

## COLLEGIALITY: AN ESSAY TOWARD BETTER UNDERSTANDING

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**L**YING BEHIND the continuing theological discussion about the meaning and extent of the principle of collegiality in the Church are the vigorous debates in the Second Vatican Council that preceded the issuance of its dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. The serious concern about the implications of collegiality led Paul VI, it will be recalled, to annex the famous "explanatory note" after the conclusion of the constitution itself. Twenty years later the debates continue. Some have shifted their positions, as we will see, as attention is focused upon the theological bases and practical consequences of the national conferences of bishops already mentioned and endorsed in *Lumen gentium*<sup>1</sup> and the world synod of bishops created by the *motu proprio* of 1965 *Apostolica sollicitudo*, in time for inclusion of the synod in the council's decree on the pastoral office of bishops, *Christus dominus*.<sup>2</sup>

Is collegiality to be limited to the two pillars of the Church which are *de jure divino*, the primacy and the episcopate, or does it extend to institutions which are *de jure ecclesiastico*? Can there be, strictly speaking, collegial acts which are other than the two instances specifically mentioned by *Lumen gentium*, namely, the acts of an ecumenical council and the acts of the entire college dispersed throughout the world in union with the pope?<sup>3</sup> Can the personal charism of the bishop given him through sacramental consecration in any sense be said to be capable of being delegated to a "representative" assembly? Is the primacy of the Roman Pontiff potentially undermined by these new assemblies of bishops? Is the unity of the Church endangered if one or more national hierarchies issue teachings potentially at variance with those of other nations? These are some of the issues that need further clarification and which I will address in some way.

Bishops, by virtue of their assumption of the episcopal office by sacramental means and in hierarchical communion with the pope, become members of the college of bishops and assume a care not only for their own particular churches but for the whole Church.<sup>4</sup> After examining the meaning of this collegial principle taught by the council, I will describe the instruments of collegiality which have emerged after the council and

<sup>1</sup> *Lumen gentium* 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Christus dominus* 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Lumen gentium* 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 22, 23.

the differing appraisals which they have received as a way to grasp better the meaning of collegiality as it is being refined in this continuing discussion within the Church. Finally, I will outline a theological synthesis of these ideas, using the trilogy developed in various places by Pope John Paul II, namely, communion–collegiality–synodality.<sup>5</sup>

Even as we move toward a technically more accurate understanding of what collegiality means, this teaching has already had a very positive effect upon the whole episcopal order in a way that parallels the greatly enhanced position of the pope in the Church and world today as a result of the teaching of Vatican I concerning the primacy. The interactions among the bishops themselves and of the bishops with the pope and his curia have reached an entirely new level of frequency and intensity. This heightened *affectus collegialis* has been already one of the unmistakably good results of the conciliar teaching.

#### COLLEGIALITY ACCORDING TO THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

Collegiality is described by the council as an essential quality of the world-wide body of bishops by virtue of their being successors of the apostles, who with Peter formed a unique “college” among themselves. They are constituted a college through episcopal consecration and hierarchical communion among themselves and with the head of the college, Peter’s successor.<sup>6</sup> But collegiality even thus defined and limited has meaning for the whole Church as well, beyond the bishops, for the Church herself is a communion of persons united in a reciprocity of gifts in the same Spirit; the episcopal collegiality grows out of such a communion and is intended to serve and preserve it.<sup>7</sup> Collegiality thus becomes a model of living and interacting among all the members of the Church.

The universal Church, furthermore, realizes herself in local or particular churches which are united together through a communion among themselves.<sup>8</sup> It is especially at the Eucharistic assembly that the Church’s koinonia is celebrated and takes place. As *Sacrosanctum concilium* states, “The principal manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God’s people in the same liturgical celebration, especially in the same Eucharist, in one prayer, at one altar, at which the bishop presides, surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers.”<sup>9</sup> The local church, therefore, is no mere organizational sub-

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., his letter to the Catholics of the Netherlands, Jan. 6, 1980.

<sup>6</sup> *Lumen gentium* 23.

<sup>7</sup> To highlight this truth, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church situates its teaching on the hierarchical structure of the Church (chap. 3) within the broader context of the Mystery of the Church (chap. 1) and the People of God (chap. 2).

