82). Obviously this was meant as a follow-up to the periods treated in the contributions just mentioned. It may be doubted whether such a broad topic as the initiators of this Consultation obviously had in mind can be fitted into a single paper. And it was the author himself who was most aware of this fact. Taking great pains he set out to cover in big steps the evolution of Roman Catholic primacy in theory and practice through the centuries up to the threshold of the First Vatican Council. The decidedly juridical view of primacy, clearly laid down as early as in the 5th century and carried on by the reform of Gregory VII (*Dictatus Papae*) in the direction of a "legalization and thus secularization of the papacy", was plain to see. The second part of the paper, however, the attempt to include a description of primacy as practised by

the Oriental patriarchs proved to be an impossible task for the simple reason of the absence, so far, of any specialist preliminary work. This is why he could only make a few, certainly valuable, comments and the two papers on primacy in the Armenian Church which were to follow confirmed him in this reserve. For they too did not manage to throw sufficient light on the open questions for their Church at least, despite the multitude of highlights they produced and the importance of the individual traits of the Armenian catholicosate they portrayed. The representatives of the other Oriental Churches had certain reservations about the presentation furnished by Father de Vries SJ. But their comments were essentially adjustments in the evaluation of individual historical dates which they felt obliged to interpret differently in the light of their own tradition. It is of course at any time inadmissible for them to ignore this Oriental interpretation of their own ecclesiastical history and church life but it also requires in each case an impartial review in the context of history as a whole as well as the relationship the churches have among one another.

Primacy, its preconditions, development and description were investigated by two exhaustive and in the substance well balanced papers put forward by the Catholic side: *"From the primacy of jurisdiction to the jurisdictional primacy. The historical background to the First Vatican Council"* (*H. J. Pottmeyer*, Bochum) and *"The bearings of the decisions of the First Vatican Council on papal primacy"* (*G. Greshake*, Vienna; 4th Cons., pp. 110-124 and pp. 136-154). In substance they had to be closely related, had to form a unity to a certain extent. Both authors kept as closely as possible to the topic they had set themselves. Characteristically both set out with a justification of their procedure. Pottmeyer questioned the "function of the historical checkback", Greshake made "preliminary hermeneutic reflections".

By doing so, they gave a certain introduction to Western methodology used in exploring historical events and documents, which at the same time amounted to an elucidation of Western thinking in general and corresponding theological methods of working. After all, many misunderstandings result from the fact that we have different approaches to our own past and that of others. This became apparent more than once in the course of this Consultation, starting with the understanding of the first Christian centuries right up to the interpretation of recent history. In this sense, these introductions may go on to bear fruit beyond the context of this meeting.

Pottmeyer proceeded to point out with remarkable conciseness "the one-sided emphases of the Council's decisions" and added a more detailed look at the historical decisions both political and sociological as well as theological of this Council. The 19th century was of course of overriding significance but occasional flashbacks on long-bygone events even further accentuated the development of the Roman Catholic conception of primacy. - Greshake primarily attempted to deal with the "interpretation of the most important statements" on infallibility as well as on the universal jurisdictional primacy of the Pope. The precision of the formulations on the one hand and their openness to a more profound and more comprehensive ecclesiology of the *communio* on the other hand were pointed out and balanced against each other. Furthermore the complex situation of the Pope with his multitude of functions acquired as a fruit of history and the wish for their disentanglement in favour of "the bishop of Rome" within the framework of the episcopate as a whole were subject to discussion.

And Greshake concluded by some albeit short comments on the question of the reception of the Council by the Eastern Churches; he did so, in view of the mutual reception by the divided Churches of each other's Councils in the process of the restoration of unity and said: "This process of reception will probably lead to amendments and modifications exceeding those which occurred in the process of the reception of the ancient Councils."

In between these two papers featured two contributions by Oriental participants; they were devoted to one and the same topic: "*The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches*" (V. C. Samuel, Syro-Indian, and Aram Keshishian, Armenian Apostolic Church; 4th Cons., pp. 117 and 124). Their insertion, to my regret, interrupted the comprehensive description of the Catholic conception of this Council which is of such great importance in the ecumenical dialogue. To V. C. Samuel the rejection by the Oriental Orthodox of the Vaticanum is clearly the logical and inevitable result of their rejection of the Chalcedonian: They decided against it "in the name of Christian truth" and this was prompted not by the bishops but by the community that is to say by monks, the parish clergy and the Christian congregations. For "the Oriental Orthodox place more weight on the action of the Holy Spirit than on the practice of authority through hierarchy". The harsh conclusion: Vatican I did not contribute anything essential to the Christian cause regarding the Oriental Orthodox and when there had occurred divisions since the time of the early Christians "Rome's claim to jurisdiction over the Eastern Churches was one reason among others". - Equally fundamental was the wholesale rejection by Keshishian of the dogma of the Pope: To begin with, the conception of the Apostle Peter and his position among the other Apostles was questionable, all the more so the privilege given to him personally could not be conferred on any other person. Hence, there is no theological justification for the claim by Rome to be the centre of the universal Church. However, he considers a thorough reflection of Roman Catholic primacy, its significance and functions to be one of the chief tasks of Catholic theology. He also indicated its direction: towards a *primatus pastoralis et servitii* (primacy of pastoral work and service). - In this we whole-heartedly agree with him and we even suspect that such reflection had found its first promoters in the last popes. However, especially in the light of the arguments put forward by V. C. Samuel, we believe it to be doubtful whether the return to "conciliar authority" he demanded - which we also advocate - will by itself be the end of the tunnel.

For a start, the discussion of these four papers which to my mind formed the core of this Consultation could not yet contribute a great deal to a rapprochement or even reconciliation of the different positions. The call repeatedly addressed to the Oriental Orthodox to produce an alternative to papal primacy as a ministry of unity for the universal Church met with no response. And it was impossible for them to come up with any answer because Oriental Orthodox theological thinking is unable to pose the question in such a way. A ministry of unity as authority will invariably sound juridical to them, that is to say beneath the true nature of the Church which is exclusively founded on the triune God, and it is from this fact only that unity as a characteristic of the nature of the Church is to be derived. At this point it became clear that even when the same or similar words are used each statement on primacy within the Church and

within the Churches must be questioned afresh for its true substance and actual meaning against the background of the tradition it originated in.

We have to omit some topics not because we have little regard for them but because we cannot fit them into the framework of this report. Nevertheless, two more ought to be mentioned. *Amba Gregorius* (Cairo) spoke on "*The Tensions between Theoretical Statements on the Primacy and the Effective Exercise of the Primacy in the Ecclesiological Life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches*", auxiliary bishop P. W. Scheele (Paderborn) held a talk on the same issue in the Roman Catholic Church (4th Cons., pp. 154-165 and pp. 191-204). Surprisingly though, the first paper then did not focus on the relationship of the Oriental Orthodox Churches among themselves but once again started out on the tensions between Rome and the Eastern Churches in the first centuries and went on to prove that Rome's increasing influence in church affairs - and the same goes for Alexandria - was closely linked to the city's political standing, even depended on it. In this way, nothing could be heard on the subject of tensions between the theory and practice of primacy within the Oriental Orthodox Churches although they were repeatedly touched on in the subsequent discussion. - That "tensions" do not only have a negative effect but may be a sign of alertness within the Church emerged from the second paper read by Scheele. He began by stating the "fact of the tensions", ranging from Peter to the "Petrine office of the Popes", and went on to study in greater detail this issue as well as the forms and degenerations of these tensions. To his mind, it is obvious that they must be seen in the twofold perspective of intra-Catholic and - especially today - ecumenical affairs. The pragmatic approach to the Petrine office as debated today by many ecumenical discussion groups in the West would prove to be too narrow if relied on alone. Progress might be achieved by considering whether it would not be possible to derive this office from the Gospel as a service to unity. Peter also was the starting point for Scheele's conception of the "forms" as well as the possible "degenerations" encountered time and again in connection with the Apostolic mission, qualified brotherly assistance in faith the pervasive fundamental function, the power of the keys and the power to bind and to loose and finally pastoral service. In the process he corrected the frequently reappearing false interpretation of the Catholic perception of the Pope according to which the Pope stands outside or above the college of bishops: "His place is right at its centre and at its top." On the other hand, he is committed to an apparent "degeneration" of the effective exercise of primacy which was not prepared, indeed unable, to face the necessary tension between unity and freedom, unity and diversity. Nevertheless, the conclusion remains that the very tensions in the world and the Church necessitate a service of unity within the Church of Jesus Christ.

5. Primacy and Petrine Office

It was with eager expectation that the papers of Metropolitan Mar Gregorios and Cardinal König dedicated to the third major topic of "Special Problems of Primacy and Petrine Office" (5th Cons., pp.126-135) were awaited. Would there be a rapprochement of standpoints this time round on questions where difficulties of mutual understanding had prevailed at the Fourth Consultation?

Metropolitan Mar Gregorios encapsulated the arguments of Catholic theology about papal primacy in three points: 1. derivation from the primacy of Peter; 2. confirmation by the Council of Nicaea (canon 6); 3. support of the Holy Spirit in allowing primacy to develop from the Lord's institution to its historical form. His findings were negative in all three points. While Jesus meant Peter (and not only his faith) when he talked about "building the Church on Peter, the rock", this word was to be seen in dialectic connection with the curse of Mt. 16,23 and was not aimed at any primacy of Peter. John 21, 15-17 could not be interpreted in the exclusive sense of a pastoral office of Peter, as the New Testament knows other "pastors" too. In the Acts of the Apostles there was no evidence of a pre-eminence of Peter over other apostles; the decision of the Council of the Apostles is taken by the "Apostles and presbyters" (15, 22). There existed no succession to individual apostles as bishops of a certain local Church. Nor was thinking to that effect on the part of the Church of Antioch with any foundation whatsoever. What exists is a succession to the college of apostles of the episcopacy as a whole. Later prerogatives of metropolitans and patriarchs are not the result of any apostolic institution or special holiness of a city, but rather the exclusive outcome of the civic importance of that city. Canon 6 of Nicaea can only be understood in this manner regarding the privileges mentioned there.

The promised support of the Holy Spirit pertained to the Church as a whole and was again and again revealed in its fundamental conciliarity (such as could be felt in the constructive discussions of the Fifth Consultation), but could not be related in any special sense to the historical development of papal primacy. A common ecclesiology for the One Church of the future could only be developed along the following guidelines: Any authority within the Church must be exercised on a conciliar or collegial basis. It must be at the same time decentralized and coordinated. The old privileges of patriarchs apply to certain ecclesiastical regions, but not beyond. Since the Churches today are all spread on a more or less universal scale, co-ordination of different Churches in the same region is necessary. Any future universal council was not to be conceived under the guidance of a certain bishop, but had to choose a steering committee and continue its work in a permanent synod.

Against this conception of a future universal council which is rather removed from the history of the ecumenical councils of the ancient church, however, some from the other Oriental Orthodox Churches too raised objections.

Cardinal König reminded in his paper (5th Cons., pp.136-140) that the principle of

"unity in the diversity of traditions" found its expression both in 'Lumen Gentium' as well as in the recent papal documents (e. g. *Euntes in mundum*, on the occasion of the celebration of the millennium of the Russian Church, No. 10). The always existing tension between unity and diversity could not be resolved in favour of uniformity, now less than ever given the worldwide relations of the Churches and present-day social development.

With regard to primacy it might be said in accordance with the Communiqué of the Fourth Consultation, that "the future exercise of such an office is not identical with the present practice which has developed without contact with the Oriental traditions" (Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 86).

However, development of the present form occurred against the background of a conception of ecclesial authority which distinguished between "authority of jurisdiction" and "authority of ordination". The Eastern Churches never knew this dichotomy which was overcome by Vatican II in respect to the ministry of bishops. The Pope is again understood as bishop among bishops and in his role within the college of bishops. On the other hand there is a pre-eminence in the ancient Church of metropolitans and patriarchs within certain regions. Can this point to common preconditions for any Roman primacy?

The 34th canon of the "Apostolic canons" gives hints to a correct understanding: "The bishops of every nation should accept that one among them is the first one (prótos) and consider him as head . . ." About him might be said that the other bishops do not undertake "anything important" without his agreement, irrespective of their authority in all other matters within their dioceses. But the prótos too ought not to act without the consent of the others in matters pertaining to his authority in a similar way canon 6 of Nicaea with its description of patriarchal competences in Egypt and those of metropolitans around Antioch ties the authority of these "prótoi" into conciliar and collegial processes. The prerogatives of these "prótoi" (called "exousia") as against other bishops are obviously established for the sake of *unity* and especially of the *preservation of the unity of faith*.

Catholic argumentation in favour of papal primacy is not limited to the reasons which may be drawn from the canons quoted; these canons, however, refer to analogies. The special role of the bishop of Rome, as early as in the ancient Church, cannot be separated from the martyrdom and the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul as is indeed shown by early historical documents. This is the basis of the spiritual power of the bishop of Rome who appears as the visible sign of unity of the universal Church. Future primacy and patriarchal rights will be more clearly tied into conciliar processes allowing for the recognition of both church unity and diversity of local traditions.

The unresolvable interrelatedness of primacy and conciliarity as illustrated by the idea of a "prótos" in the ancient Church was received with gratitude by the participants of the Consultation. Nonetheless, the idea of a common "head" of the universal Church met with apparently still little Oriental Orthodox sympathy, given the strictly regional scope of Oriental patriarchal rights. (...)

More closely related to the ideas of the Consultation were *Bishop Krikorian's* suggestions (5th Cons., pp. 142f) who felt that future efforts should focus to an even greater extent on theological criteria and those of the history of tradition, under what

8) "Wort und Wahrheit" Supplementary Issue No. 5, pp. 184-187

conditions and within which limitations the different character of the traditions might fit into a future church unity after all. - To what an extent was there a need for e. g. previous convergence or consensus on the issue of primacy? Could the problem and reality of a universal ministry of unity of the Pope be more easily settled within the very framework of a koinonia itself formed along conciliar lines (insofar as the Oriental Orthodox Churches would in a first step consider the Catholic perception of this point as a tolerable aspect of the independent tradition of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the view and form of ecclesial conciliarity)?

The commentator thinks this to be worth considering. Because, if the decision of Vatican II that patriarchal rights according to the canons of the first Ecumenical Councils are to be preserved (Decree on the Oriental Churches No. 9), is implemented in its full sense, this must also hold for the separate traditions of patriarchates in their view of conciliar and primatial church structures.

For these, as early as at Ephesus 431 and even more so at the councils from Chalcedon (451) to Nicaea II (787) were given different emphases in the thinking of the patriarchs and other council fathers of the East than by the Roman legates and the Pope himself, something which did not prevent ecclesial koinonia or the convocation of common councils at the time.

c) Thus the different conceptions of primatial church structure - a locally limited patriarchal one in the Oriental Orthodox Churches and universally designed one of the bishop of Rome - were both included in their own particular theological pattern of reflection in the final Communiqué as forms of two different ecclesial traditions. As ways towards their harmonization the following aspects should be studied more thoroughly (according to the Communiqué, Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 101): the question of how church authority is rooted in the sacramentality of the Church, that of personal and synodal authority above the level of the local episcopal church, and this in the light of the respective liturgical, canonical and pastoral ecclesial tradition.

List of Participants

Oriental Orthodox:	Metropolitan Amba Bishoy, Damiette Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, Aleppo Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vienna Father George K. M. Kondothra, Geneva Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, New Delhi Metropolitan Thomas Mor Themotheos, Kerala
Roman Catholic:	Franciscus Cardinal König, Vienna Father Frans Bouwen PA, Jerusalem Professor Philipp Harnoncourt, Graz Father John F. Long SJ, Rome Alfred Stirnemann, Vienna Professor Ernst Christoph Suttner, Vienna Father Jean M.R. Tillard OP, Ottawa MMag. Dietmar Winkler, Graz
Secretary of the Minutes:	Mag. Gerhard Habison

Programme

Saturday, 29th June	8.30 a.m.: Breakfast 9.00 a.m.: Morning Session 12.30 p.m.: Lunch 4.00 p.m.: Afternoon Session 6.30 p.m.: Dinner
Sunday, 30th June	Morning: Participation in the Liturgy of the Churches Represented 1.00 p.m.: Lunch 3.00 p.m.: Afternoon Session 6.30 p.m.: Dinner
Monday, 1st July	8.30 a.m.: Breakfast 9.00 a.m.: Morning Session 12.30 p.m.: Lunch 4.00 p.m.: Afternoon Session 6.30 p.m.: Dinner

Papers and Discussions

Saturday, June 29th: 9 a.m.

First working session. Chair: Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian

The seminar starts with a prayer initiated by chairman Bishop Krikorian. The Holy Spirit may guide all participants that they fulfil the will of God in every way, especially towards the unity of all Christians.

