1989

Community building essence of the Roman Catholic Church's survival.

Dorothy J. Vermeulen
University of Windsor

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COMMUNITY BUILDING: ESSENCE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SURVIVAL

by

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A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research
through the Department of
Religious Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1989

ISBN 0-315-54526-7

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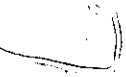
ACW 3366



ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to discern the model or models of church and of ministry operative in small faith communities in North American Catholicism, in the light of Post Vatican II studies in Roman Catholic ecclesiology. More specifically, this thesis tries to determine whether or not the ecclesial reality of these groups is that of a community of equal disciples, where equality is understood as an equality of dignity, decision-making, and diverse and interchangeable ministries.

Since the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church, an extensive body of ecclesiological studies has arisen. Much of it has focused upon the use of theological models to elaborate an understanding of Church. This same period has also witnessed the emergence of a vast number of small faith communities of prayer, mutual support, and social action. While these have flourished especially in Latin America, there is a developing literature which documents North American attempts to form such communities. However, as yet there has been no formal attempt to articulate the ecclesiology operative in these faith groups within the spectrum of theological models. It is to this task of articulation that my thesis is directed, with special focus upon the issue of equality. In making this application, we can discern whether or not there is an

emerging consensus or even an ongoing conflict in the lived and formulated theology of church in the generation after Vatican II.

In the first chapter, therefore, I develop the notion of model, indicate the spectrum of models of the church, and concentrate especially on elaborating the two contrasting poles of church as institution and as community of equal disciples.

In the second chapter, I establish the understanding of ministry and leadership, as contained within these contrasting models of church, and as formulated in postconciliar studies.

In the third chapter, then, I apply the previously elaborated models of church and ministry to small faith communities, according to available documentation, and, in particular, attend to the presence and possibility of a community of equal disciples in these groups and their ministries.

What conclusions can be drawn from this study? I suggest that by retrieving the model of church as community of equal disciples, it is possible for the Roman Catholic Church to reshape itself around an image that both draws upon its authentic roots and is open to more liberating and interdependent expressions in the future. The concept and application of the community of equal disciples model offers the opportunity for the Roman Catholic Church, (1) to bridge

the chasm that separates clergy and laity; (2) to communicate the gospel story in an interrelational manner even within huge anonymous parishes; (3) to recognize official sacramental leadership among the laity; (4) to reanimate its credibility among its people and in society first at the local and then at wider levels.

If theology is truly rooted in praxis, an analysis of the present ecclesiology of small faith communities in North American Catholicism, as presented through the literature on the subject, can perhaps indicate something of the lingering tensions, unresolved issues, and possible future direction of this church. I conclude that the renewal and vitality of the Roman Catholic Church, indeed its hope for the future, depends upon the flourishing of small faith communities of equal disciples.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to the several computer specialists who throughout the past year gave valuable advice and assistance so that I could produce this thesis: Christopher Diett, Ted Grayson, Paul Major, Tom Miehls, Charles Rocks and Ed Tracey. Thank You.

To the groups related to the church that taught me the importance of community: Gwen Rouble and the Liturgy Committee, The Good Shepherd Prayer Group, The Breakfast Club and The Secondary School Chaplains. Thank You.

To my family: to Joe who wanted to give me several pictures each worth a thousand words so that I could finish quicker; to Joanne who gave daily encouragement with the words, "I hope you get your book done soon"; to my mother and mother-in-law for helping with household tasks so that I could complete the project; to Rob, Jim and my brothers and sisters for their support and confidence. Thank You.

To Ralph Kirchner who made the concepts come alive with his introspective illustrations. Thank You.

To the staff at the university: to Ethel Smith and Christine Charlebois, for their consistently positive attitude when dealing with student concerns; to Dr. McKendrick, for his special command of linguistic structures which result in an overall smoothness in composition; to Dr. Culliton whose understanding, reassurance and endorsement speeded up the process; to Dr. King, who gave countless hours of direction and most especially believes in and is constantly working towards a community of equal disciples in the church. Thank You.