<sup>8</sup> *Lumen gentium* 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium* 41.

division of a world-wide body, for the unique reality that is the Church is made up of a collegiate unity among these local assemblies through their bishop. As *Lumen gentium* succinctly puts it:

The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful. The individual bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity in their particular churches, which are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists.<sup>10</sup>

A communion such as the Church is in her deepest reality, one that involves each member's relationship with God as well as with each other, really has no counterpart in political or secular life; it is truly, as the council said, a "mystery."

The entire body of bishops together with the pope, a collegial body of teachers and pastors, possesses supreme and full authority in the Church. National episcopal conferences are mentioned in *Lumen gentium* but as aids in the development of a "collegiate spirit" (*collegialis affectus*).<sup>11</sup> This phrase avoids the resolution of the question of the limits of collegiality, some wishing to limit it to the two hierarchical institutions of divine right, the papacy and the full episcopate, excluding this note from institutions of ecclesiastical right such as the national conference.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, a distinction has been drawn between "effective" and "affective" collegiality, "effective" referring to the exercise of supreme power in strictly collegiate acts, "affective" describing more an atmosphere of mutual co-operation, assistance, and love among the bishops. The question remains, however, whether an act to be strictly collegial always requires the exercise of supreme power and whether collegiality itself admits a certain gradation.

Some commentators, e.g., Giuseppe Alberigo, have alleged that two ecclesiologies were operative at Vatican II: the Church as a communion, as a "symphony of local churches," and the preconciliar universalist conception. Alberigo for this reason finds a lack of internal connectedness and integration between the first two chapters of *Lumen gentium* and chapter 3, that is, between the Church as a mystery and a people, and the Church united under the episcopal college. He finds number 22 of chapter 3 particularly "long and tortured" and its formula of "hierarchical communion" to be inadequate to express the richness and diversity

<sup>10</sup> *Lumen gentium* 23.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Luigi Carli advocated this position both at the council and at the synod of 1969; see G. Caprile, *Il sinodo dei vescovi 1969* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1970) 77.

implied by the concept of the Church as a communion.<sup>13</sup>

A fairer analysis might be that *Lumen gentium* and also *Christus dominus*, which was based upon it, gave no expanded, systematic treatment to the principle of collegiality which they were introducing. The council consciously confined itself to universal aspects of collegiality, deliberately leaving open the doctrinal bases for its more local expressions.<sup>14</sup> The council desired to integrate all the elements which make up the Church, both the mystical and the institutional, the primacy and the episcopate, the people of God and the hierarchy, striking new notes and establishing new balances which would have to be worked out and theologized upon in the lived experience of the Church.

#### INSTRUMENTS OF COLLEGIALITY

The phrase "instruments of collegiality" belongs to Pope John Paul II,<sup>15</sup> who in the programmatic address at the start of his pontificate stated:

Collegiality certainly means the adequate development of organisms, some of which will be entirely new, others updated, to ensure a better union of minds, intentions, and initiatives in the work of building up the Body of Christ which is the Church. In this regard I mention above all the synod of bishops . . .<sup>16</sup>

The synod of bishops and the national conferences of bishops, to which the synod corresponds to an important degree as its base, are two new instruments of collegiality which have already had a great impact upon the Church. Seven "ordinary" synods and one "extraordinary" synod have been called since 1967. There is also another category of synod called the "special" synod, such as the one held in 1980 among the Dutch bishops with the pope, a synod which refers to a single region. By the express desire of Paul VI, reconfirmed by John Paul II, the canons in the new code regarding the synod (342–48) comprise chapter 2 of the section on the supreme authority in the Church, immediately after the

<sup>13</sup> See his chapter "Istituzioni per la comunione tra l'episcopato universale e il vescovo di Roma" in the collection he edited, *L'Ecclesiologia del Vaticano II: Dinamismi e prospettive* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1981) 235–66.

<sup>14</sup> K. Morsdorf, "Quomodo in hierarchica structura constitutionis ecclesiae se habeat principium collegialitatis ad principium unitatis caput inter et corpus," *Acta Congressus internationalis de theologia Concilii Vaticani II* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1968) 165. See also Morsdorf's commentary on *Christus dominus* in Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II 2* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968) 180.

<sup>15</sup> *Osservatore romano*, Sept. 17–18, 1979.