Father Jean M. R. Tillard OP

Emerging Points of Consensus

My task, if I understood it correctly, was not to introduce new theological insights on the theme of Roman Primacy. It was to read again all the papers of the so-called Vienna consultations and to pick up some specific "points" important for the future discussion of the topic.

This is what I did. I have to confess that the re-reading of this collection of papers - sometimes repetitive - has been quite a long and heavy exercise. But my great surprise has been to discover that their spirit is not yet a spirit of constructive dialogue. To the eyes of a reader spending a large part of his life in ecumenical commissions or encounters, some sentences are really strange, if not shocking:

"We discern much more of the spirit in the Vienna consultations of the last decade than in the total development of the Papacy.... We believe that the universal jurisdictional primacy claims of the Roman Church are not inspired by the Holy Spirit." (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 5, 1988, p.133)

"...the language of Pastor aeternus is in radical contradiction with that of the New Testament." (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 4, 1978, p. 127)

"...there are no authentic religious documents supporting the Roman Pontiff in his primacy or the-eminence over the other bishops of the West." (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 2, 1974, p.138)

This is why I tried to discover some emerging points on which, according to my opinion, it is possible to build up a serious and non-polemical dialogue, aware of what we share in common. Some of these points were not explicitly developed in the papers submitted during the consultations, but nevertheless they have been at least in the mind of the writers.

I. The first point I want to remind is that on each side (the side of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the side of the Roman Catholic Church), there is a malaise concerning one's own ecclesiological structure.

1. On the side of the Oriental Churches, a sentence of Professor V. C. Samuel is worth being entirely quoted:

"Oriental orthodoxy has its own problems. The most serious of them is its inability to face new situations and new challenges on the strength of its declared faith in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Consequently it often tries to adopt the Roman

Catholic way of over-centralization, or falls into an un-intelligent traditionalism. Thus it stands in need of discovering its real nature and thereby making its genuine contribution." (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 4, 1978, p. 123)

In other words, it is not sufficient to reject the Roman Primacy. It is also necessary to discover in which way there is perhaps in it a (distorted or not) response to an authentic need of the Church. St. Augustine would speak of a desiderium coming from the spirit of God.

2. On the side of the Roman Catholic Church, nearly all the papers - but especially those of Father de Vries - show the existence of a constant and sometimes very strong tension between the affirmation by the Roman See of its so-called "universal jurisdiction" and the reactions of the sensus fidelium. Even in the Western Church, the strong absolutistic ideas advocated by the See of Rome met strong disapproval (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 2, 1974, p. 152-56), not only within the conciliar process but also after the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17) and Vatican I. It is clear that Vatican II initiated a new phase of this vital tension and that - especially with the crucial issue of the Episcopal conferences - we are at the beginning of a slow but firm process leading to a re-equilibration.

It is here important to recall that, to grasp the mind of the Roman Catholic Church, one has to look not only at the declarations of the hierarchy but also at the deep expression of the sensus fidelium. Thus, it becomes evident that the Roman Catholic Church as such, never "received" the absolutistic view of Roman primacy that some Oriental theologians identify with the Roman Catholic doctrine, because of the action of some of the popes.

II. My second point is more precise. Reading the papers, I discovered in many of them the tendency of over-simplifying the problem through reducing the Roman primacy to a primacy of jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is - even in Pastor aeternus of Vatican I - only one of the consequences of the primacy. The classical expression "primacy of jurisdiction" is misleading. It would be better to speak of the degree of exousia that the office of Primate requires in order to be an authentic service of the church. And it is very crucial to recall that the strongest affirmations of the power of Rome were usually associated with the fight for independence of the Western Church from the secular power (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 4, 1978, p.72-3). It is not due only to a hunger for power.

Primacy has to be seen not in terms of power, but in terms of service, a service which is impossible without the possession of a kind of power analogous to the one the bishop possesses to exercise his office. Exactly as episcopacy cannot be defined in terms of power, primacy cannot be defined in terms of jurisdiction. It is, thus, possible to discuss the problem of primacy without being entirely obsessed by the question of jurisdiction. It is also possible to challenge the way primacy is concretely exercised in the Catholic Church without affirming that primacy, as such, is "against the Oikonomia of the Holy Spirit."

III. On both sides people agree on a very basic point. It has been quite well expressed, on the Oriental side, by Professor V.C. Samuel who writes:

"The position of Oriental Orthodoxy is based on a recognition of the Holy Spirit as the real foundation of the church and its life. Any exercise of authority in the

church is delegated, so that it should conform to the divine mind which the spirit of God alone guarantees. The authority of the hierarchy is, in fact, essentially and fundamentally sacramental. They (sic) lead the worship and perform the sacramental acts. Even this statement has to be qualified, as the celebration of the Sacraments requires the participation of the community. The church is a community - a believing, worshipping and sacramental community. In it, the patriarch or the catholicos is indeed the most respected leader, and with him are the bishops. The presbyters have their leading role in local communities comprising the people." (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 4, 1978, p.122)

The Roman Catholic Church shares the same view. Moreover, it affirms the sacramental origin (and not only the sacramental exercise) of any specific kind of authority possessed by persons belonging to the hierarchy. I believe that this basic consensus is crucial for our dialogue.

It is also clear that for both the Oriental and the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of God has to be studied from its realization in the local churches. Lumen gentium is explicit on this issue and it is wrong to say that for the ecclesiology of the Roman Church "the Universal Church is the sum of local churches" (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 4, 1978, p.132).

Thus, it is possible to find in the ecclesiology of the local church - gathered around the eucharistic synaxis, in communion with all the local churches - the point of departure for a new way of looking together at the problems of a primacy concerned with the communion of all the local churches.

IV. This leads me to my next point. I have been convinced by the re-reading of the papers that the way Paul VI confirmed and promulgated the documents of Vatican II may help us to find a very basic agreement on which it would be possible to construct a serious dialogue. We know that at Vatican II the words of Pius IX promulgating the documents of Vatican I "sacro approbante concilio" were replaced by "una cum Patribus concilii" and "quae synodaliter statuta sunt". As Father de Vries wrote (Wort und Wahrheit. Suppl. Issue 2, 1974, p.159; and nearly all the Catholic theologians made the same judgement): "...the council is not merely subordinate to the Pope: he is also a member of it."

But what is true of the interaction between the Bishop of Rome and the local Bishops during an ecumenical council has to be true also outside the council. Without entering the wrong path of the Council of Basel (1431-1457), it is right to affirm that the council is the supreme act and the model of the synenergeia (or symphony) of all those who share in the service of episkope. From this agreed statement, it would be possible to discuss very deeply, and in the light of the various traditions, the meaning of primacy and the reasons why - quite early - the episcopal see of Rome appeared as the one claiming to be called (divina Providentia) to a specific "primacy of service" amongst all the others, a claim which has never been entirely rejected by the other Churches. Is it not too easy to explain even the "primus inter pares" or the "primacy of honour" only by the political role of the imperial City of Rome? The reading of all the papers - even the most drastically opposed to any kind of Roman primacy - shows that the so-called "Roman pretension" is not rooted only in a hunger for power. It has something to do with a need, the need for an authentic communio of all the local

churches, in faith and mutual respect of their own rights. But how? This is the problem.

Discussion:

Bishop Krikorian: Father Tillard who knows the PRO ORIENTE consultations only through the records has got a partially negative impression of what has happened so far. Indeed, some words may have been shocking, but they were not destructive. I have been taking part in all the consultations and remember that the spirit was always brotherly and reconciling.

Amba Bishop: I expected a paper summarizing the work of the former meetings to facilitate the study of the previous works, but here I am confronted with a deep study, a strong work reflecting the Roman Catholic view. Thus a new paper is added to those we heard before. It is not a combined paper, we have to recapitulate the Orthodox papers also.

Secretary General Stirnemann: The Standing Committee which meets twice a year has elected Primacy as the topic. Out of 14 papers a new-coming theologian was to give a new starting point for the discussion by his paper.

Bishop Krikorian: We should read page 15 - 18 of Booklet No. 1⁹⁾ again to have more points also from the Oriental side to discuss.

Proposal accepted. He reads these pages:

Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian

Primacy of the Pope and Authority in the Church

These issues were widely studied and discussed at the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Vienna Consultations. The role of the Ministry of Peter in connection with the Ecumenical Councils was sufficiently elucidated by both the Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox theologians. It was generally stated, that "The role of the Ministry of Peter in the medieval councils was entirely different from the one it had played in the ecumenical councils of the first millennium" (Wilhelm de Vries, 2nd Cons., p.150). In the first millennium, after the 4th century the Popes claimed as their right to confirm the decisions of the Councils. In the second millennium, after the tragic schism of 1054, the situation changed completely and the Pope became the powerful Lord and monarchical Head of the Council which rightly are called Papal Councils.

Although it was not openly declared, the general opinion on the side of the Oriental Orthodox theologians tended to accept the pre-eminence of the Pope in the convocation of General Councils. I think all Churches would agree that the Pope could call "universal" synods, beforehand consulting other church-heads. Over such Councils the Pope and the other Patriarchs successively could preside. according to Amba Gregorios of the Coptic Orthodox Church:

9) The Vienna Dialogue. Five PRO ORIENTE consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy. Communiqués and Common Delarations. Vienna 1991, p. 15 - 18 (abbrev. "Booklet No. 1")

"We need a consultant universal body in which all primates sit together as equals and as brothers, to speak together and to serve the Church Universal of God, to work for the salvation of the souls of the people of God, to defend the Orthodox faith, to act together in a spirit of love, of humility and of service, to propagate the Christian faith to non-Christians, to solve the problems facing and challenging our common call and heritage. The head of this body universal could be the Bishop of Rome once, could be the Bishop of Alexandria for another time, or could be the Bishop of Antioch or the Catholicos of all Armenians or another." (Cons., p. 230)

I think the sense of this proposal is a *conciliar* and *co-operative* guidance of ecumenical synods in a united universal church. In this connection the acknowledgement of Vatican II, which recognizes the right of veto of the Roman Pontiff, i. e. in some cases the Pope can reject the decisions of General Councils, remains open to discussion and solution. On different occasions I have suggested to assign the right of confirming the conclusions of ecumenical synods to three persons: to the Pope, to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and to the Patriarch of Alexandria! However in conveying the privilege of confirming the decisions of General councils on three or four church-leaders, the proclamation of dogmas will automatically fall under control.

A new and real Ecumenical Council can correct or complement the decision of Vatican I.

Another problem issued down from the Council of Vatican I is the question of *infallibility*. A certain change of interpretation was noticeable from the very beginning, specially in phraseology. Both sides avoided the expression "infallibility of the Pope", preferring to speak of the "infallibility of Ecumenical Councils". It was silently agreed upon the term *indefectibility* (of the Church):

"Indefectibility is a much more useful term, and that not because H. Küng prefers 'infectibility' to 'infallibility'. While it can be proved that the Church has often gone wrong in condemning as error that which we know today to be true, it is not so easy to prove that the Church as a whole has gone away from the truth, though many people have begun to argue that way. The idea of indefectibility when applied to the Church as a whole has some substance though only faith and not reason can affirm it with any certainty" (Paulos Mar Gregorios, 2nd Cons., p. 46)

The Roman Catholic theologians tended slightly to ascribe *infallibility* to Ecumenical Councils, but not to "papal synods", called "ecumenical" by the Catholics:

"The question concerns the ecumenical character of the councils that took place after the fifth and after the eight century, respectively. There have been, as is well known, all sorts of councils in the meantime, which cannot be deemed equal in importance and character, including those reckoned to be "ecumenical councils" by the Catholics. There is, incidentally, no official list of the councils recognized by the Catholic Church to possess ecumenical authority" (J. G. Remmers, 2nd Cons., p. 65)

The Church as a whole through the centuries has protected the Apostolic tradition of the faith against temptations and deviations by the grace of the Holy Spirit who dwells

in her. The Church as retainer of the true Christian faith is *indefectible*, according to the Oriental Orthodox, or *infallible*, according to the Roman Catholic theologians:

"The church as communion of faith can ... be rightfully described as infallible 'ex-sese', i.e. by virtue of the Spirit of Pentecost dwelling in this community. The Church as a communion thus does not have a secondary or passive part in the charisma of infallibility, merely heeding to and abiding loyally by the doctrine established through the teaching function. Although the infallible official teaching and guiding of the Church is, no doubt, included in the unshakeable faith of the Church. The *consensus fidelium* must not be considered totally dependent on official teaching" (Remmers, 2nd Cons., p. 57).

Although the theologians of both sides appear to have reacted at a consensus of indefectibility/infallibility, the tension, not to say the contradiction between theory and practice remains as a major hindrance or disturbing factor for a final and official agreement. One has the impression that too much power is concentrated on the person of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church still is a "Papstkirche" and not a real conciliar communion.

Another controversial aspect of primacy is the problem of jurisdiction. The Orthodox Churches have developed a certain conciliar and collegial system of administration and a national or regional firm and steadfast autocephaly which they would not give up at any and in any case:

"Many Churches of the Orient, since the fourth century, in their elections, administration and theological discussions have incorporated representatives of the community, thus exercising and expressing a conciliarity which in its fundamental points was and is faithful to the earliest traditions of the Christendom" (Krikorian, 3rd Cons., p. 101)

Therefore the jurisdictional claim of the Roman Catholic Church over the Church universal, is not realistic and reconciling at all. Even the argument that the regional Churches could maintain their national status and character on the basis of their proper rites, does not offer sufficient trust and security. The desired unity can be realized on the principle and system of plurality which only can guarantee the identity of the autocephalous Churches.

With primacy immediately connected is the question of authority. While in the Orthodox Churches authority is decentralized and spread on synods and smaller councils, in the Roman Catholic Church still the Pope enjoys immense power and authority, both in matters of administration and of faith. The Second Vatican Council wished and promised collegiality and conciliarity, but it seems that the realisation of such a system needs a long time. Throughout the Vienna Consultations the Roman Catholic theologians exposed rather a reconciling spirit and a flexible approach to the question, declaring that "The Pope is not outside or above the *college of bishops*, he is part of it." But the crucial question remains the clearing and removal of the tensions between good wishes and practice:

"The Pope is not outside nor above the *college of bishops*: he is part of it. His place is right at its centre, and thus at its top. And that is also the right place for his special confession of faith. As according to the Lord's will St. Peter and the other Apostles form a single Apostolic collegium, correspondingly the Bishop of

Rome, the successor to Peter, and the bishops, the successors to the Apostles, are linked with one another' (Vat. II. Eccl. Constitution No. 22) Does current practice live up to this theory? This is the question that ought to be addressed not only to the pope and his assistants in the Vatican, but at the same time to all bishops. And even the pope's unique fundamental function cannot be fulfilled without the spirit of collegiality taking concrete form" (Paul-Werner Scheele, 4th Cons., p. 199).

The problem of the Roman primacy was retaken up and investigated according to the data of the New Testament, of the early Ecumenical Councils and the Church History. Paulos Mar Gregorios exposed his own biblical and historical interpretations and negated the claim of Rome for a jurisdictional primacy over the whole Church of Christ. He said:

"When we take the scriptural testimony as a whole, it does not say that Peter is the foundation of the Church. Peter himself makes no such claim in his own epistles (original or attributed) or in the Marcan Gospel which modern criticism holds to be Petrine in origin" (5th Cons. p. 127).

"The Nicene Canon which gives priority of honour to the Bishop of Rome, as we have already stated, was a matter of civil protocol at that time. Today if that primacy of honour is restored, it will be on grounds other than civil protocol, but largely on the basis of respect for the Nicene Canon, of respect for an old Tradition and of respect for the size and importance of that Church" (5th Cons., p. 132).

His suggestion for the solution of the problem was the same conclusion of the earlier Consultations, i.e. the development of a conciliar and collegial system of administration and authority in the universal Church:

"Authority in the Church should always be exercised on a conciliar or collegiate basis; this means that any one, whether he be Primate of a National Conference, Archbishop of a Province, Bishop of a Diocese, or Priest of a Parish would exercise his authority in the Church along with a Council-National or Regional Council, Provincial Synod, Diocesan Council (with Presbyters and others), or Parish Council" (5th Cons., p. 135).