Dedicated to those who are building Communities of Equal Disciples in the Roman Catholic Church.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to discern the model or models of church and of ministry operative in small faith communities in North American Catholicism, in the light of Post Vatican II studies in Roman Catholic ecclesiology. More specifically, the thesis tries to determine whether or not the ecclesial reality of these groups is that of a community of equal disciples, where equality is understood as an equality of dignity, decision-making, and diverse and interchangeable ministries.

My academic conclusion will be that the small faith communities emerging in North American Catholicism are moving strongly in the direction of the community of equal disciples model of church, but that such a model is not wholly realizable within existing parish structures. My personal conviction is that the Roman Catholic Church will survive and flourish in the future only as transformed into a network of communities of equal disciples.

The motivation for writing this thesis comes from an understanding of a crisis situation of multiple dimensions in North American Catholicism. The local church is no longer viewed as the center of spirituality and holiness. Roman Catholics who are serious about an intimate relationship with the divine, that is integrated into the whole of life, usually seek God in prayer groups, social justice groups, in

depth catechetical formation, meaningful Eucharistic celebrations or other communities and activities that respond to their spiritual quest. Since these faith experiences are often unavailable within their geographical parish, they are frequently willing to travel great distances to fulfill this longing.

However, switching parishes is not the only possible option. Dissatisfaction leads many people to leave the Roman Catholic church altogether. Large numbers are trying to find a group where their gifts are affirmed and appreciated, their participation is equally valued and their spiritual lives are fostered. Many of these find a welcome place in other Christian denominations. Still another population is content with the status quo, finding solace in familiar routines, and holding on to a religious practice that remains an undemanding compartment of life. Of course, many simply drift away from any connection with this or any church, either unawakened to the religious quest or finding little that sparks their interest or responds to felt longings.

There is yet another assemblage on whose behalf I write this thesis--those who love their church and are anxious to raise its consciousness and to transform it into a vital spiritual reality. A growing number look to the process of forming small communities within the parish structure where they hope to enflesh the basic message of Christ--to love

and serve one another and their world. This is the alternative to leaving the church: the creation of faith communities, alive with the spirit of Christ, where each of the above groups could be fulfilled and remain actively present in their local parish.

What must be done to ease the aging clergy's job and perhaps redefine the nature and function of their ministry, to give the laity the opportunity to exercise their gifts for the good of the parish and beyond its boundaries, and to share in the institutional authority of the parish as well as to develop a profound and socially just spirituality in the parish? In this thesis, I hope to demonstrate that the answer lies in moving away from the long dominant Roman Catholic model of the church that stressed its visible, institutional, hierarchical elements. In its place I propose to give emphasis to the more recently presented model of church as a community of equal disciples and to stress that the implementation of this model lies in the formation of small communities within and across local parish structures.

For centuries the Roman Catholic Church has been viewed primarily as an institution and all its functions enforced and served this conception. Today its validity is being questioned from many directions including those mentioned here: the dwindling number of clerics; the reluctance to admit lay people to parish ministries; the request for decision-making power on the part of the laity; the

inability of local clergy to move toward a collegial position; and the searching outside the parish for a deeper spirituality.

In place of the institutional model whose adequacy has been seriously questioned, Avery Dulles proposes as the best model of the church the image of a "community of disciples of Jesus".[1] Roger Haight reaffirms that this model is virtually identical to liberation theology's view of church as "community of the Spirit of Jesus".[2]

Recently there have been various writings on the model of church as a community. The Whiteheads, for example, believe the church should be a "community of stewards" (1984:49-59); Delores Lecky favours the term a "community of ministers" (Bausch,1986:72); Leonardo Boff advocates "base communities" (1986:1f); and Rosemary Radford Ruether speaks of feminist base communities (1983:205f).

William Bausch states that the community model of the church exists on the various continents (1987:184-186). But he concludes that North American Catholicism does not have an adequate community-based model of church. Although it is equally dissatisfied with the institutional model, it has not developed a new image that is recognized, endorsed and operational at the official level.

In order to discern the models operative within attempts at building small faith communities, it is necessary first to explain the notion of model and to

indicate the variety of models developed in recent ecclesiology. Here I rely on the writing of Avery Dulles, who both sets forth a working definition of model and spells out a number of models helpful in developing an ecclesiology. His work provides the structural framework within which to assess the possible models of church.