<sup>16</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II 1* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1978) 15.

chapter on the Roman Pontiff and ahead of the chapters on the cardinals, Roman Curia, and papal legates. Ninety-two canons refer to episcopal conferences, which were not mentioned in the 1917 code.

Although these bodies are often included by theologians in the context of collegiality, the Code does not give them the capacity per se to engage in "truly collegial acts," which are tied to the entire college of bishops gathered in ecumenical council or acting unitedly throughout the world (can. 337). Canon 343 states that "the function of the synod of bishops is to discuss the matters proposed to it and set forth recommendations . . . (but) not . . . to settle matters or draw up decrees, unless the Roman Pontiff has given it deliberative power in certain cases," and even in this case the pope is to ratify all decisions. It is presumably understood that even such deliberative power as may be given the synod remains juridically the power of a synod, that is, qualitatively different from that of the entire college as such. The synod exists, according to canon 342, to "promote the close relations between the Roman Pontiff and the bishops" and to provide the advice and assistance of the bishops to the pope who convenes it, ratifies the election of its membership and appoints other members, determines its agenda, presides over it, and so on. It is for this reason that some evaluate the synod more as an advisory body to help the pope in the exercise of his own ministry than as an expression of the episcopate itself,<sup>17</sup> an institution which thus, it is alleged, is "part of the fundamental ambiguity of the postconciliar ecclesiology."<sup>18</sup>

However restricted juridically may be the roles of the synod and national episcopal conferences, their existence and continued life and activity are new historical facts and sources of further development of their theological significance and of the concept of collegiality itself. This is the major point of an early and much-cited reflection by Joseph Ratzinger upon the national conferences of bishops.<sup>19</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the first document passed by Vatican II, conceded regulation of the liturgy within certain limits to competent territorial bodies of bishops, i.e., national conferences.<sup>20</sup> Ratzinger states that "this small paragraph, which for the first time assigns to the conferences of bishops this canonical authority, has more significance for the theology of the episcopacy and for the long-desired strengthening of episcopal power than anything in the *Constitution on the Church* itself." Ratzinger continues:

<sup>17</sup> Alberigo, "Istituzioni" 244.

<sup>18</sup> Jan Grootaers, "I synodi dei vescovi del 1969 e del 1974: Funzionamento insoddisfacenti e risultati significativi," *L'Ecclesiologia del Vaticano II* 271.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, "The Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality," *Concilium* (Dogma) 1 (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist, 1964) 39-67.

<sup>20</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium* 22, 2.

One not infrequently hears the opinion that the bishops' conferences lack all theological basis and could therefore not act in a way that would oblige the individual bishop. The concept of collegiality, so it is said, could be applied only to the common action of the entire episcopate. Here again we have a case where a one-sided and un-historical systematization breaks down. The *suprema potestas in universa ecclesia* . . . applies of course only to the college of bishops as a whole in union with the bishop of Rome. But is it always a question of the *suprema potestas*? We should rather say that the concept of collegiality, besides the office of unity which pertains to the pope, signifies an element of variety and adaptability that basically belongs to the structure of the Church, but may be activated in many different ways. The collegiality of bishops signifies that there should be in the Church (under and in the unity guaranteed by the primacy) an ordered plurality. The bishops' conferences are, then, one of the possible forms of collegiality that is here partially realized but with a view to the totality.<sup>21</sup>

Ratzinger cites an article by Jérôme Hamer, O.P., which claims that limited and partial expressions of the collegiality of the Church have a theological basis which goes beyond mere pragmatism, for "there are not two episcopal collegialities, a universal one and a regional one. There is only one—that of the entire episcopate and the pope. The conference is a legitimate historical and practical expression of the collegiality which is of divine right."<sup>22</sup>

Archbishop Josef Tomko, the present general secretary of the synod, will thus write that the episcopal conference and the synod as well derive their theological qualification from the episcopal and pastoral nature of their membership and association. They therefore have a sacramental and charismatic basis that goes beyond juridical categories.<sup>23</sup> They are, after all, bodies of bishops, even if only partial realizations of the worldwide episcopate. Their decisions, even if not strictly acts of the whole episcopal college, may help prepare for such acts.

#### REFLECTIONS AND REFINEMENTS

In very recent times Ratzinger, now prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Hamer, presently prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, have reflected further upon these issues and produced new refinements and precisions. Very significant as a background of their thought, it seems to me, is the important and much-discussed work of Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Eglises particulières et église*

<sup>21</sup> Ratzinger, "The Pastoral Implications" 63–64.