Cardinal Dr. Franciscus König in his short study on the "Roman Primacy as a Historical Development" emphasized the fact that the Christian Church from the very beginning has exposed some multiformity in various parts of the world. He quoted St. John (17), Canon 34 of the "Apostolic Canons", Canon 6 of the Council of Nicaea, as well as the Ecumenical Decree No 14 of the Second Vatican Council and "Euntes in mundum No 10" (on the occasion of the Millennium of the Russian Orthodox Church) of Pope John Paul II, and tried to explain the difference of understanding primacy in the Churches of the West and East. As conclusion the Cardinal did not present any clear statement; he rather launched ecclesiological questions on the future conciliar structure of the Church. In a concluding remark Krikorian too put forward a similar question:

"What should be the structure of the Ecumenical Church, an organic jurisdictional body or a unity of communities bound together in bonds of love, harmony and essential dogmas? Some theologians are convinced that if the

Churches could form and constitute a conciliar Community, then it would be easier to solve the problems of primacy and authority" (5th Cons., p. 142)

Paulos Mar Gregorios: Father Tillard's paper is interesting for his conclusions come from the outside. "They are very sobering to me, but I also know that there always has been a large common ground of agreement." The five joint communiqués answer many of the questions Fr. Tillard raised. Let us look at where we have agreed. Communiqués have a larger value than individual papers!

Let us specify what we have agreed upon, for Primacy also exists in the Orthodox Churches. Where are the difficulties? Orientals accept Primacy, but is universal jurisdiction a necessary aspect of Primacy? The Oriental Churches have become universal themselves: how do they live Primacy in this situation?

Father Tillard: I have written this paper according to the demand of PRO ORIENTE and have also read all the communiqués. But the view which Paulos Mar Gregorios just now gave of Primacy and universal jurisdiction is not in tune with that of the communiqués.

Professor Suttner: From the topic of Primacy in general we soon came to the Primacy of the Pope. Let us see it on the different levels: each primus within any unity of a church exerts Primacy. As points of interest I see on page 15: "the presidency of an ecumenical council could be taken over by the heads of different churches at different occasions."¹⁰) On page 17 the question is interesting why in the Oriental Churches authority is decentralized and on page 18 it is stressed that Primacy exists on different levels.

Secretary General Stirnemann: There are more points of the Communiqués in the booklet to be considerate. He reads them to the participants.¹¹)

Father Tillard: My task has been to read all the papers and to find out some specific points which could be important for future discussions. I have not evaluated but quoted participants as V.C. Samuel. The problem of Primacy has also to do with questioning the Orthodox tradition. Primacy is not only a matter of jurisdiction. I find it very important that V.C. Samuel says: "The Holy Spirit is alive and acting not only with the leaders of the churches but also with the communities." This insight is in tune with Pope Paul VI approving the documents of Vatican II replacing the words "sacro approbante concilio" by "una cum patribus concilii" and "quae synodaliter statuta sunt". In fact I have taken more care of the Oriental opinion in my paper than of the Catholic one.

Bishop Krikorian: We recognize a very great development by Vatican II but there stays the contradiction between obvious practice and the theory of Vatican II.

Father George: Let us distinguish clearly between universal and local Primacy. Universal Primacy is our Oriental problem, if the Pope exerts it as a universal pastor. Further we should think about what "ecclesia universalis" and "consensus fidelium"

10) Booklet No. 1, p. 15

11) The Primacy-related Extracts from the Five Communiqués can be found at p. 11f. of this booklet, the Primacy-related Extracts from the Summaries of the Five Vienna Consultations on pp.13-36 of this booklet.

mean. We Orientals cannot forget our historical experiences with Rome. The Eastern churches have a conciliar concept.

Professor Harnoncourt: We have to distinguish which Primacy we are speaking about. Every head is in a leading service. Referring to the bishop's Primacy I would rather call it authority within an episcopate and not Primacy. Regarding the Pope we have to distinguish the different levels on which he can speak. Distinction is also necessary between official declarations, practice, consensus fidelium. Moreover, it is not the Pope, but the Roman Curia which is leading the jurisdictional style.

Professor Suttner: The Pope can act and speak on the following different levels:

- Bishop of Rome
- Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Province of Rome
- Primate of Italy
- Patriarch of the West
- Head of the Catholic Church

In addition he is the sovereign of the Vatican State. This has to be considered. Therefore I ask you: do we really have no sacramental ordination higher than episcopacy?

Bishop Krikorian: In the Armenian Orthodox Church the Catholicos is consecrated because of his privileges which the other bishops do not have.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: Our task is to see what we have already agreed upon. We have no problem with Primacy. The problem is the jurisdiction and authority of a patriarch. In our church the head is called patriarch but another bishop is the Primate. May I quote professor De Vries who stated that the first millennium of Christian history is very helpful to us. It shows that the Popes exercised little power. They could not exercise as much power as in the second millennium. We have to find solutions for the third millennium!

Bishop Krikorian: Cardinal Ratzinger made the same statement about the role of the Popes in the first and the second millennium at a PRO ORIENTE meeting in Graz.¹²)

Professor Suttner: This paper has been republished by Ratzinger when he already was Cardinal in Rome and head of the Holy Office.

(Interruption of the discussion as H. E. Cardinal König is entering)

Cardinal König: May I repeat some short and very personal remarks already made years ago:

We must have a vision of our future unity.

We cannot change the past but we need a new approach.

The world of the future will not ask us about our past but people will ask us: Who is Jesus Christ? What is his message for our time?

Theological discussion is necessary but looking into the future we must know how we witness our Lord Jesus Christ and his message for our time in the right way.

Father Bouwen: We must clarify the kinds of Primacy we mean. The Primacy exercised now is the one of the second millennium, practised in the Western Church only. We should rediscover the practice of the first millennium together and not each side alone

12) Ökumene-Konzil-Unfehlbarkeit: Ed.: Foundation PRO ORIENTE. Vienna/ Innsbruck 1979, pp. 208-215 ("Predictions for the future of ecumenism", see also an extract of that paper in this booklet page 85 - 87)

for herself. Pope John Paul II mentioned that the stumbling block for unity was and is the question of Primacy, when Patriarch Dimitrios I was in Rome on December 7th, 1987.¹³⁾ Then he also advocated to study and solve this problem together.

Primacy is a service of communion (unity) among the churches. It is necessary to work for communion, not for jurisdiction. We have to study that together from our experience and the needs: how can we be united facilitating the communion in liturgy, witness and service? The fact and importance of the local church must be taken into consideration. This is where the church lives in the Eucharist around the local bishop.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: We should discuss the referring passage in the communiqué of the 5th Consultation.¹⁴⁾ Primacy can never be separated from collegiality.

Bishop Krikorian: First we could read on page 102.¹⁵⁾ Members of the Catholic Church had insisted on it. How do we understand it?

Father Tillard: We have to start with the realization of God's desire, namely mankind in Koinonia with God and his will. This is realized through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist which is the synaxis. But the sacramental celebration must then influence and strengthen the whole life of the community.

In Vatican II the bishop is called "vicarius Christi" but the community of bishops must be in communion with the other large communities. The bishops have to be in collegiality. This comes from the synodality of the church. The Catholic Church says: because of the long history and the special nature of the church where St. Peter and St. Paul preached, lived and died, Rome has a specific mandate. The bishop of Rome is elected by the Cardinals. He has not to interfere in the affairs of the local bishop. There is one exception: when it comes to problems of Koinonia with other local churches, e.g.: the writing of NN is dangerous for the Koinonia (communion) of the church. This is meant as a unique service of unity.

Bishop Krikorian: I think there are problems regarding the practice of these papal interventions.

Amba Bishoy: The church of the apostles should be the basis of our studies. Professor Harnoncourt said "without St. Peter the apostles are not the church". What happened after the martyrdom of St. Peter? Others stayed alive. What was the condition of primacy and the role of the Bishop of Rome under these circumstances? We know that it is said in the New Testament: St. Peter was sent to Samaria, together with St. Paul. Is this the model of Primacy?

We also know from the New Testament that for a while the apostles refused to accept St. Peter after his baptizing of Cornelius and his flock. The jurisdiction at that time was clear. St. Paul contested St. Peter in the case of the Jewish law.

We have to look deeply into every small event written in the Acts and the Gospels. St. Peter founded the church of Antioch. Why is not Antioch the throne of Primacy? I regard these remarks and questions as a help for opening the way to a new approach.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: The first Christian generation was unique. Not the New

13) Information Service 66 (1988) p. 29f.

14) Booklet No. 1, p. 102f.

15) Booklet No. 1, p. 102

Testament is the only normative basis but the apostolic practice. We have to ask: What did they do?

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: The special mandate of the Bishop of Rome, presented by Father Tillard, is very good for the Church of the West, but it doesn't concern the Oriental Catholic Churches and Patriarchs in history. If a special mandate of the Pope is advocated, we have to take into account the experience of the Oriental Catholic Churches!

Professor Harnoncourt: The idea and practice of Primacy in the New Testament is changing. Consider the role of St. James or St. Andrew, the brother of St. Peter. Jesus Christ himself said: you should not struggle for the first place.

The New Testament reaches into the time after the death of the apostles. Even history is consequently a principle of development within the Church and therefore important for our days.

Pope Paul VI is mentioned as having declared openly: the councils of the second millennium were not ecumenical like the former ones. After the division up to Vatican II there were only councils of the West. Therefore they are not models for finding unity.

Pope John Paul II said to Patriarch Dimitrios: The task of understanding and practising the right form of Primacy we have to solve together.¹⁶⁾

Father George: Service of unity of the Church is a recent expression. Is it a positive response to Orthodox concerns? The Pope, in his view, is a super-episcopus over the local bishop.

All heresies were dangerous. The task of solving such problems went to the council of bishops and could not be the task of a single person.

Father Tillard: It was Pope Leo I already who called himself "servus servorum Dei". In most Eastern traditions the most important verse regarding the Pope is not Mt. 16/18, but Lk. 22/32: "You will be defeated in the trials but afterwards you have to confirm the others." We know that Pope Paul VI said: my title is "I am your diaconus".

Bishop Krikorian: Is the present Pope acting as a servant of the servants of God? The Armenian Catholicos cannot speak ex cathedra though he is elected on a broader basis.

Father Bouwen: We must ask ourselves: Is there the need and room, as a principle, on the universal level, for a ministry of universal communion. If it really is, how can it be exercised? In this respect we must take into account historical experience. Mistakes however are no arguments against the principle.

Bishop Krikorian: There are models of traditions: The Roman Catholic, the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox. How do we come to the new and common model?

Amba Bishoy: The New Testament is not supporting the Protestant view. Tradition is a safeguard but we cannot neglect the New Testament, we interpret it in view of our traditions.

If jurisdiction is only in the hands of the Patriarch, how can church be governed? What happens, if this Patriarch is going a wrong way? In our church he can be controlled by other Patriarchs.

When I read the words of the New Testament "confirm all your brothers", then I can

16) Osservatore Romano (December 7/8, 1987), p. 5

interpret these words as following: Jesus did not say, confirm all your brothers! Confirm those who are in danger or who suffer from temptation!

Professor Suttner: We Catholics have to learn a lot of things regarding our relations with the Oriental Catholics. When the Oriental Christians made their union with Rome it should always have been clear that the Pope has no right to interfere like in the Western Patriarchate, for they belong to Eastern Patriarchates.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: History is a legitimate norm. But how do you distinguish between history and tradition? History as such is not normative. The Western tradition should not be normative for the whole Church. The example of the Council of Florence shows to us a unity which the Orthodox Churches have refused, to which they gave no reception.

Amba Bishoy: I have two questions regarding Primacy:

- 1) Does the consecration of a bishop require permission by the Pope?
- 2) Jesus Christ had no successors. He is still alive. The apostles died and had successors. What happened when St. Peter died but other apostles were still alive?

Professor Suttner: Each church has a certain discipline how a bishop is created. In our

Professor Harnoncourt: In the Roman Catholic rite of ordination the people are asked, Catholic Church the Bishop of Rome, the Western Patriarch, is nominating the bishops. In the Eastern Patriarchates the Local Churches elect their bishops.

if they oppose the candidate or not. Then he brings up the question: what does Romanitas mean? The answer could bring better understanding.

Cardinal König: If the see of a bishop is vacant, the Pope in his conscience is obliged to listen to those who are informed. It is a human problem to find out who is a good advisor.

Saturday, June 29th: 4 p.m.

Second working session. Chair: Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian

Magister Winkler presents and explains the Roman Catholic model which he has worked out. He mentions that it is very difficult to put a living church in a structure. This model was prepared according to the Canon Law what has brought a lot of tension.

Pope

Titles: Bishop of Rome, Vicarius Christi, Head of the Catholic Church, Patriarch of the Occident, Primat of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of Vatican City, Servant to the Servants of God.

Authority: Primacy means the ministry of sanctification, teaching and leadership, which includes:

- suprema potestas
- plena potestas
- potestas immediata
- potestas universalis

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 331-5)

Universal Episcopacy

has together with the Pope the *suprema* and *plena potestas*. The universal authority is shown in an Ecumenical Council (e.g. Vatican II).

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 336-41)

Synod of Bishops

assembly of bishops to advise the Pope and to show the spirit of community between the Pope and the bishops.

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 342-48)

Sacred College of Cardinals

counsels the Pope and is responsible for the election of the Pope.

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 349-59; ApCons.

"Romano Pontifici eligendo", 1.10. 1975

(AAS 67, 1975, p. 609-45)

Nuncio (or other Legati Romani Pontificis)

information about the Church in/of a certain country, connection with the Holy See, diplomatic mission and representation of the Holy See.

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 362-67)

Conference of Bishops

members are the bishops of a certain territory, region or country (e.g. Austria).

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 447-59)

Bishop of a Diocese

pastor proprius of a particular Church. In charge of his diocese and responsible for the unity of the universal Church.

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 381-402)

Curia of the Diocese

supports the Bishop to fulfill his pastoral, tribunal and administrative duty.

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 469-94)

Council of Priests, Synod of the Diocese (clergy and laity), Pastoral Council...

counsel the bishop.

(comp. CIC 1983, cann. 495-502; 460-68; 511-14)

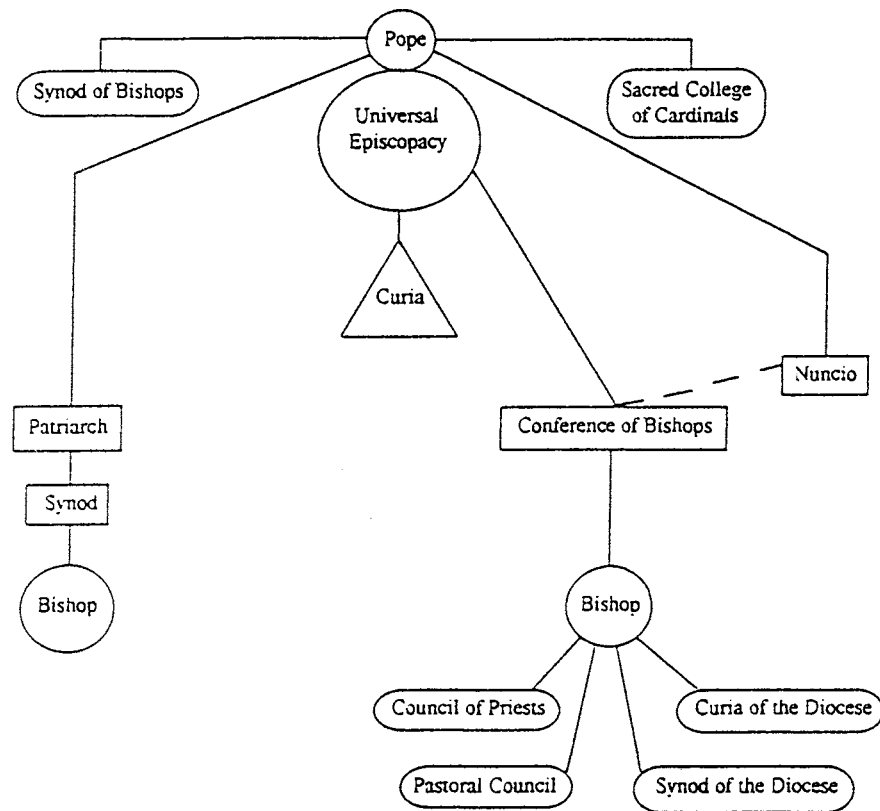
Oriental Churches (united with Rome)

have their own specific structure. This is not to exclude a *Conference of Bishops* nor different executive or consulting bodies (as seen in the Latin Church). The *Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches* is responsible for their bishops. There are 21 autonomous Oriental united Churches (*Ecclesiae sui iuris*); they have their own legal body: the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* (CCEO 1990).

Because of Vatican II a reform of the Curia has been necessary and came into being with the Apostolic Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* (Paul VI, 15. 8. 1967). The organogram based on this Constitution, the Instruction *Pastor Bonus* (John Paul II, 28. 6. 1988), the *Osservatore Romano* (No. 20, 17. 5. 1991) and the *Annuario Pontificio per l'Anno 1991* (Città del Vaticano 1991).