More specifically, Dulles places at the two contrasting poles of his models those he calls the institutional and the community of disciples models. He regards the institutional model as exclusively dominant within the Roman Catholic church from the post reformation period. He then presents a variety of complementary models which have been developed or retrieved in recent decades (communion, sacrament, herald, servant). Later, Dulles arrives at the conclusion that the community of disciples is the model most able to integrate all the best features of the other models, including the institutional.

The community of disciples model is further developed and refined, often in explicit contrast to institutional and hierarchical emphases, by recent New Testament studies. These writings, with varying weight, stress the equal dignity and ministerial roles of all members of the Christian community. They move towards an understanding of church as a community of equal disciples.

In the first chapter, therefore, I develop the notion of model, indicate the spectrum of models of church, and

concentrate especially on elaborating the two contrasting poles of church as institution and as community of equal disciples.

The term community of disciples takes its roots in the earthly ministry of Jesus and today constantly "calls attention to the ongoing relationship of the church to Christ its Lord who continues to direct it through his spirit" (Dulles,1978:206). Moreover, Vatican II repeatedly refers to its members as disciples (Dulles,207). These are people willing to ascertain more fully what it means to be a Christian. The disciple has not arrived, but is on the way to "full conversion and blessedness of life" (Dulles,1982:10).

To initiate this process, there is a vast amount of education necessary both on the part of the clergy to be reformed, and the laity to be informed. Only then will the church start to shift into a mode of collaboration and collegiality. The Dulles' model, as refined by others into a community of equal disciples model, appropriately assumes this direction.

A critical feature both in the theological models and in the small faith communities is the understanding and practice of ministry, as well as the corresponding portrayal and forms of leadership. Within the framework of this paper, therefore, I look at the view of ministry and of leadership as they are found in the two models at either end of the

spectrum, the institutional and community of equal disciples models. These follow respectively an hierarchical, authoritarian and an egalitarian, collaborative approach.

Within this conceptual framework, I then expand the treatment first of ministry and then of leadership by looking to postconciliar studies which focus specifically on this area. In their discussion of ministry, these studies underline the ministerial responsibility of all Christians within their local church and in outreach to the wider society. At the same time, they acknowledge a wide variety of ministries arising from the diverse gifts of the members and responsive to the needs of the group. These writings also tend to stress that the building of community is the underlying and foundational ministry and a dimension of all the other ministries. By community building, they understand in general the development of a common bond rooted in shared experience, vision, values, support, and outreach.

These studies also emphasize that leadership must arise from within the community and accentuate its nature as a leadership of function rather that caste, rooted in spirituality and gifts, and defined in terms of service to and empowerment of others. In effect, they speak of some form of servant leadership exercised within and for the good of the community as a whole. This understanding of ministry and leadership corresponds to and is best situated within the model of church as community of equal disciples.

In the second chapter, I will develop the understanding of ministry and leadership, as contained within the contrasting models of church, and as developed in postconciliar studies.

To enflesh the theological notion of community implicit in the model articulated by Dulles and others, it is helpful to consider the writings of two prominent community builders, Jean Vanier and Scott Peck. Vanier, a renowned establisher of l'Arche homes, postulates that community is a sign that love is possible in a materialistic world. It is a gathering of people who care about one another's lives, both the joys and the sorrows; who willingly pray on each other's behalf; who serve one another and celebrate together; and as a group work for a better world.

A distinguished promoter of community building in society, Scott Peck, reinforces Vanier's concept of community when he says, "to use the word meaningfully we must restrict it to a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together and to delight in each other, make other's conditions our own" (Peck,1987:59). He further explains that community must be inclusive. It thrives on commitment, appreciates differences, is transcended by consensus and humility and its underlying premise is that it

is a safe place to be.[3]

For too long, in Peck's view, the word community has been loosely and falsely used to mean any gathering of town, apartment, association, etc. "regardless of how poorly those individuals communicate with each other" (Peck:59). As Peck and Vanier conclude, without sharing our brokenness and pain, as well as our delights, there is no community. If that is the case, we may inquire where in the church's liturgical gatherings or other opportunities for coming together do we get to share our joys and pain with one another? Both experts contend that these sharings are fundamental to community building.