<sup>22</sup> Jérôme Hamer, O.P., "Les conférences épiscopales, exercice de la collégialité," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 85 (1963) 966–69.

<sup>23</sup> "Conferenze episcopali e politica: Il ruolo delle conferenze episcopali nazionali dopo il Concilio Vaticano II," *La chiesa e la comunità politica* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1979) 246–56.

*universelle* of 1971.<sup>24</sup> I will summarize de Lubac's analysis, then proceed to Ratzinger and Hamer.

There has never been, de Lubac writes, a universal Church without particular churches. Wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, the Catholic Church is there in its entirety. But neither were there ever particular, autonomous churches that were later federated into the universal Church, any more than the Twelve selected by Jesus were only later associated among themselves. The college of bishops, the successors of the Twelve, is a permanent, indivisible reality. In this double sense it is universal. The college has nothing to do with a system of particular national or regional assemblies or any other grouping similar to contemporary models; it is based upon the realities of primitive Christianity. It is, furthermore, a permanent aspect of the Church's life, exercised day by day in the simple circumstance of each bishop teaching in his particular church the same faith and maintaining the same fundamental discipline. Each act of a bishop, if it has universal import and is exercised in the fabric of the ecclesial communion, can be and must be said to be collegial.

De Lubac then distinguishes a collegial act from what he calls a collective one. Today especially the bishops act collectively in regional or national (or international) associations to develop among themselves a better collegial sense. These can be called possible variants of collegiality as partial realizations; but, as founded upon the Scriptures, episcopal collegiality, like that of the Twelve, is universal or it is not collegiality. A collective act is not the same as a collegial act; reciprocally, not every collegial act is necessarily a collective one. They are different notions. Confusing the two could create a bureaucratized Church paradoxically diminishing the role of the individual bishop. *Lumen gentium* and *Christus dominus* therefore speak of episcopal conferences only in pragmatic terms, for these documents do not know any intermediary on the doctrinal level between the particular church and the universal Church.

Some other ideas of collegiality, de Lubac finds, seem aimed at reducing the authority of the pope and the bonds of the bishops with him. Some want, e.g., an ecumenical council as a permanently sitting institution; but a council is an event, not an institution. Others would like the world synod transformed into a kind of council, becoming a regular organ of the universal episcopal magisterium; as long as the synod remains purely consultative, they say, it is not fully collegial. This is to make collegiality equivalent to conciliarity. If some, on the other hand, want the pope to be constrained to execute the decrees of the majority, they have to be reminded that there can be no case, even in an ecumenical council, where

<sup>24</sup> Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1971. In its original form it was a paper delivered as a conference at Le Centre St. Louis de France, Rome, Oct. 28, 1971.

the pope and bishops are opposed, much less where the first member of the college is reduced beneath the secondary ones.

In the year when Vatican II opened, Hamer published his now classic work *L'Église est une communion*, which went beyond juridical appraisals to describe "communion" as the permanent form of the unity of the Church.<sup>25</sup> In his latest article, "La responsabilité collégiale de chaque évêque,"<sup>26</sup> Hamer stresses that such a communion is not a vague sentiment but an organic reality with both interior and exterior dimensions. Each Christian in this communion has a personal relation with God and *with every other; it is in this spiritual communion that ecclesial communion in all its concreteness, including episcopal collegiality, finds its source and meaning.*

Hamer writes that "collegiality" has come to be used in far too loose a way. *In a manner very similar to de Lubac, Hamer distinguishes a collegial act, which is always of the college as such, never of individuals or even groups of individuals, from a collegial spirit and collegial activities, which pertain to a synod or national conference of bishops. Synods and conferences are representative bodies, but bishops cannot delegate to representatives what belongs to them as individual members of the episcopal order by virtue of sacramental ordination and hierarchical communion: "The members of the college do not personally dispose of this collegial power which constitutes a unique reality; it is capable neither of transmission nor of delegation."*<sup>27</sup>

If, according to Hamer, the synod lacks the authority to take decisions that *ipso facto* engage the whole Church, it can do much to prepare for such decisions by its discussions and recommendations. He is positive about the present process of the synod, which he regards as unique, preserving without confusion the various competencies involved. He concludes with a warning that the collegiality espoused by Vatican II should not be played off against the residency requirement for bishops stressed by the Council of Trent. The primary responsibility of bishops, according to Trent, is the *cura animarum*, which cannot be done at a distance. Hamer joins de Lubac in seeing the danger of multiplying collective activities in the name of collegiality.