The institutions of the Roman Curia (Congregations, Councils, Tribunals, Offices, Commissions and Committees) are equal in rank. The Secretary of State, however, has some coordination duty. Most of the institutions are dependent upon the Pope who nominates their members.

Chart I: Structure of the Roman Church according to the Canon Law
(C. I. C. 1983)



ORIENTAL CHURCHES

LATIN CHURCHES

- Governing
- Deliberative
- △ Deliberative/Executive
- Executive

Secretariat of State

immediate support of the Pope to lead the Church. Coordination of the Curia, the Nuntii, papal politics and diplomacy (together with the Governor and the Prefecture of Vatican City). The *Central Statistics Office* is incorporated.

Congregations

are managed by a cardinal with a secretary and some subsecretaries in some instances. Members are cardinals and bishops of dioceses. Consultors and other experts are usually called in.

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith: protection and promotion of Christian faith, ethics and morals.

Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches: responsible for all matters concerning the Oriental Churches (united with the Holy See). There are as many offices as united

Oriental Churches.

Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and the Divine Worship: responsible for the liturgy and questions of cult as well as questions concerning the discipline of the sacraments, like the validity of ordination, granting dispensations etc.

Sacred Congregation for Causes of Saints: implementation and execution of canonizations.

Sacred Congregation for Bishops: coordination of the pastoral work of the bishops, foundation and change of dioceses, supervision of bishops and conferences of bishops. The *Papal Commission for Latin America* is incorporated.

Sacred Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples: direction and coordination of the missionary work and missionary societies.

Sacred Congregation for the Clergy: responsible for the spirituality of the clergy and their discipline, for preaching, apostolic work, religious instruction and questions concerning means of subsistence of the clergy.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education: responsible for the academic education, Papal High Schools, Universities and Faculties and other educational establishments.

Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes: responsible for monasteries, societies, orders and secular institutes.

Councils

have more or less the same structure as the congregations. They are managed by a cardinal or an archbishop. Members could also be laymen.

Papal Council for the Laity: all matters dealing with the mission of the laity.

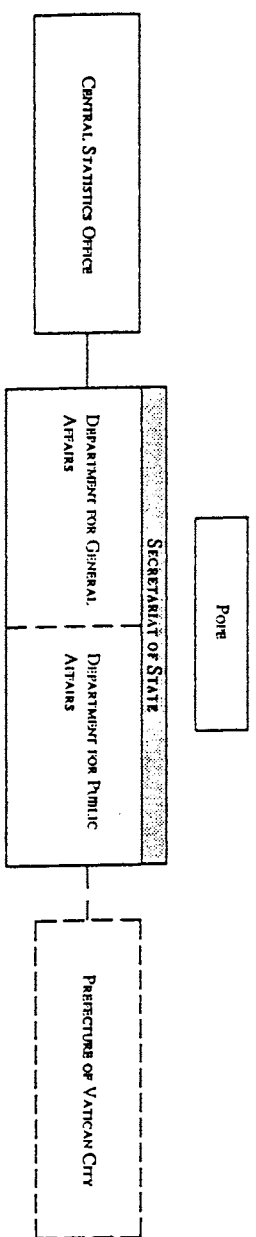
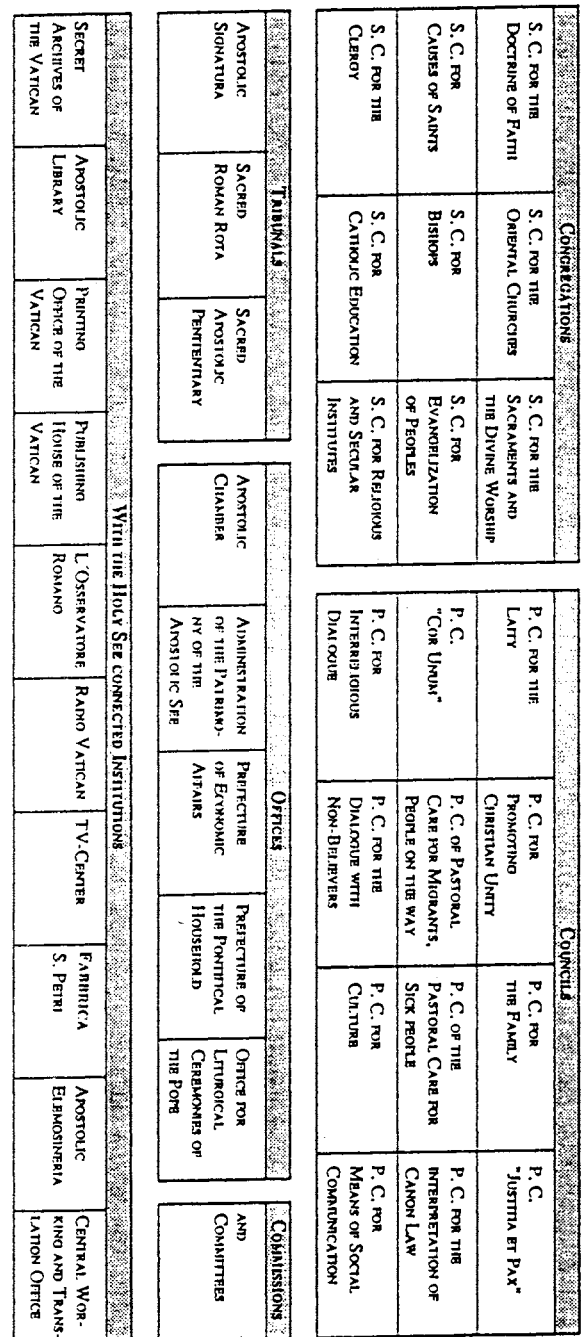
Papal Council for Promoting Christian Unity: ecumenical theological work, bilateral and multilateral dialogues.

Papal Council for the Family: research of problems concerning the family.

Papal Council "Justitia et Pax": promotion of Christian ethics; social work; research of problems concerning justice and peace.

Papal Council "Cor Unum": coordination of Charity Organization Societies.

Chart II: Structure of the Roman Curia



Congregations		
S. C. FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH	S. C. FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES	S. C. FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND THE DIVINE WORSHIP
S. C. FOR CAUSES OF SAINTS	S. C. FOR BISHOPS	S. C. FOR EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES
S. C. FOR THE CLERGY	S. C. FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION	S. C. FOR RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR INSTITUTES
Councils		
P. C. FOR THE LITURGY	P. C. FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY	P. C. FOR THE FAMILY
P. C. "COR UNUM"	P. C. OF PASTORAL CARE FOR MIGRANTS, PEOPLE ON THE WAY	P. C. OF THE PASTORAL CARE FOR SICK PEOPLE
P. C. FOR INTERDIOCESE DIALOGUE	P. C. FOR THE DIALOGUE WITH NON-BELIEVERS	P. C. FOR CULTURE
		P. C. FOR THE MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Papal Council of Pastoral Care for Migrants and People on the Way: pastoral care of tourists, refugees etc.
Papal Council for the Pastoral Care of Sick People: pastoral care in hospitals, at home etc.
Papal Council for the Interpretation of Canon Law: interpretation and revision of the CIC, CCEO etc.
Papal Council for Interreligious Dialogue: theological work, contacts with Moslems, Hindus etc.
Papal Council for the Dialogue with Non-Believers: study of atheism etc.
Papal Council for Culture: different questions concerning cultural assets of the Church.
Papal Council for Means of Social Communication: problems of mass media and communication, communication of all kinds etc.

Tribunals

Apostolic Signatura: supervision of tribunals, court of appeal for acts of administration and conflicts of competence.
Sacred Roman Rota: ordinary court of the Holy See for litigations worldwide.
Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary: granting absolutions, dispences etc.; questions of indulgences.

Commissions and Committees

for example: *Papal Commission for the Bible*, *International Theological Commission*, *Papal Commission for Sacred Archaeology*, *Papal Committee for the Study of History* etc.

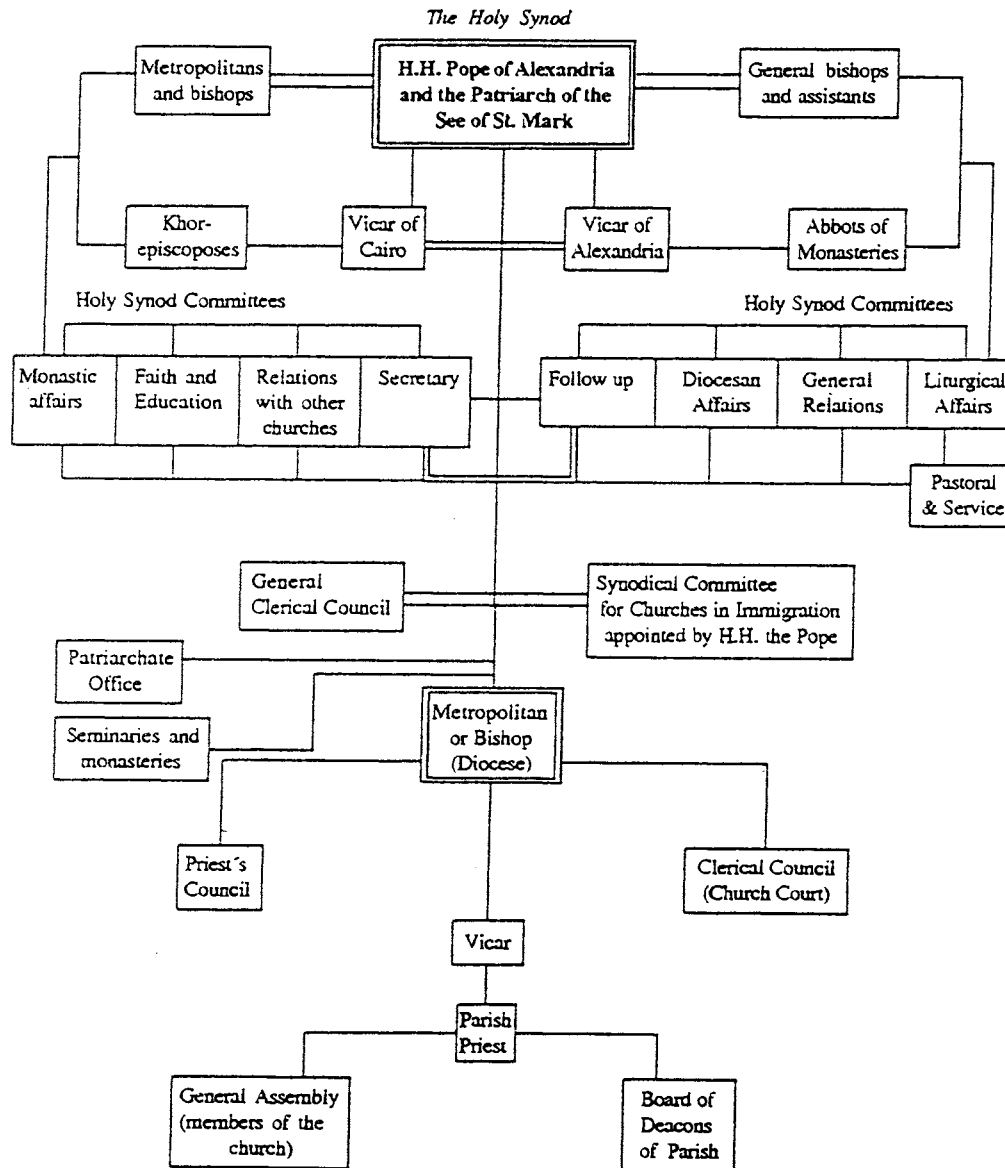
Offices

are administrative bodies.
Apostolic Chamber: administration of the property and the rights of the Holy See during the vacancy of the Holy See.
Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See
Prefecture of Economic Affairs: controlling and coordination of all the finances.
Prefecture of the Pontifical Household: papal ceremonies, audiences, travels (together with the State Secretariat) etc.
Office for Liturgical Ceremonies of the Pope

Professor Suttner: I cannot find the ecclesiology of Vatican II in this organogram. The Oriental Canon Law has given back some of the authority to the Eastern Catholic Churches. The Codex for the Eastern Rites 1990 has not been considered.
Professor Harmoncourt: Every bishop belongs to the universal episcopacy. He is a member and not dependent. Regarding the Roman Curia its members are not only functionaries but many are local bishops like the bishop of Paris or the bishop of Cologne.

Amba Bishoy presents the organogram of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Chart III: Coptic Orthodox Church



Father Bouwen: In former times the Turks imposed upon the Coptic Church a council, called "maglis milly". Does this community council still exist?

Amba Bishoy: This council has been revived by Pope Shenouda as a consultative board.

Professor Harnoncourt: I conclude that the Patriarch can indirectly interfere by the means of the synodical committee for diocesan affairs, even against the will of the bishop.

Amba Bishoy: The bishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church originally were members of the Holy Synod, but later, with more bishops consecrated, they formed an own Holy Synod, separated from the Coptic.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim presents the Syrian Orthodox organogram. Especially the three synods are discussed (**Chart IV, next page**)

Syrian Orthodox Church:

1. According to the constitution of the S.O.C.A. (=Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch), which decided in the last Holy Synod to be revised, and a new committee formed by five metropolitans and presided by the Patriarch himself, the Holy General Synod is the Supreme Spiritual and Administrative body in the Universal S.O.C.A. The Patriarch of Antioch and all the East is the Supreme Head of the Church and He presides over the Holy General, Patriarchal and Local Synods.

2. The Catholicos of the East is local head of the S.O.C. in India.

3. Each elected metropolitan is the primate in his diocese.

4. The Patriarch of Antioch is also responsible for his diocese (Damascus) and for:

1. Ecumenical relations
2. Theological Seminary
3. Publications and the Patriarchal Magazine
4. Monasteries and all the monks
5. External affairs
6. Patriarchal delegates and Patriarchal dioceses
7. Any individual Church
8. Finance Committee

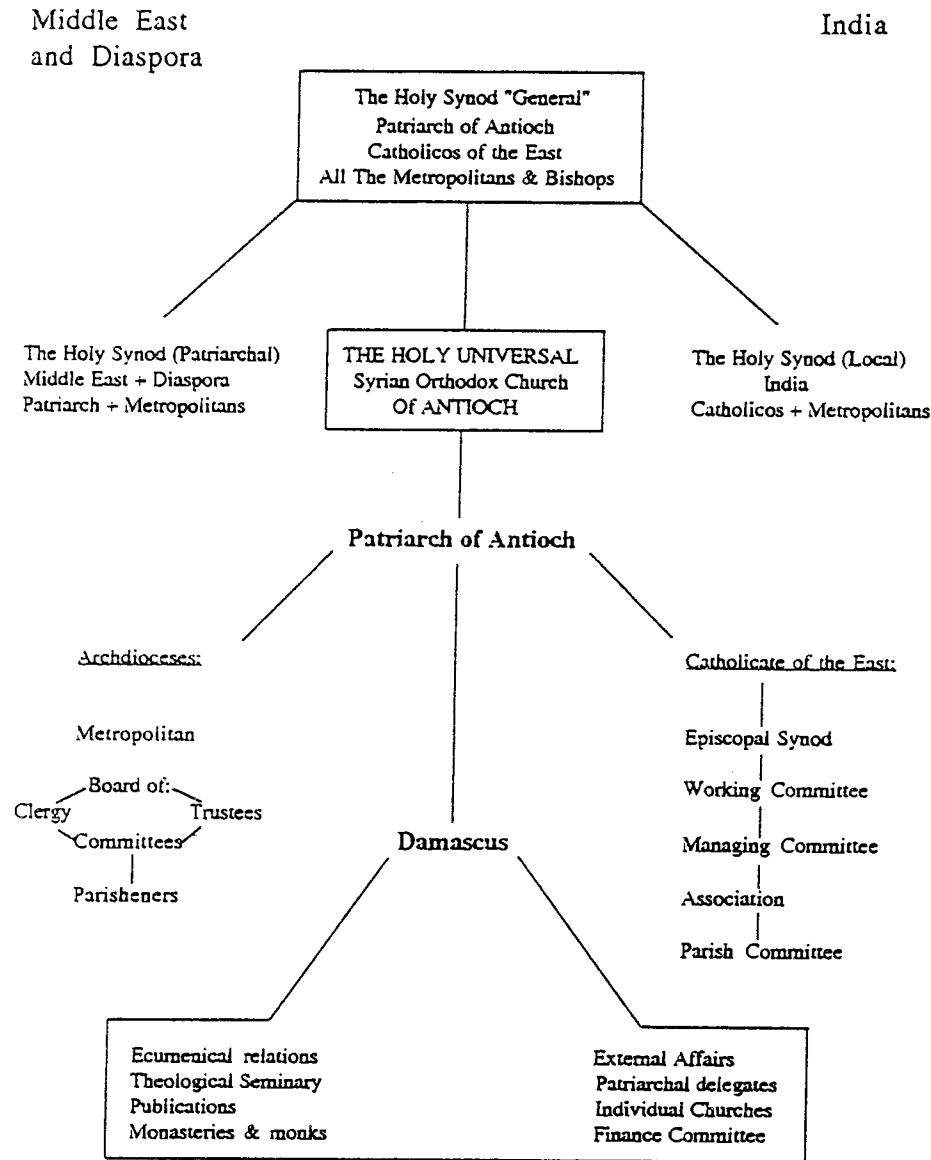
5. The Holy General Synod is the place where the major decisions are taken such as:

1. The constitution of the Universal Church
2. The decisions concerning relations with other churches
3. Election of the Patriarch

6. Each Synod (Patriarchal, Local) has to take decisions which concern its own jurisdiction.

7. The Metropolitan should have two boards. Board of clergy, Board of trustees (Laity: male, female). All the administrative decisions could be taken only by the board of trustees presided by the metropolitan. Any spiritual concern is to do with the board of clergy also presided by the metropolitan.