If the community of equal disciples can be taken as a fundamental and primary model of church, rooted in the practice of Jesus, and if this model is the principal prototype essential to restructure the Catholic Church of the future, I propose that community building is the principal ministry necessary to achieve this model.

Today, the ministry of community building provides an alternative vision for the church. It is based on the principle that the kingdom of God is with us (Haight:162). It is an uncentering of the church, through a gathering of equals whose intent is to walk together in life, to pray and play together, to learn more about their faith, so that they may carry forward the purpose and intention of Jesus to the world. Community building is a process of empowering people.

It breaks the climate of passivity and motivates in the direction of communion as opposed to privatism and individualism (Haight:226).

The ministry of community building is the ministry in which all ministries are rooted. Its basic impulse is ministerial service in Jesus' name. As a ministry it belongs to everyone by reason of his or her baptism. All Christians are community builders in a formal and real sense. Through baptism all are called by Christ to share in his love. Ordination may be one of the ministries of community building, but not the only vehicle for loving service to be rendered to God's people. Yet if there are not specific efforts and programs to build community in a parish, it does not exist.

Even though the Eucharist is a celebration of a community of believers, Joseph Martos cautions that if real community is not present in many fashions before and after the Sunday liturgy, the term community of believers has face value only. "If there are not shared commitments to common values and ideals, they cannot be intensified in liturgical worship" (Martos,1982,62). To the extent these realities are present or lacking in an assembled group, to that degree they are alive or absent in their sacramental celebrations. Community building is theological, sociological and psychological. It brings about definite changes in the manner that people perceive God, others and themselves.

Genuine community is a precondition for a fully authentic and meaningful liturgical celebration of realities already experienced within the group.

I contend that there needs to be in every parish a specific community building ministry, while community building must also remain the underlying premise for all ministries. This specific ministry will consist of people whose presence and activity fosters hospitality, affirmation, encouragement, outreach and service, in a variety of ways. Their efforts will convey a sense of identity and belonging to more and more people in the parish. Because of the unique nature of each parish, community building ministries can take countless forms. Whatever the focus or structure to be sustained, community building "must involve support, personal reflection and a meditative study of scripture."[4]

Rather than setting down a preset norm which may be restrictive, I maintain that the description, purpose and identity of these small communities will depend on the talent, culture and pluriformity of needs in each parish. Other situations are also emerging because of priestless parishes. The Vatican II idea that the church is the people of God, and therefore in basic ways presumably belongs to the people, is creating a different atmosphere and a rethinking of the requirement of sacramental ordination to officiate at the liturgy. Again planning must begin for the

reality of no-priest parishes. "Goodwill and the freedom to minister are not enough. Skills must be acquired, accountability demanded and a support system provided" (Geaney,1987,109f). Dedicated and mature men and women, trained in spiritual leadership, will be the sustaining force of the church's future.

Ultimately, the community building process may be accepted more readily if the directors of seminaries were convinced of its importance, and offered courses and institutes to the students, priests and the laity in this essential ministry. Leading the clergy and the laity to maturity through the ministry of community building is the proposition for the survival of the Roman Catholic Church in North America. Community building is a positive alternative for the present dissatisfaction with the hierarchical, clerical, institutional model of the church. The people of God are longing to be involved as respected, credible members. Through the ministry of community building both the clergy and the laity will have the opportunity to reform the church, restructuring it into small groups who are eager to learn, pray and support one another along life's journey. As a result of this endeavour, creative ministries will evolve and function with a collaborative, interchangeable leadership of laity and/or clergy. Ultimately both the church and the world will be enriched with a renewed spirit of Christ.

After presenting the above theological framework and central concepts, I analyze small faith communities in North American Catholicism in order to discern which model(s) of church, ministry and leadership are in fact operative in them. While there have been many attempts, both informal and more organized, to build such communities, I limit my consideration to written materials. These texts document the experience of such communities and contain at least implicitly a certain vision of church and its mission.