Ratzinger, who in his article of 20 years ago saw the emphasis of Vatican II on the particular churches as a needed counterweight to a "monolithic universalism," urges in a significant recent writing as a private theologian upon the final report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues that the relation of the universal Church and the particular churches must be carefully worked out.

<sup>25</sup> English version, *The Church Is a Communion* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964).

<sup>26</sup> *Nouvelle revue théologique* 105 (1983) 641-54.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 648.

Apostolic succession is the sacramental form of the unifying presence of tradition. For this reason the universal Church is not a mere external amplification, contributing nothing to the essential nature of Church in the local churches, but it extends into that very nature itself. Here it is necessary to contradict the ARCIC Report where it says: "The Second Vatican Council allows it to be said that a church out of communion with the Roman See may lack nothing from the viewpoint of the Roman Catholic Church except that it does not belong to the visible manifestation of full Christian communion". With such an assertion wrongly claiming the support of Vatican II, church unity is debased to an unnecessary, if desirable, externality, and the character of the universal Church is reduced to mere outward representation, of little significance in constituting what is ecclesial. This romantic idea of provincial churches which is supposed to restore the structure of the early Church, is really contradicting the historical reality of the early Church as well as the concrete experiences of history, to which one must certainly not turn a blind eye in considerations of this sort. The early Church did indeed know nothing of Roman primacy in practice, in the sense of Roman Catholic theology of the second millennium, but it was well acquainted with living forms of unity in the universal Church which were constitutive of the essence of provincial churches. Understood in this sense, the priority of the universal Church always preceded that of particular churches.<sup>28</sup>

Ratzinger thus underscores the principle of the unity of the universal Church embodied in the primatial office; he also emphasizes that individual bishops even in their own dioceses articulate the voice of the universal Church. Such theological principles must be kept in mind as we evaluate the effectiveness of bodies like the synod in expressing the meaning of collegiality.

#### COMMUNION-COLLEGIALITY-SYNODALITY

An analysis of the procedures and results of the 1980 synod on the role of the family published two years ago<sup>29</sup> highlights the issues involved in the attempt to clarify the meaning of collegiality provided above. As in the synods since the one held in 1971, the 1980 assembly produced no formal document of its own apart from a brief "message" at its conclusion. Instead, it remitted certain "propositions" to the pope from which he issued his own apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* on November 22, 1981. The authors, Jan Grootaers and Joseph Selling, lament that the wide and comprehensive discussions of issues in the particular churches which were part of the synod's preparatory phase and the rich exchange of experiences which took place among the bishops during the

<sup>28</sup> "Anglican-Catholic Dialogue: Its Problems and Hopes," *Insight* 1, no. 3 (March 1983) 5.

<sup>29</sup> Jan Grootaers and Joseph A. Selling, *The 1980 Synod of Bishops on "The Role of the Family": An Exposition of the Event and an Analysis of Its Texts* (Leuven: University Press, 1983).

synod sessions themselves became funneled through a process which resulted in secret propositions transmitted to the pope. "One searches desperately for something in *Familiaris consortio*" they write, "that emanated specifically from the synod and was not already part of pre-synodal teaching or practice." They fault the exhortation because they find in it "no spirit of inquiry, no initiation of further study or willingness to rethink fundamental presuppositions."<sup>30</sup>

Even the critics, however, would have to concede that the synod represents a substantial advancement in the practice of collegiality. It provides the pope, his curia, and the bishops with access to one another on a continuing basis. Given the fact that there are now 3000 bishops in the Church, such regular assemblies would seem to be essential even if only 300 of them can attend a synod at any one time. The diversity of cultures and theologies becomes more apparent with each synod, underscoring the necessity of developing fraternal relations and interaction. As Grootaers himself has noted, a certain practical collegiality of a very effective kind is already evident through the mutual influence provided by the synods: *Gaudium et spes* of the council influenced *Populorum progressio* of Paul VI, which carried great weight with the bishops of CELAM meeting at Medellín, who in turn made some contribution to the thinking that went into *Octogesima adveniens* of Paul VI, which provided the framework for the document on *Justice in the World* issued by the synod of 1971. The synod of 1974 resulted in *Evangelii nuntiandi*, which made so powerful an impact on the Puebla meeting of CELAM.<sup>31</sup>