Chart IV: Syrian Orthodox Church



8. The Committees for: education, church buildings, schools, charity, finance are linked directly with the board of trustees, and spiritually under the guidance of the clergy.

9. There are certain limits for the Patriarch, the Catholicos, the metropolitans which are described by the constitution.

Bishop Krikorian presents the **Armenian organogram (Chart V, next page)**. It is mentioned that the Armenians were representatives for all non-Chalcedonian Churches in Jerusalem. It can be seen that the Oriental Orthodox Churches have different traditions.

1. The Head of the **Armenian Apostolic Church** is the **Catholicos** who in relation to the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople bears also the title of "*Supreme Patriarch*".

The Catholicos presides over the Supreme Spiritual Council, Bishops' Conference and National - ecclesiastical General Assembly. In his absence the *locum tenens* or the vicar general holds the chair and conducts the meetings.

Only the Catholicos is entitled to consecrate bishops and *myron*. At the ordination of bishop 2 - 3 bishops accompany the Catholicos and during the ceremonies of the consecration of *myron* 12 bishops assist him.

The Head of the Armenian Church has the right to proclaim decisions and declarations concerning social, ritual and moral problems in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

Changes or reforms must be discussed and decided in advance by the Bishops Conference. Doctrinal questions can be rephrased or reformulated only by the Conference of Bishops and with the agreement of the National-ecclesiastical General Assembly.

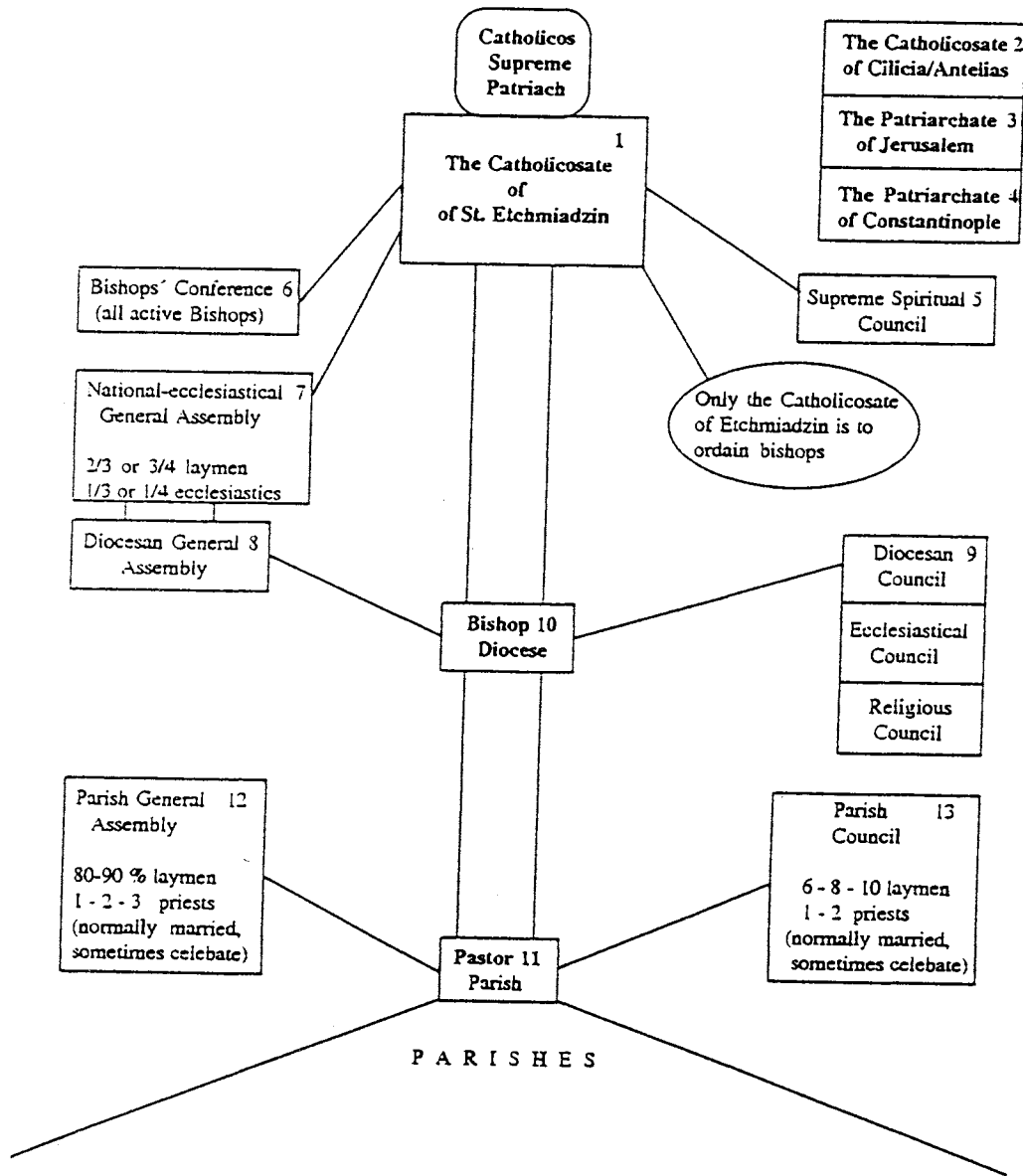
The theory of infallibility is unknown to the Armenian Church. The Catholicos can be removed or dismissed from his throne if he deviates from the traditional dogmas of the Church.

2. The **Catholicate of Cilicia** came into existence in XVth century as 1441 the general Catholicate was removed from Sis(Cilicia) to Etchmiadzin at its original locality. The Patriarchate of Sis was founded for the Armenians of Cilicia. During the genocide of 1915-1918 the Armenian population of Cilicia was also deported to Syria. The last Catholicos of Sis, Sahak Khabayan, was given by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Eghishe Dourian, the dioceses of Damascus, Beirut and Cyprus. Consequently in 1929 Khabayan reestablished the See of Cilicia in Antelias near Beirut by the agreement of the French high-commissioner Henri Ponsot.

The Catholicate of Cilicia enjoys complete autonomy, but in the important questions of theology, moral and discipline which concern whole the Armenian Church, only the Catholicate of St. Etchmiadzin has the right to take and decree decisions.

Like the Catholicos of St. Etchmiadzin, the Catholicos of Cilicia too is entitled to consecrate bishops and *myron*.

Chart V: Armenian Apostolic Church



By the Religious Council of the Catholicosate of Cilicia

WHILE PRESENTING THE STATUS OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH THE FOLLOWING POINTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH GIVEN ACCORDINGLY

A. Since 1441 the one Armenian Church has had uninterruptedly two Catholicos independent jurisdictions:

- a) The Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, and
- b) The Catholicosate of Cilicia (since 1930 re-established in Antelias, Lebanon).

B. Canonically, historically and traditionally the Catholicos in the Armenian Church has two major rights and privileges that exclusively belong to him:

- a) The consecration of the bishops, and
- b) The blessing of the Myron (the Holy Chrism).

The Catholicos is the person who receives special consecration (anointing), which is one of the most elaborate ceremonies of our Church.

Today these two rights are equally reserved for the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin and the Catholicos of Cilicia.

C. Within our Armenian Church we have also two Sees that are known under the name of Patriarchate: The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Heads of these two Sees have the rank of Archbishops who enjoy a certain degree of internal autonomy but their ecclesiastical rank is not equal to that of the Catholicos. That is why they cannot consecrate their bishops nor bless the Holy Chrism as these two rights canonically belong only to the person who is a consecrated Catholicos (Even the locum tenens of a Catholicosate in the case of vacancy does not possess these rights). Their bishops are consecrated by the Catholicos of All Armenians of Etchmiadzin and they receive the Holy Chrism from the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. That is why the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin is sometimes referred to also as "Supreme Patriarch". Of course, they (the Patriarchates) are historically and in the present times very important Church centers but canonically not on the same level as the Catholicosate.

It is on this basis that our two Catholicosates participate in the World Council of Churches as full members. It is on this basis that our two Catholicosates have always sent observers or representatives to the Vatican Council, to Lambeth Conference, to Orthodox Churches' celebrations and consultations.

These are the fundamental facts and norms of our participation in the ecumenical life and work of the Christian Churches.

Therefore, the descriptive form of the Armenian Church should be the following:

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

A) The Catholicosate of All Armenians (Etchmiadzin)

- H.H. Catholicos Vazgen I.

B) The Catholicosate of Cilicia (Antelias)

- H.H. Catholicos Karekin II.

The Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople should appear under the Catholicosate of All Armenians under the name of the Catholicos. In fact, when H.H. Catholicos Vazgen I. visited His Holiness Pope Paul VI, the two Patriarchs accompanied him.

Continuation of the Description of Bishop Krikorian

3. The Armenian **Patriarchate of Jerusalem** came into existence in 1311 as the Armenian monasteries and churches of Palestine rejected the decision of the Synod of Sis (1307) which under the pressure of the political situation had declared union with the Roman Church. Originally this Patriarchate was accepted as the juridical body representing and protecting the rights and interests of all Ancient-Oriental Orthodox Churches in Palestine.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is governed by constitutional monastic statutes which exclusively authorize the Brotherhood of the Monastery of St. James to take all decisions without any participation of the laity.

4. The Armenian **Patriarchate of Constantinople** was established in the middle of the XVIth century by the encouragement of the Ottoman Sultans as a counterbalance to the Byzantine or Ecumenical Patriarchate. About four centuries the authority of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was extended over the Armenian Dioceses and churches within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. After 1915 or 1923 it became the "*Patriarchate of the Armenians of Turkey*" with limited rights and privileges.

The **Supreme Spiritual Council** is the Synod of seven bishops, including 3 or 4 consulting lay-members, which assists the Catholicos of St. Etchmiadzin in making decisions for current affairs of the Monastery of Etchmiadzin and of the Armenian Church in general. There are three bishops from Diaspora who travel to Armenia whenever there are important issues, otherwise for daily questions the Council holds meetings periodically.

6. the **Bishops' Conference** is the highest authority of the Armenian Church, under the presidency of the Catholicos, which takes the final decisions on theological, moral and canonical questions.

7. The main function of the **National-ecclesiastical General Assembly** is the election of Catholicos. Issues pertaining to organization and finance fall also within the scope

of the rights and duties of this Assembly. Whenever specially important questions arise - national, administrative or canonical, the Bishops' Conference and the National - ecclesiastical General Assembly may hold mixed meetings.

8. the **Diocesan General Assembly** is entitled to elect the bishop. In yearly meetings it also examines and decides on the more important administrative and financial issues.

9. The **Diocesan Council** is the governing body of a Diocese under the presidency of the Bishop. The chairman is always a layman. It consists of 15 - 20 laypeople and of 3 - 5 ecclesiastics.

10. The **Bishop** is the spiritual head of a diocese. In ritual, moral and ecclesiastical questions he is the decision-making instance. For dispersed communities in different countries the Catholicos is entitled to assign a "Patriarchal Delegate" as diocesan bishop.

11. A **parish** is the smallest administrative unit of the Church (*paroikia/parochia*). A group of parishes in a city or a country constitute a diocese. The ecclesiastical head of a parish is the pastor, representing the diocesan bishop. Sometimes the Catholicos can offer a parish the privilege of maintaining direct relations with the Mother See in St. Etchmiadzin (*Prelature*). Until 1980 Vienna was such a prelature which took care also for the Armenian communities in Germany.

12. The **Parish Assembly** elects the pastor consulting and in agreement with the Diocesan Bishop. In yearly meetings it confirms the accounts and assesses the new budget. Also the statutes of the community have to be affirmed by this Assembly, but the final confirmation is the right of the Bishop.

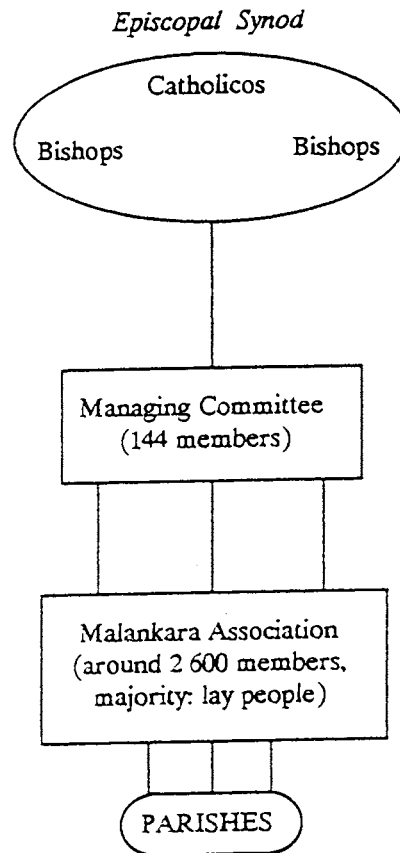
13. The **Parish Council** is the governing body of the community under the guidance of the Pastor. The laymen manage the immovables and real estates of the Church, take care of the finance and develop cultural activities. The Pastor is responsible especially for ecclesiastical, ritual and moral life of the Parish.

Father George presents the **Indian Orthodox** organogram. **Chart VI: next page**

The Parish Assembly. Every parish has an assembly consisting of all adult male members. The assembly, presided over by the vicar, manages all the affairs of the parish. The assembly annually elects a parish managing committee and a lay-steward who is the joint-steward along with the vicar of all the assets of the parish. (Some parishes have begun to elect adult female members to the parish managing committee).

The Diocesan Assembly. Every parish assembly elects the vicar and two lay members to the Diocesan assembly. The Diocesan assembly elects for 3 years two priests and four lay members to the Diocesan council together with the Diocesan Secretary. The Diocesan Metropolitan presides over the meetings of the assembly and the council. (Some dioceses now elect adult female members to the council).

Chart VI: The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India



The Malankara Association. Every parish elects a priest and two laymen to the Association, which includes the episcopal synod. This supreme representative body of the whole church is presided over by the Catholicos. A Lay Trustee and a Priest Trustee appointed by the Association together with the Catholicos cum Malankara Metropolitan manage the assets of the Church. There is an elected lay secretary for the Association (around 2 600 members).

The Managing Committee. The Association elects a Managing Committee of 144 members for 3 years. The Managing Committee which includes all members of the Episcopal Synod has a majority of lay membership. the managing committee manages the affairs of the Church as a whole.

The Bishops. The bishops are directly elected by the Association with the separate majority of the priests and lay persons present in the Association. The Episcopal Synod normally approves this election and the Catholicos together with other members of the synod consecrates the candidates. All bishops are assigned to dioceses. There are no titular bishops.

The Catholicos cum Malankara Metropolitan. The Catholicos is directly elected by the Malankara Association. The powers of the Catholicos include the consecration of prelates, presiding over the episcopal synod, declaring its decisions and implementing them, conducting administration as representative of the Synod and consecrating Holy Myron. He is honoured as the primus inter pares in the episcopal Synod.

The Episcopal Synod. All bishops are members of the Synod. The Synod has authority to decide in matters of faith, order and discipline. If there is any accusation against the Catholicos the Episcopal Synod can hear such accusations and make appropriate decisions.

Professor Harnoncourt: It is very interesting, for this system is the only one which has been worked out from the ecclesiological point of view. It can hardly be compared with the others.

Father George: In our church bishops are ordained for the whole church. Then they are assigned to a diocese.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: Our bishops are not delegates of the Patriarch.

Amba Bishoy: There is no church without bishops.

Magister Winkler: But the local church is realized by the community sharing the Eucharist.

Sunday, June 30th: 4 p.m.