While certain groups fall within the community of disciples model, they are not fully communities of equal disciples, and this latter model is not wholly realizable within existing parish structures. In examining these communities, I pay particular attention to the degree to which they do approximate a community of equal disciples model. The presence of these communities, raises important issues about the relationship of such groups to the larger institutional structures.

With regard to forms of ministry and leadership, there is a similar tension. In a community of equal disciples, there is a recognition of the ministry of all members, their variety according to gifts, and an underlying emphasis upon community building. Leadership arises from within the group and is exercised in its service.

These are communities of word and sacrament in a very fundamental sense, as well as groups of mutual support and

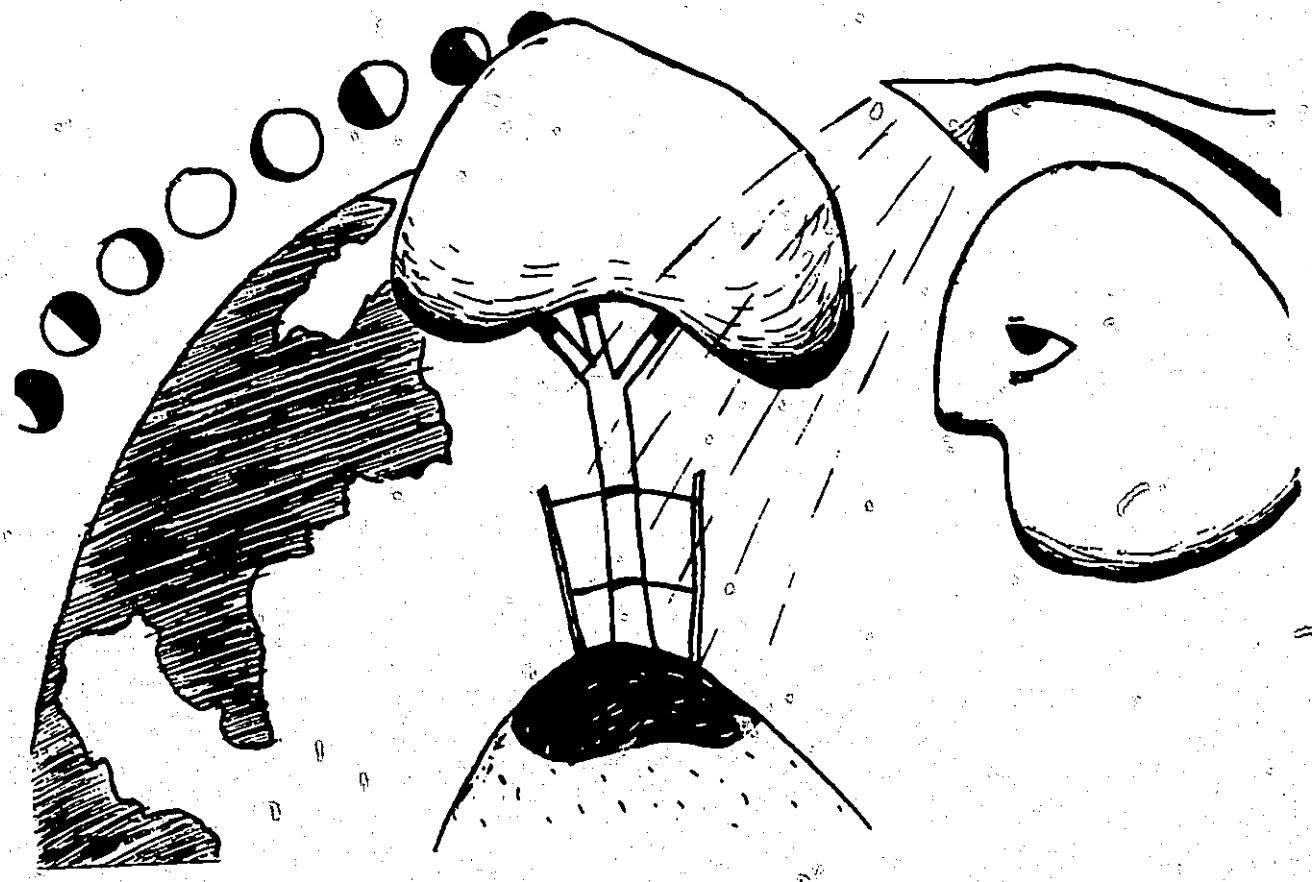
social outreach. The members do read and reflect on the scriptures in relation to their own lives, and they minister to one another and to their society in sacramental ways. Yet the laity do not exercise a sacramental ministry in an official sense, and may not preside at eucharistic celebrations. The emergence of these communities raises fundamental questions about the nature and relationship of ordained and non-ordained ministry and leadership.