Whether one calls the results of the synod or national conference merely "collective acts" or "collegial activity" with de Lubac and Hamer, or distinguishes with Tomko true collegial acts of various grades from acts of the college itself, such instruments do recapture for the Church a way of thinking and acting with concern for every part of it in view. This is collegiality in the larger sense and it may be of greater importance.

A host of theological issues are involved when one proposes, as Grootaers, Selling, and Alberigo do, to make substantive changes in synodal practice and procedure. They usually cite the early works of Ratzinger on the local church and Hamer on the Church as a *communio* without taking into account the later reflections and refinements to which I have alluded. Then there is the unique role of the primacy and the nature of the episcopate, which comprise not only a *collegium* but also a body of witnesses to, and authoritative teachers of, the divinely-given deposit of faith. It is certainly helpful that there be wide consultation in the Church before a synod convenes and that there be a frank exchange of experiences by all the synod participants, but given the charismatic basis of the

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 337.

<sup>31</sup> Grootaers, "I synodi dei vescovi" 293.

Church's *communio* and the nature of divine revelation given once for all, purely inductive approaches to doctrine and concerns about whether the synods are deliberative or merely consultative do not strictly apply.

On this subtle but essential point the reflection of Karol Wojtyła, writing as Archbishop of Krakow in 1972, are illuminating. The doctrinal and pastoral character of the power of the episcopate in the Church is given expression at the synod, he writes, through a common action and a collegial vote on issues of significance to the Church today. The importance of such a vote is that it is taken within the episcopal college collegially acting, rather than its formal aspect, that is, as a consultation for the head of the college. A vote of this special kind is "a testimony of the faith and life of all the churches, the express witness given by the bishops who have responsibility for these churches, a demonstration of the concern for the entire Church". Such a vote, therefore, does not fit categories of deliberative or consultative, he maintains, for it has a "weight of ecclesial quality."<sup>32</sup> A pope obviously could not be opposed to such an expression of the churches' faith and love.

The present methods of the synod remain the subject of continual review and discussion, but in its present form it achieves its purpose reasonably well within the severe limitations of time (four weeks) and the size and diversity of its membership. New issues for theological reflection and pastoral action do emerge, but their resolution often must await a quiet living with them by the whole Church until a consensus upon them can be achieved. A polemical resolution of such issues or one that does not respect differing competencies would not be in keeping with the nature of the Church. The problems attendant upon "doctrine by committee" have been well described by Paul Ramsey in his book about the 1966 Geneva Conference on Church and Society, *Who Speaks for the Church?*<sup>33</sup> in which he explains the difference between a group or body that simply speaks *to* the Church and one that truly speaks *for* the Church.

The principal danger to be avoided in discussing the forms of interaction in the Church is to approach these questions with preconceived models and then try to fit the realities of the Church's ongoing life into them. The trilogy, communion–collegiality–synodality, emerges as a truer theological basis of these new instruments—the synodal practice reflecting the collegial nature of the Church as a communion. The preparations for the synods, the work of the national conferences, the pastoral letters and theological exchanges, the expressions of mutual charity, the atmos-

<sup>32</sup> *Karol Wojtyła e il sinodo dei vescovi* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1980) 19.

<sup>33</sup> Nashville: Abingdon, 1967.

phere of respect for one another, and fidelity to the faith are all part of this process which should always be going forward in the Church. Apart from such a trilogy, Tomko believes, collegiality would appear to be in a state of "suspension" between collegial acts.<sup>34</sup>

It is vastly more complicated to accomplish this task in the world today, but with the leadership of a dynamic primacy and the help of an episcopate renewed by the collegial principle new modalities can be developed and older ones improved to bring this about. Continual communication is the key, as Cardinal Wojtyla said at the synod of 1969, communication of personal gifts and insights, and, more than external structures, the internal participation of persons themselves.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Personal interview, Rome, March 1, 1984.

<sup>35</sup> *Karol Wojtyla e il sinodo dei vescovi* 12-13.