Third working session. Chair: Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian

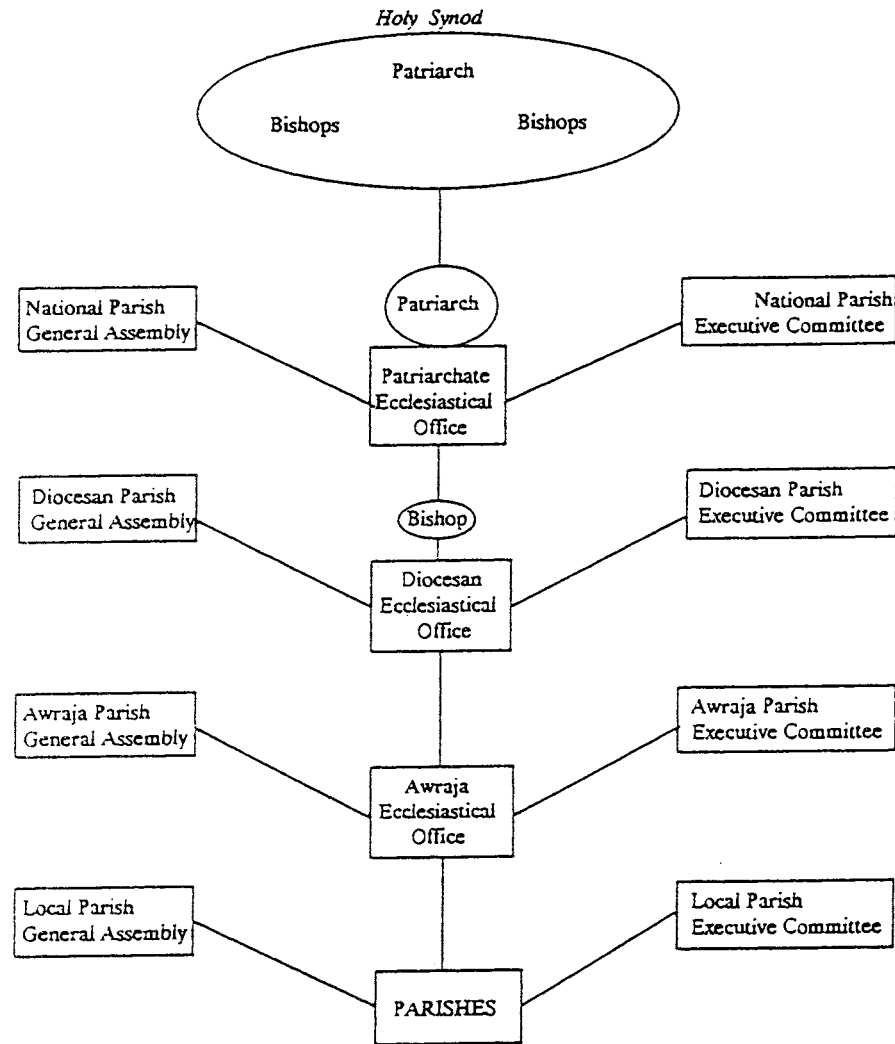
Paulos Mar Gregorios presents the **Ethiopian Orthodox** organogram (**Chart VII, next page**), remarking the "awraja" i.e. district organisation.

Below the Holy Synod, in the centre line, the hierarchy of the ecclesiastical offices is given.

- a) His Holiness the Patriarch is the Head of the Patriarchate ecclesiastical office.
- b) The bishop is the Head of the Diocesan office.
- c) The Awraja archpriest is the Head of the Awraja ecclesiastical office.
- d) The Heads of the Ecclesiastical offices at the different levels are the chairman of their corresponding Parish General Assemblies.

1. **Holy Synod:** All archbishops and bishops are members of the Holy Synod. The Holy Synod has its ordinary meetings twice a year. Extraordinary meetings can be called by H.H. the Patriarch.

Chart VII: Ethiopian Orthodox Church



The Holy Synod is the highest body responsible for the spiritual, administrative and juridical life of the church.

The Holy Synod consecrates Holy Myron.

2. **The Patriarch:** The Patriarch is elected from among the Holy Synod members by the members of the Holy Synod, administrators of the ancient cathedrals and monasteries and representatives of Parish Councils throughout the country. The Patriarch presides over the meetings of the Holy Synod and the National Parish General Assembly. He heads the Patriarchate Ecclesiastical office and overlooks at the administrative and spiritual activities of the church.

The name of H.H. is recited in the liturgical services of all the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in Ethiopia and abroad.

He is referred to as "His Holiness", the Patriarch and Head of archbishops and he is accorded all the honours due to his position.

3. **Bishop:** He is elected by the Holy Synod and by the representatives of Parish Councils from the diocese to which he is going to be assigned. He is consecrated by the Patriarch together with the other members of the Holy Synod. There are also titular bishops who have no specific dioceses.

The bishop has supreme responsibility for all the activities of the church in his diocese. He presides over the meetings of the Diocesan Parish General Assembly. The name of the bishop is recited in all the liturgical services of EOC churches in his diocese.

4. **The National Parish General Assembly and the National Parish Executive Committee:**

a) National Parish General Assembly: All archbishops, diocesan archpriests and representatives of clergy and laity attend this meeting. The Assembly is convened once a year. The Assembly makes decisions and recommendations on administrative and property matters of the church. The decisions and recommendations find their application following the approval of the Holy Synod.

b) National Parish Executive Committee: This executive committee is elected by the National Parish General Assembly. The committee has nine members. The secretary of the Head office of the Patriarchate acts as the chairman of the executive committee.

5. **Diocesan Parish General Assembly and the Diocesan Parish Executive Committee:**

a) Diocesan Parish General Assembly: The Awraja archpriests, representatives of Awraja clergy and laity constitute this meeting. The Diocesan Parish General Assembly meets once a year. The Diocesan Parish General Assembly is responsible for church matters in the diocese.

b) Diocesan Parish Executive Committee: The Diocesan Parish General Assembly elects a Diocesan Parish executive committee. The Diocesan archpriest acts as the chairman of the executive committee.

6. **Awraja Parish General Assembly and Awraja Parish Executive Committee:**

a) Awraja Parish General Assembly: The representatives of the Parish Councils in the Awraja constitute the Awraja Parish General Assembly. The Awraja archpriest presides over this assembly. The Awraja Parish General Assembly is the body responsible for all the church matters in the Awraja.

b) Awraja Parish Executive Committee: The Awraja Parish General Assembly elects an executive committee. The committee has five members. The Awraja archpriest is the chairman of the Awraja Parish Executive Committee.

7. Local Parish General Assembly and Local Parish Executive Committee:

a) Local Parish General Assembly: The Administrator of the church presides over this meeting. The Parish General Assembly is constituted by all members of the Parish Community. It meets twice a year. It is the body responsible for all church matters in the Parish.

b) Local Parish Executive Committee: The executive committee is elected by the Local Parish General Assembly. The administrator of the local parish church is the chairman of the executive committee. The executive committee has several subcommittees.

Bishop Krikorian: Contrary to the Roman Catholic Church the Oriental Orthodox Churches are more based on synods and councils and also frequently on democratic elections. There are five Oriental Orthodox traditions with differences in details. However, in the main lines they are similar. Another difference to the Roman Catholic Church is that in the Oriental Orthodox Churches the participation of laypeople has a long tradition whereas in the Roman Catholic Church laypeople have only consultative status without any authority for taking decisions.

In the Orthodox Churches the heads possess full authority but they are still under control and bishops' conferences decide in agreement. There is no decision by a single person. In the Holy Synod which elects the bishops the laity has a large percentage of membership. The Oriental bishop has to cooperate with others, he has limited rights to impose himself.

Professor Harnoncourt: The Oriental Churches have in common that the local church is predominant, but their patterns are quite different. The Roman Catholic Church however is worldwide with certain bishops' conferences for whole continents. How does communication function among the Oriental Churches? It is understood that they have full communion but how do they communicate? Is there anything similar to the Panorthodox Synod of the Byzantine Orthodox Church?

Secretary General Stirnemann: There is the impression that in the Oriental Churches it is more usual to act outside the established law than in the Roman Catholic Church. If one hears an Oriental Patriarch saying "I am the law", this is more the attitude which the Orientals attribute to the Pope and reject for themselves!

Bishop Krikorian: That may be true. Discipline and Canon Law are not as strict as in the Roman Catholic Church. This is both good and bad, but there is hardly room for abuse.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: Participation of laity in the Oriental Churches is dominant. In the fifth century the bishops used to be elected by the people and the priests. Stressing the importance of the board of trustees in our church I can say: if the members of the board reject anything, I have to follow them and cannot accomplish the respective project.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: All these six organograms show the situation of the last 50 years. Every local church has had a historical development, namely reactions to the demands of the present situation on top of the old structure, because some essential parts remained unchanged. I see the principle of coordination executed to the least extent in the Oriental Orthodox Churches, somewhat more in the Byzantine Orthodox and comparatively to the highest degree in the Roman Catholic Church. To me all

churches are local. The problem is however that the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox want to stay local and at the same time they want to be the big umbrella for all Christians.

For the Oriental Orthodox Churches after a first meeting in 1965 a standing committee of the conferences of Oriental Churches was set up and functioned for a while. Because of geographical and historical circumstances there had neither been any contact nor a common body before that time.

All the six churches involved in the present study seminar have both a hierarchical and conciliar structure. Regarding the relation between head and synod, for the Orientals the head is a part of the synod and there are two meetings every year. In the Roman Catholic Church there is an ecumenical synod only every 50 years or more. Therefore the Pope is gaining more power. The Pope of Alexandria is an exception on the Oriental side. He was the first who had authority and jurisdiction outside his diocese, namely in Egypt. In this church consequently the synod is less powerful and meets only occasionally. I also know violations of the principles in my own church, e.g. the way how the parish priest is chosen.

Father Tillard: What has been the influence of emigration to the Oriental Orthodox Churches? Are they no more territorial now? This has been a problem of the Roman Catholic Church in South America for example.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: The emigrants are no large factor. More important are Patriarchs who try to centralize. But the laypeople raise their voices for decentralization.

Father Tillard: Under Pope Paul VI the Roman Catholic Church has been faithful to the principle: a bishop should be ordained in his diocese. Pope John Paul II acts differently.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: Until 1957 all the Syrian Orthodox Churches were linked directly with the Patriarch. In that year the diaspora in America founded a new diocese. We try to keep the old structures but there is development: Once a year all the clergy, bishops and delegates meet to discuss the future. Liturgies in English did not succeed so far. We feel that the people are linked to the Patriarch more than the priests and bishops.

Bishop Krikorian: The diaspora has influenced the centralization of the power of the Catholicos since the 12th century. A certain control over the bishops who were elected by the communities is exerted because of the consecration in Etchmiadzin.

Father George: If the new dioceses demand to be an autocephalous church, would this be a solution in the future?

Professor Harnoncourt: We must distinguish between migration and immigration. There are mother- and daughter churches. If Greek Orthodox Christians come to Russia, where they are in full communion, they will not build a new church!

Secretary General Stirnemann: Present and past show us the opposite, even in the Roman Catholic Church: in the United States a century ago Polish Roman Catholics built their own churches. They could not stand the Irish and Italian influence.

Thomas Mar Themotheos: The same has happened with Syrians in India and even inside the Roman Catholic Church in India.

Magister Winkler: The organogram show the structures regarding jurisdiction, primacy and administration. What are the ecclesiological differences? Are there any?

Father Tillard: The Syro-Indian Orthodox Church is the only one to ordain bishops for the whole church. Priests however are ordained for a certain parish. In the Roman Catholic Church it is the other way.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: Many theological principles are violated in practice, e.g. one place - one bishop. In all the churches there are bishops without assignment for a special diocese.

Father Tillard: We say that visible communion is necessary.

Secretary General Stirnemann: Regarding lay participation we must distinguish. The church is always influenced by political development and circumstances but "political" does not automatically mean "democratic". In the Renaissance the Pope had to do what the college of Cardinals wanted.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: Democracy is a secular derivation from our principle that everyone baptized is a child of God. The church has a tendency to imitate successful structures of the secular society. Our idea of democracy in the church means that the laypeople should have more influence.

Father Tillard: I am surprised to hear about the democratic principle in the church. Let us look back: ours is the holistic principle. It is the way the church is involved. This distinction is crucial!

Bishop Krikorian: Cardinal König said that we need a new approach. Is there a possibility that the Roman Catholic Church brings a new approach to the last two councils and their authority and thus the authority of the head of the church?

Father Tillard: In the soul of the Catholic Church it is clear that the Pope is the head. The problem is: how is it realized? The Pope will make efforts to find ways to relate with other Patriarchates.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: Will the structure of the Roman Catholic Church be changed when the Oriental Orthodox Churches come in? The Oriental Catholic Patriarchs thought they would get more power coming in but they lost power.

Father Tillard: The first necessity must be an authentic desire for communion which is expressed by serious steps forward on both sides.

Bishop Krikorian: The Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Damaskinos said: we are ready to enter communion, if jurisdiction falls. ¹⁷⁾

Father Tillard: Before Vatican II the Catholic ecclesiology was not one of communion but of obedience. The new insights are the fruits of rediscovering the studies of patristic wisdom. We must discover the way Primacy has to be exercised.

Father Bouwen: The Orientals among themselves should find out the visible sign of communion. Sometimes

the Eucharist is celebrated together among different Oriental Orthodox Churches. In Jerusalem this has never been done.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: Our churches get together in a general synod as uniting body

but a protocol will not mean jurisdiction. We have unity in faith and doctrine. The visible communion with Rome as the only way of union however - there we disagree. It is a good thing but it is not an indispensable condition. We have developed several forms to express visible unity, e.g. Easter greetings between the Patriarchs.

Father Bouwen: This visible unity would be conciliarity.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: A primus inter pares is not essential to us.

Amba Bishop: This is the present situation of the Oriental Orthodox Churches: We had a council at Addis Ababa in 1978. The five churches are in communion. In our dialogue with the Byzantine Orthodox Church we are representing one family but with subdivisions. We are exchanging the results and news of any dialogue. No church can have a new development against recognized dogmas but they can have their own feasts and other local particularities. A necessity is the office.

Father George: If we talk about the visible sign of communion we Oriental Orthodox Churches have to recall our bad historical experience with the Roman Catholic Church.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: If the necessity arises to convene a supreme council we will agree.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: Any patriarch can invite the others for the council.

Amba Bishop: Primacy of honour, following the historical events, we can accept. But this would not mean that the Pope of Rome could periodically convoke the councils unless the other Patriarchs so ask him. He could have the Primacy of honour in the council and in the Eucharist. I cannot give a final reply.

Father Bouwen: The church is not governed by majorities but by consensus. One has to start an exchange of opinions to achieve consensus. The Pope would not need the right to initiate this exchange. We are all victims of our history, therefore we must distinguish between history and tradition. It is a fact that there has been no tradition among the Roman Catholic and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the second millennium until Vatican II.

Father Tillard: The Pope does not convoke, he receives a council.

Secretary General Stirnemann: Then there could be many Patriarchs to receive the new ecumenical council and not only the Pope. You claim the same right and importance for your Patriarchs as we claim for the Pope. Accordingly relatively small churches would have a vote whereas large national churches like the churches of Germany, France, United States etc. would not have a vote.

Professor Harnoncourt: We know that in our faith unity is existing: There is one Jesus Christ, one Spirit, one baptism, but this unity is not visible. We are responsible towards the world to testify unity. Our divisions however hinder this testimony. We should follow his Spirit but we are hindering his work. Ultimately we have to obey to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, not to the Pope or a Patriarch. Keeping this in our minds should make it easier for us to find a form of unity.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: I agree that we have the responsibility to make unity visible. Regarding the councils it can be said that no council has ever got pre-reception. This is a process which takes time. Important is: there is no veto. If some do not receive it we have to make efforts, continue the negotiations and plead with them to get unanimity.

Amba Bishop: How can the Primacy of honour be described and practiced? It was bad

17) Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreou. Überlegungen und Perspektiven für die ökumenischen Beziehungen zwischen Ost und West. In: 20 Jahre Ökumenismus. Ed.: Theodor Piffl-Percevic/Alfred Stirnemann. Vienna/Innsbruck 1984, p. 158f.

that the emperors could convene the councils. In fact the history of the church was changing because of political reasons. The main responsibility cannot be left to one person alone. Why did the Pope not come to the councils? When he is able to come, will he come? The councils should not always be in Rome.

Secretary General Stirnemann: The Popes were present at some ecumenical councils.

Father Tillard: A main reason was that these councils were councils of the Eastern parts of the church. The Pope left the freedom to them, but he received the councils.

Monday: July 1st, 1991: 9.00 a.m.