In the third chapter, I apply the previously elaborated models of church and ministry to small faith communities, according to available documentation, and, in particular, attend to the presence and possibility of a community of equal disciples in these groups and their ministries.

What conclusions can be drawn from this study? By retrieving the model of church as community of equal disciples, it is possible for the Roman Catholic Church to reshape itself around an image that both draws upon its authentic roots and is open to more liberating and interdependent expressions in the future. The concept and application of the community of equal disciples model offers the opportunity for the Roman Catholic Church, (1) to bridge the chasm that separates clergy and laity; (2) to communicate the gospel story in an interrelational manner even within huge anonymous parishes; (3) to recognize official sacramental leadership among the laity; (4) to reanimate its credibility among its people and in society

first at the local and then at wider levels.

Since theology is rooted in praxis, an analysis of the present ecclesiology of small faith communities in North American Catholicism, as presented through the literature on the subject indicates something of the lingering tensions, unresolved issues, and possible future directions for the church. I conclude that the renewal and vitality of the Roman Catholic Church, indeed its hope for the future, depends upon the flourishing of small faith communities of equal disciples.



Affirmation and Encouragement

INTRODUCTION NOTES

1. Avery Dulles, *A Church To Believe In* (New York: Crossroads, 1982),pp.7-8, roots discipleship in the writings of the four evangelists.

2. Roger Haight, *An Alternative Vision* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985),p.174. It is Jesus' salvific message and ultimately Jesus Christ himself as bearer of this message, that makes the community of the Spirit distinctive. The Church is filled with the Spirit of God through the members that make up the community.

3. See Scott Peck, *The Different Drum* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987),pp.61-67, for a detailed explanation of inclusivity, commitment, consensus, realism, contemplation and a safe place as vital components of community.

4. William Bausch, *Take Heart Father* (Mystic,Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987),pp.81-94. Here Bausch tries to allay the fears of structured, power-oriented priests. He repeatedly assures them of the kind of joy an harmonizing and collaborative style of priesthood and leadership can give.

CHAPTER 1

CONTRASTING MODELS OF CHURCH

1. NATURE AND VARIETY OF MODELS OF CHURCH

Introduction

In the first chapter, I will explicate Avery Dulles' idea of model and then present and assess the institutional model of the Roman Catholic Church[1] which has been the prevalent image since the Council of Trent. In contrast to this model, I will develop Dulles' preferred metaphor for the church as a community of disciples. I will then articulate the scriptural origins of the community of disciples model, trace it back to the community that Jesus established, and finally present concepts from modern theologians that expand its ecclesial implications.

Images and Models

Throughout history, ecclesiology has developed its self understanding through metaphorical images found basically in scripture. The New Testament is rich with expressions which describe the church as a city, pillar of truth, house of God, and bride of Christ. (Dulles,1978:23). According to Dulles, such complex and subtle images function as symbols which have the ability to transform life, integrate reality and reorient loyalties and aspirations in a manner that exceeds conceptual thought (Dulles:24). Thereby, religious

imagery or symbols are both "functional and cognitive" (Dulles:25). Relevant symbols can connect groups with common attitudes and commitments and have the potential to make the church become what they suggest the church is (Dulles:25).

An image becomes a model when it is "employed reflectively and critically to deepen one's theoretical understanding of a reality" (Dulles:27). A model can also be a concrete image, that is easily conceived, as for example, body, treasure, temple; or it can be an abstract construct such as evangelization, kingdom, sacrament.