Fourth working session. Chair: Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian

Professor Harnoncourt presents the sketch of a christological and sociological organogram of the universal Church, including local churches. (Chart VIII)

Amba Bishoy: I think that mysteries cannot fully be explained by such means. May I ask where the Apostolic Sees in the local thrones are?

Professor Harnoncourt: Every bishop is representing an apostle.

Amba Bishoy: In this organogram the apostles are in the center and the bishops in the local churches. This is a defect! The first nucleus was in Jesus and the apostles went out all over the world. This diagram, though it is a good work intellectually, is reflecting the idea of Primacy. The apostles founded local churches which became mother churches to others. The local church is not a part of the universal church but it is fully universal, if it is in communion with all other local churches.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: We are still talking about a mother church which gave to the world daughters. But it is Jesus Christ who must be the center, present in the midst of the church. On this organogram the local churches are still outside but we have to show the equality!

Father George: Let us remind ourselves of the reality: there are local primacies but there is no visible center. Still there is a force that holds us together, namely the invisible spiritual dimension.

Professor Harnoncourt: It belongs to the principle of incarnation that the head is visible. You can see the conciliarity of the twelve. To give witness of that the unity of all local churches must be made visible in a council because of the conciliarity.

Amba Bishoy: The Catholic side stresses that a leader must be visible. Who was the visible head of the church when St. Peter was dead and other apostles were still alive?

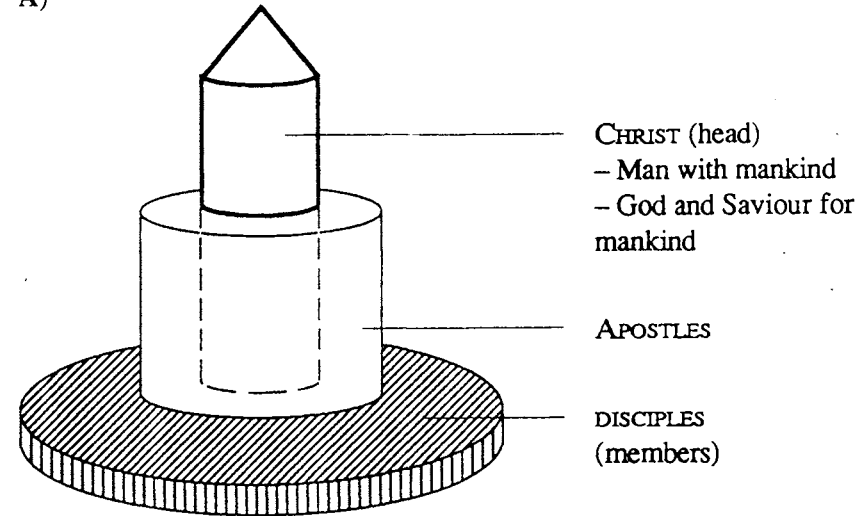
Professor Suttner: Consider this time from which only few texts have come to us: the New Testament, the letter of Clement of Rome and that of Ignatius of Antioch. This period is practically without historical sources. We can just make theories and reflections. We cannot give an answer how they managed the situation. It is hidden in history!

Amba Bishoy: The problem is not historical alone but also theological. St. Peter was not present but other apostles were. History proves it. Did then the successor of St. Peter have the Primacy?

Father Tillard: For the Roman Catholic Church Primacy comes from the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. It is not only the place and role of St. Peter which counts. He was

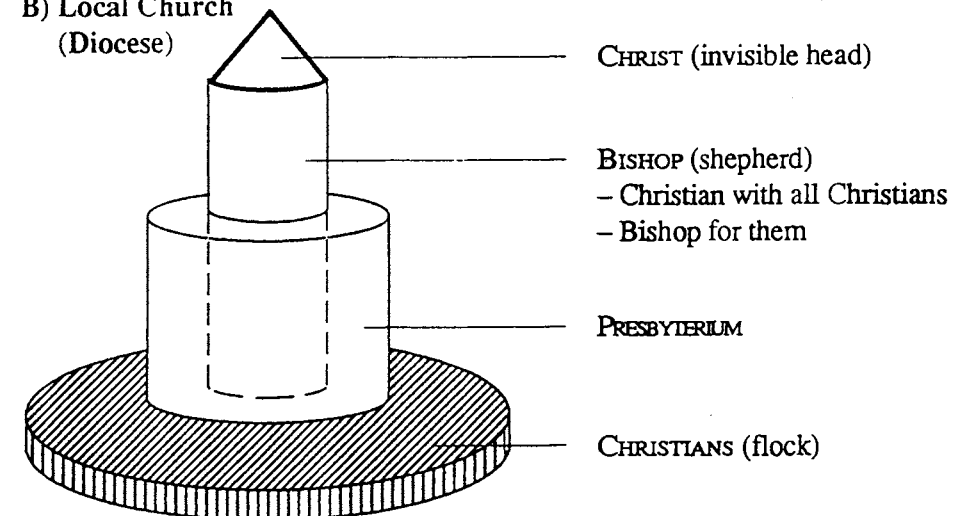
Chart VIII: Organogram of the universal Church

A)

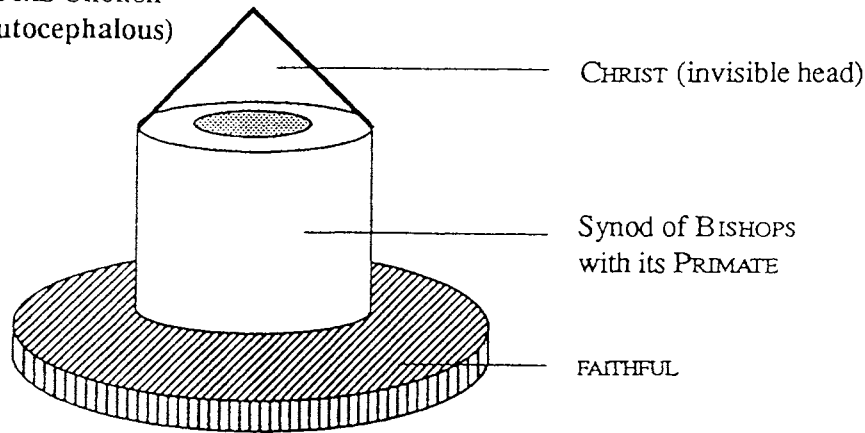


The community of Christ, surrounded by his apostles and disciples is *the fundamental pattern* of every local Church and the universal Church as well.

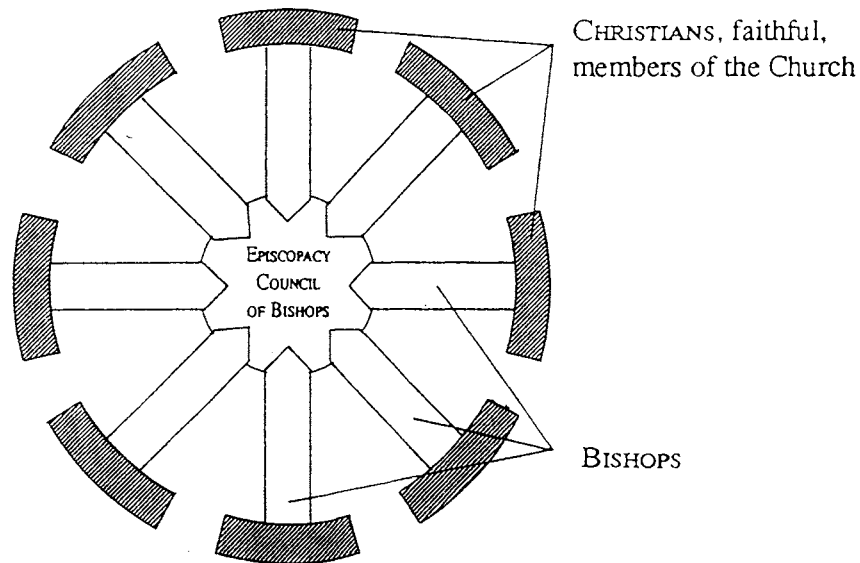
B) Local Church (Diocese)



C) LOCAL CHURCH
(autocephalous)



D) Universal Church,
community of all local Churches



linked with the Old Testament and the Jewish tradition. St. Paul represents the new side and openness of Christianity. Rome is the town where Peter and Paul gave witness. It is not an argument of succeeding St. Peter but of a city in which the two main apostles were together and gave witness.

Father Long: If we are looking for a written proof, there is none for any of the apostolic churches represented here. Only much later it was put into writing. We have to live on tradition. Except for the New Testament which is very incomplete in this regard we have no written sources about how they governed the churches. A community does not depend on written testaments but on testimonies how it was formed and gave witness.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: Rome as the place of the martyrdom of St. Peter and Paul we also venerate. But their tombs do not bring with them the right of jurisdiction.

Amba Bishoy: After the death of St. Peter other apostles were still alive. This is a clear proof that Rome had no Primacy at that time. You have to revise your theory of Primacy!

Professor Suttner: Amba Bishoy's arguments are purely theoretical and dogmatical. There is no proof for his theory.

Father Long: We can draw no conclusions from the life or death of an apostle. We know that the apostles handed on their mission to the communities and there were successors. We cannot speculate on the basis of Amba Bishoy's theory.

Professor Harnoncourt: We are wrong in discussing the Primacy of St. Peter. We have to discuss Primacy in the local churches! We must think about conciliarity among the churches and practice discussions and prayer with each other! There is no use of biting each other about the role of St. Peter. And it is obvious that Vatican I and II were councils of the West and not of all sister churches.

Cardinal König: We have already tried to think about certain and concrete steps towards unity. We should give up the discussion of Primacy now and should try to imagine a first step of a unity model.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: How do we envisage a primatial structure in a universal church? We have not yet heard from the Catholic side which changes in papacy would be possible.

Father Tillard: If there is a strong desire towards communion with Rome from important blocks of apostolic tradition and concrete steps can be noticed then I believe that together with these theologians Rome would have to discuss Primacy which is not principally and mainly jurisdiction. Primacy needs to be faithful to its mission to watch over unity. When this communion is in danger in some part of the church there will be no direct intervention but the Pope will say to the respective leaders: please intervene. The jurisdiction in a united church would be different from jurisdiction in the present Western Church, but we have no experience. The Uniate Churches certainly are no example. They were absorbed.

Father Long: The decision in the PRO ORIENTE Standing Committee was to look at primacies in the different churches. Whatever Primacy may be in the future it will not be exercised the way it is today. What it will be we cannot say. We do have some experience since Vatican II. The revision of Canon Law and of liturgy have loosened a formerly very rigid system. Even the Roman Catholic Church is concerned about the exercise of Primacy we must acknowledge. A big deal of work, dialogue and

theological foundation will have to be done. Coordination of the external structure will also be necessary. Eastern Europe needs a united Christian witness but we are still struggling to find out what the form will be.

Father Bouwen: Since the fifth century our two traditions have been without contact and now we rediscover each other. How can we do that together? We should find a way of working together on a provisional basis until slowly by experience we find out what Primacy is, what is necessary and what is not. For example when Pope Shenouda came to Rome this needed a lot of explanation but it also brought experience.

Father Long: In 1966 Pope Paul VI wrote a letter to the Russian Orthodox Patriarch. The draft came back with a correction by Paul VI himself. He brought in the words: "...at the time of resurrection we are praying for this part of the flock of Christ of which you are the pastor". This was revolutionary at that time. Today this phrase is normal. We have to take care of the mutual respect of the partners and of these parts of the church for which they are the pastors.

Mar Gregorios Ibrahim: Primacies and their actual exercise: this and the proposed collaboration need explanation. Is it sacramental? Where will the place of the Oriental and Uniate Patriarchs be?

Father Long: A good example is the situation of the Copts in the seventies. In principle there is a series of statements for guiding the search for Unity between the Roman Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church signed by the Popes Paul VI and John Paul II on the one side and Pope Shenouda III on the other side.

All should be united in one Patriarchate allowing the mutual variety inside the churches to respect the different traditions.

Paulos Mar Gregorios: In recent times we have taken several steps towards unity: exchanges among the primatial sees in the form of Easter greetings. Almost all Oriental Orthodox Churches have taken common steps and issued common statements with the Pope. The Vienna Consultation at the invitation of PRO ORIENTE have been very important steps.

Some of our churches have joint commissions with the Roman Catholic Church. Theologians are exchanged for better mutual information, because people still write nonsense. This question and proposal dating back already years ago: we have a tremendous amount of common ground. Can this not be expressed in a structure in which we meet frequently, regularly and officially so that communion can be reached?

Monday, July 1st, 1991: 4 p.m.

Fifth working session. Chair: Father John F. Long SJ

In the last session the draft of the common statement is being read and discussed in detail at length. Radical wordings and statements are substituted by universally accepted expressions especially because many participants feel that the discussion of the three days has taken place in a quite good climate and this fact should find its expression.

Father Long, who had arrived later for the study seminar took the chair for the work on the statement. In the end the text as discussed and amended is unanimously endorsed by the participants.

Statement of the First Study Seminar of PRO ORIENTE on Primacy, between theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches - Vienna, June, 29 to July 1, 1991

The First Joint Study Seminar on Primacy between theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches was held under the auspices of PRO ORIENTE and on the initiative of the Standing Committee for the follow-up of the Five Unofficial Vienna Consultations between them, at the Bildungshaus, Lainz, Vienna from June 29th to July 1st.

Six Roman Catholic theologians, including His Eminence Francis Cardinal König, and six Oriental Orthodox theologians took part. No Ethiopian Orthodox theologian could attend due to the political situation in Ethiopia. The seminar was characterized throughout by a spirit of mutual openness and candor, with a genuine sense of our common responsibility for the visible manifestation of the unity of Christ's Church. Bishop Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian and Fr. John F. Long SJ chaired the sessions.

The seminar participants reviewed together the papers and joint statements in the five unofficial Vienna Consultations in relation to the principle of primacy, Roman Primacy and Primacy in the Oriental Orthodox Churches. They also studied the six "organograms" of the present structure of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, for comparing the way the primacy is exercised in the various churches.

We made the following observations:

1. All present structures are the result of a historical process of development. They express the churches' ongoing theological reflection on what Christ wills for his Church, on how the Holy Spirit has been working in the churches and on the Apostolic tradition which they inherited. They also reflect responses to internal and external demands facing a particular church at various stages in its historical development.
2. While recognizing that some historical developments have now become part of the tradition, some of the changes met with strong opposition from within the church itself, and not all historical changes have been integrated into the tradition of the particular church.
3. In all churches we observed some tension, and sometimes even discrepancy, between ecclesiological perception and actual practice. Every church recognizes the need to improve present practice in the light of the acknowledged ecclesiological norm.
4. It was also noted that all our churches at various periods spread geographically and have become in one way or another world-wide. Their present structures reflect this process.
5. In all the churches we observed the interaction of the twin ecclesiological principles of
 - a) hierarchical gradation in authority; and
 - b) conciliar exercise of that authority.
6. We observe that the size and spread of a Church affects the frequency of the meetings of its whole episcopate in Council, as well as the involvement of the whole episcopate in Synodal exercise of the ongoing administration of the whole

church. In the Oriental Orthodox Churches the episcopates meet in Synod on a more or less regular basis. In the Roman Catholic Church the whole episcopate comes together in Synod or Council at intervals of decades and sometimes of centuries. The recent introduction of a representative Synod of Bishops in that Church, as well as the regular meetings of regional and national conferences of bishops are an effort to meet this situation.

7. We noted that the Heads of Churches, in all cases, are part of and not over and above the episcopate. There are however significant differences among our churches in the relation between Head and Synod of Bishops and in the way the churches understand the meaning of primacy.
8. In particular we recognize that there continues to exist a significant difference in the understanding of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches concerning the place and the functions of the Bishop of Rome in the one Church of Christ.
9. We saw the need for further study of the concept of jurisdiction, starting with the differences in concept of jurisdiction of a diocesan Bishop, an Archbishop or Patriarch, the Synod of Bishops in a given church, and an Ecumenical Synod of the whole Church.
10. We observed significant variations also in
 - a) the procedures for electing and consecrating Heads of Churches and Bishops;
 - b) the role of Christian laypeople in the election of Heads and Churches and Bishops as well as in the ongoing administration of the church, at local, diocesan and patriarchal levels;
 - c) the understanding of the role of the Oriental Catholic Churches in the work for restoring the visible unity of the Church.

Following a useful discussion on the way primacy is now exercised in the various churches, the participants embarked on envisioning a future pattern of primacy that would be acceptable to all concerned and could lead to the restoration of mutual communion. All agreed that the present division is a scandal to the world and a violation of the God-given unity of Christ's Church. All of us Christians have a God-given responsibility to restore the visible unity of the One Church of Jesus Christ.

Two summaries of the issues raised and topics to be discussed further will be prepared by Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox participants and attached to this statement of the Seminar.

The seminar found this exploratory meeting very useful for clarifying the issues. We need further seminars with carefully prepared papers of the issues that continue to divide us, in order to see more clearly what can be done by the Churches to restore communion.

Franciscus Cardinal König, Archbishop emeritus of Vienna

Metropolitan Amba Bishop of Damiette, Barari and Kafr el Sheik

Archbishop Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo

Bishop Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Patriarchal Delegate for Central Europa and Sweden

Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios of Delhi

Metropolitan Thomas Themotheos of Outside Kerala Diocese

Fr. John F. Long SJ

Fr. J.M. Tillard OP

Mons. Dr. Philipp Harnoncourt

Fr. Frans Bouwen PA

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ernst-Christoph Suttner

Fr. Dr. George M.K. Kondothra

Reflections of a Roman Catholic participant after the discussions during the Seminar

Working for a common understanding and a common practice of Primacy at the service of the unity of the Church, to the glory of the Father

During this first Study Seminar of PRO ORIENTE on Primacy, in the course of our frank and brotherly discussions, it became clear that a more systematic and gradual approach may be necessary, if we want to move forward towards some new understandings of the questions raised or towards some concrete steps opening the way to a new common experience.

Some frequently used terms need to be clarified. Some memories need to be purified. Some questions require further study. By engaging in this process, it will become clearer that what the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches already have in common should allow for substantial convergencies in reflection and practice.

1. We all agree that primacy is practised in all the Churches, in different ways and on different levels: local, national, regional, world-wide. It is essential to distinguish these different levels and to make clear, each time again, to which level we are addressing ourselves. It is also impossible to study the primacy of the Bishop of Rome in isolation from other forms of primacy within each Church and between different Churches.
2. Primacy has always to be seen and studied in organic relation with the principle of conciliarity, at all levels. In a synod or a council, the "primus" (protos) can never be separated from the other members. In the spirit of the 34th canon of the Apostles, the "protos" cannot act without the others, as the others cannot act without the "protos". What is true for a council or synod is also true, in an analogous way, for the level of daily life and the regular living out of communion between persons and Churches.
3. In the study of Primacy it is vital to distinguish between the principle of the need for or the existence of a primacy, on one side, and the concrete way it is practised, on the other side. In fact, this practice has taken very different forms in different Churches and has also changed within the same Church according to historical, geographical and cultural circumstances.
4. In the Western Church (Patriarchate of the West), the way primacy was perceived and practised during the second millennium was deeply influenced by the historical, theological and canonical developments taking place in that part of Christendom, developments which included the struggle between the spiritual and temporal authorities and the traumatic experience of the Reformation period. This perception and practice of primacy was further affected by the fact of the estrangement and final separation between the Eastern and Western parts of the Church. It developed within one tradition without the contribution of balance coming from the Oriental traditions. More than once an effort was made to apply this understanding of primacy - as it has developed within one church of tradition, the western - on a universal level, without making the necessary distinctions related

to the experience of the whole Church during the first millennium of its existence. All future studies of primacy must study carefully these distinctions and see their validity and the way they apply to a renewed and purified understanding of primacy in all our Churches.

5. Notions like "primus inter pares", primacy of honour, the right to convoke a council and to receive the decisions of a council have to be studied more deeply and clarified more precisely before they can be used in a fruitful way.
6. Primacy cannot be reduced to its purely juridical dimension, primacy of jurisdiction. It is fundamentally a service to preserve, manifest and promote unity in faith, witness, service and liturgy. The concept of primacy of jurisdiction, which seems to constitute a major difficulty for the Oriental Orthodox Churches, should be studied within the full meaning and the manifold dimensions of primacy as a service of communion.
7. It seems important to approach the study of primacy not from above, i.e. starting from an abstract notion strongly coloured by past experience and particular traditions. The right starting point seems to be the ecclesiology of communion on the local, regional and world-wide level. This communion is to be manifested at each level in a constant interaction between conciliarity and primacy. Furthermore, considerations must be given to how far this also applies to the relations between the primates of all the major Sister Churches. What structures are necessary and how do conciliarity and primacy interact on this level?
8. The Oriental Orthodox Churches agree that the primates of all Sister Churches have a special responsibility to manifest and promote the unity of the whole Church. How they carry this out practically is not clear to Roman Catholics. As Roman Catholics, we recognize a particular role and responsibility of the Bishop of Rome in this universal communion. This special function seems to be absent from the tradition of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. How can these two traditions be reconciled?
9. We should try to find ways to bring these two different traditions together with a view to a more profound mutual interaction and common witness, since our efforts should not be limited to abstract theological reflection. On the basis of all which our Churches already have in common, we should find ways for regular consultations, mutual visits, collaboration and common witness and service, in order to enrich each other's thinking and practice. This would be entirely in line with what Pope John Paul II said in his speech to Patriarch Dimitrios I, in Rome, 7 Dec. 1978, emphasizing that Catholics and Orthodox have to study together this ministry of unity in the One Church of Christ - and particularly the ministry of the Bishop of Rome - in order to find together the ways to render this ministry more fruitful in the Spirit and as faithful as possible to Christ's will for His Church. Would it not be a part of the possibilities and responsibilities of PRO ORIENTE to promote such living contacts, even before the restoration of full communion?

Questions for Future Study on Primacy and Unity From the Oriental Orthodox Perspective

From the Oriental Orthodox perspective a number of issues still remain to be clarified by further study in order to remove the obstacles to restoring communion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, one issue of particular importance being the understanding of Primacy as an expression of the Unity of Christ's Church. We should also begin to envision the future pattern of the unity of the One Church.

1. All the Oriental Churches have in recent times moved beyond their traditional territorial boundaries, through emigration or otherwise, and are on the way to becoming world-wide. Their synods and heads of churches now exercise jurisdiction in several continents. The Roman Catholic Church too has only for some centuries become world-wide, by mission as well as by emigration and colonial settlements. Are there in principle differences between the universal primacies exercised by the Oriental Orthodox Churches and by the Roman Catholic Church? Can we spell these out?
2. Roman Catholic theologians have sought to postulate something called "Petrine Office" which they regard as essential to the visible unity of the Church. What is this Petrine Office? How was it exercised during the time of the Apostles? Was it geographically located or attached to a particular local church in Apostolic times? Can it be inherited? By whom? Did Peter exercise any function in the Apostolic College which was not shared by the other Apostles? If so, what? Was Peter the first bishop of Jerusalem? This does not seem to have been the case. Was he the first bishop of Rome? Was he the first bishop (meaning the head of the local church) in Antioch? It is obvious to the Oriental Orthodox that in the early period the unity of the world-wide church was less structured and centred. Even the last Apostle, St. John, does not seem to have exercised any jurisdictional authority over the whole world-wide Church, from his imprisonment on the island of Patmos or his earlier residence. The Church of the period of the persecutions managed with a minimum of visible structure for world-wide co-ordination. No "Petrine Office" seems to have functioned at that time, according to the Oriental Orthodox.
3. The Oriental Orthodox believe that no one See should exercise authority over all the churches of the world. Nor do they believe that communion with the See of Rome is any more indispensable than communion with any other See for the visible manifestation of the unity of the Church.
4. The Oriental Orthodox Churches believe that their synod of bishops presided over by the head of the Church has a special "service" to render to the visible unity of Christ's Church, which cannot in principle be different from the "service" to be rendered by the Bishop of Rome and the Council of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church to that visible unity.
5. The Oriental Orthodox venerate the tombs of Peter and Paul at Rome, as they venerate tombs of other Apostles and Martyrs. This makes Rome a high centre of pilgrimage, but according to the Oriental Orthodox the primatial Sees did not develop in relation to the tomb of any particular Apostle. If tombs and places of martyrdom are to be graded at all, the first honour would go certainly to the empty tomb in Jerusalem.

6. The Oriental Orthodox cannot see from available evidence, that there was any original "Mother Church" other than the Church of Jerusalem where the whole College of apostles was physically present. Neither do they see that any one bishop as successor of the Apostles exercised universal authority over all the churches in the sub-Apostolic times or even at the time of the Ecumenical councils of the fourth and fifth centuries.
7. In the primatial See of Rome, as in the other primatial sees of Alexandria and Antioch, the Metropolitan Bishops of these large cities came to exercise a certain jurisdiction over all churches within a given territorial area, which they may not have exercised in earlier periods. We recognize these developments as legitimate and justified within the tradition of the one undivided Church of the early centuries. But the Oriental Orthodox have not, in their tradition, accepted the principle of any one primatial See having jurisdiction over all churches.
8. In envisaging a possible future design for the visible unity of Christ's Church in the process of restoring communion among the three ancient traditions of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches we see the possibilities in the following general terms:
 - a) There will be many primatial sees in One Church, corresponding to the number of autocephalous churches.
 - b) Their visible unity will be sacramentally manifested through Eucharistic Communion and occasional synods of the bishops of all churches.
 - c) Other ways can be designed for the manifestation of the same unity - e.g. a Supreme Council of the Heads of Autocephalous Churches; regional and local synods; representative world assemblies of all the Churches, with bishops, priests and laity chosen from each autocephalous church.
 - d) At every level - local, national, regional, universal - the coming together of the episcopate and their mutual eucharistic communion (along with all Christians present) will be a major manifestation of the visible unity of the One Church.
9. Primacy in each autocephalous Church will be vested in the head of that Church with his Bishops in Council. Among the autocephalous churches themselves there can be a primacy of honour or rank or seniority, which would not imply any authority for one over the others. Once there is unity in the Apostolic faith and tradition as well as eucharistic Communion among the autocephalous churches, the ranking will give due consideration to the protocols of the Council of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381) where the Bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were given special placing in the one undivided Church. As for questions about who will convoke local, regional or universal ecumenical councils, and who will preside over these meetings, such questions can be settled by mutual agreement on the basis of the principle of conciliarity among the autocephalous churches. The reception and implementation of conciliar decisions will be the responsibility of each autocephalous sister church.

Conclusion

The Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches have, by the Grace of God and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, come a long way from their mutual isolation which has now lasted for centuries.

We do meet occasionally and talk to each other. The heads of our Churches exchange fraternal letters of greeting to each other on Easter, Christmas and other occasions. Most of the Heads of our Churches have visited each other. Several of the Oriental Orthodox Heads of Churches have made joint declarations with the Pope of Rome. Several of the Oriental Orthodox Churches have set up joint commissions with the Church of Rome. Our scholars have studied and lectured in each other's institutions. The Five PRO ORIENTE Unofficial Vienna Consultations of 1971-1988 and this first Study Seminar of PRO ORIENTE on Primacy (1991) are milestones on that long and arduous path we have trodden.

We have come a long way; but we still have a long way to go. The question has been raised in our Study Seminar about making some preliminary explorations for setting up a more permanent consultation council for the three great families of our Churches which share so much in common - the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches. It will provide a forum for more frequent and more sustained mutual contact and consultation among our three families of Churches.

Joseph Ratzinger

On Primacy as exercised in the First Millennium¹⁸⁾

(...) Now church unity is of course no political problem which can be solved through compromise, by judging what might find acceptance and what is just tolerable. Here unity in faith is at stake, that is to say the question of truth, which must not become the object of political bargaining. So long and in so far as there is the obligation to regard any maximum solution in terms of a claim to truth itself, so long and in so far there is no other way, but to simply strive for the conversion of the respective partner. Conversely it must be said: The claim to truth must not be raised where it has no imperative and unshakable authority. It must not be imposed as truth what in reality is a historically grown form, more or less closely connected with truth. Hence it follows that particularly when the weight of truth and its unrenouncable character are being brought up this must be matched by the sort of uprightness which is distrustful of any hasty invocation of truth and ready to look for its inner broadness with the eyes of love.

CONSIDERING REUNION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

What then are the implications of the maximum claims outlined earlier on? Surely, no one firmly rooted in Catholic theology can simply declare the doctrine of primacy as null and void, even less so when he is trying to understand the objections raised and to evaluate the shifting weights of the historical evidence with open eyes. On the other hand though, he cannot possibly consider the way primacy was practised in the 19th and 20th centuries to be the only form possible and a necessity for all Christians. This is precisely what Paul VI's symbolic gestures, most recently his prostration in front of the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch, want to express, thereby seeking to break the deadlock of historical developments. Although we are not in a position to bring history to a halt and to go back on the course of centuries, it may, however, be said that it cannot be impossible among today's Christians what was possible throughout a millennium. After all it was in the same year of 1054 that Humbert of Silva Candida in the very bull by which he excommunicated Patriarch Kerularios, thereby initiating the schism between the East and the West, described the Emperor and the people of Constantinople as being "very Christian and Orthodox in faith"; even though their concept of Roman primacy surely differed much less from that of Kerularios than from Vatican I. In other words: Rome does not have to demand more of a doctrine of primacy than was formulated and lived in the first millennium. When Patriarch Athenagoras on 25th July 1967 received the Pope in the Phanar by calling him the successor to Peter, the first in honour among us, the presiding one in love, those words in the mouth of this great leader of the Church represented the essence of primatial teaching in the first century and Rome does not have to demand more. Unity in this connection could be on the following basis: the East on the one hand refrains

18) This article is an extract from the paper "Prognosen für die Zukunft des Ökumenismus" read in German by the professor of dogmatics in Ratisbon and later Cardinal; it is published in the PRO ORIENTE Volume No.4: "Ökumene, Konzil, Unfehlbarkeit", Tyrolia, Innsbruck-Wien-München, 1979, p. 211

from fighting the Western development of the 2nd millennium as heretical and accepts the Catholic Church as legitimate and Orthodox in faith in the form it has come to take as a result of this development; conversely, the West for its part recognizes the Church of the East as legitimate and Orthodox in faith in the traditional form in which it has come down to us. It goes without saying that such an act of mutual acceptance, of renewed recognition in the common unlost catholicity is no easy task. It is an act of rising above oneself, of self-denial, by the same token however also one of self-discovery. It is an act which cannot be enforced by diplomatic decrees. It rather is a spiritual challenge to be met by the Church in the East and in the West as a whole. When what is theologically possible is to become a reality in church life, theological concepts must be spiritually prepared and spiritually received within the Church.

Hence, my diagnosis of the East-West-relationship within the Church is this: ecclesial unity between the East and the West is in principle possible; there is however a lack of adequate spiritual preparation which means that in practice things are not yet mature. When I am saying: theologically in principle possible, this implies that a closer look may still come up against a considerable number of obstacles ranging from the filioque to the indissolubility of marriage. But in view of the forces of resistance arising at different times and in varying degrees in both the East and the West it must be realized that unity itself is a Christian truth, something intrinsic to the Christian faith, its rank being indeed thus that it may only be sacrificed for the sake of the very essence, not however where formulations and practices stand in the way, which may in themselves be of great importance but do not disrupt the communion in the faith of the Fathers in its basic ecclesial form.¹⁹⁾

The dual nature of the above diagnosis allows for entirely opposite prognoses. What is theologically possible may turn out "playful" in spiritual terms and thus become theologically impossible; what is theologically possible can become possible in spiritual terms, thereby gaining in theological depth and purity. At present it is not yet foreseeable which of the two prognoses will materialize; the factors suggesting the one or the other are about equally strong. However, the opposite possibilities implied in the diagnosis ought by no means to be seen as a problem of a merely theoretical calculus of probabilities but rather as a practical imperative: It is the task of every responsible Christian and of theologians and church leaders in particular of course to make spiritual room for what is theologically possible; and yet, without cheap superficiality, to see and live the contrasts in every respect under the imperative call for unity without uniformity; to go on questing not only for the justifiability of the union and the recognition of the other but even more so for the justifiability of remaining apart. For it is not the unity that we must answer for but the separation.²⁰⁾ The possibility of opposite prognoses means that the prognosis also depends on us, that it exists in the

19) A proposal outlining different steps towards the restoration of unity between East and West is offered by L. Bouyer, *Réflexions sur l'établissement possible de la communion entre les Eglises orthodoxe et catholique. Perspectives actuelles*, in: *Koinonia, Premier Colloque ecclésiologique entre théologiens orthodoxes et catholiques*, Istina, Paris 1975

20) That this is the only right perspective is shown with special emphasis by D. Papandreou, in: R. Erni - D. Papandreou, *Eucharistiegemeinschaft. Der Standpunkt der Orthodoxie*, Freiburg i.Br./Schweiz 1974, 68-96, esp. 91 f.

form of a call. To create such an awareness is presumably the true purpose of such a meeting, which does not merely pass on information but outlines a duty and poses the challenge of that kind of examination of conscience which moves to action.

(Translated from the German original by Melitta Krcał)

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