Through his development of the various models, Dulles provides an understanding of the complex nature or essence of the church. Being a many-faceted composite, the church cannot be contained in one dimension or description but rather requires a plurality of models to encompass its totality. Dulles suggests the number of models or types can be varied at will but he limited his initial research to a manageable five: (institution, communion, sacrament, herald and servant) in the hope of stimulating and broadening the theological understanding of the church for all its members.

Dulles sees these various images as complementary, each one shedding light on, or accenting different aspects of the reality of the church. Subsequently, however, he comes to favour the vision of the church as a community of disciples. In the later expanded edition of *Models of the Church*, Dulles presents the community of disciples model as most

able to integrate all the best contributions and features of the other models, including the institutional. Moreover, "unlike several others already mentioned, [it] is congruent with our everyday experience of church" (1982:9).

To be relevant, Christian images or symbols must reflect the experience of the people. If they are of a former age and no longer speak for the faithful, the images become powerless and devoid of their spiritual significance. Likewise, for a new image to take hold in the church, the community has to be "ripe psychologically" (Dulles,1978:25). Dulles believes that today's Christians are seeking a personal call and wish to respond in a free self-conscious manner. Similar to the early disciples, they are in search of a relationship with Jesus himself, the Lord of the church, not the church itself. It is a precarious, fragile relationship, founded on faith, that requires the company of other Christians for its continuance (Dulles,1982:9-10).

More specifically, Dulles places at the two contrasting poles of his models those he calls the institutional and the community of disciples models. He regards the institutional model as exclusively dominant within the Roman Catholic Church from the post reformation period. Its success depended on "the homogeneous Christian character of that former culture and society" (Rahner,1974:23). Today's church is in transition to a community of equal disciples who critically disassociate

themselves from absolute authority in order to seek interdependence, personal freedom, a voice in decision-making, plus the opportunity to share faith and life with one another.

Before developing the community of disciples model which is central to this thesis, let us first examine the predominate position of the institutional model of the church out of which it emerges.

Review and Critique of Institutional Model of Church

The prevailing model of the church is highly institutional, that is, it is understood "in terms of dogmas, laws and hierarchical agencies, which impose heavy demands of conformity" (Dulles,1982:3). To be a committed Catholic in the institutional model, is "simply to adhere to the beliefs and practices demanded by the office-holders" (Dulles:3). The institutional image is one in which the visible, organizational, hierarchical elements are taken as primary and most important, to the neglect and even the exclusion of other dimensions of the church.

From Dulles' point of view, institutionalism is a deformation of the true nature of the church (Dulles:40). This is not to say that the church should be without order, structure and authority but rather the concept of institutionalism that he opposes is the one developed in the

late middle ages as a defense against the attacks on the papacy and hierarchy. Congar brings out clearly the identification of the church's ecclesiology

> as machinery of hierarchical mediation, of the powers and primacy of the Roman see, in a word "hierarchology". On the other hand, the two terms between which that mediation comes, the Holy Spirit on the one side, the faithful people or the religious subject on the other, were as it were kept out of ecclesiological consideration[2](1965:45).

In its strictest form, the institutional model identifies the church with its hierarchical structure and regards it as the perfect society, superior to all others, and established in this pyramidal form by Jesus himself. This model was expressed "with singular clarity, in the first schema of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* prepared for Vatican Council I" (Dulles,1978:41).

> We teach and declare: The church has all the marks of a true society. Christ did not leave this society undefined and without a set form. Rather he himself gave [it] its existence, and his will determined the form of its existence and gave it its constitution. The church is not part nor member of any other society, and is not mingled in any way with any other society. It is so perfect in itself that it is distinct from all human societies and stands far above them.[3]

In the institutional model, the powers and functions of the church are generally determined as "teaching, sanctifying and governing" (Dulles:42). However these categories lead to divisions of hierarchical nature between

the teachers and the taught; the sanctifiers and the sanctified; the governors and the governed. The church as institution is always the giver, the governing body or hierarchy (Dulles:42).

From this arrangement, only the master teachers have access to sacred doctrine which is handed down from Christ and is imposed upon the laity. Likewise grace is assumed to flow from the pope downwards and is to be dispensed through the actions of the clergy. Unlike teaching and sanctifying which are directly traced to Christ, ruling is done in its own name. Officials "govern the flock with pastoral authority and as Christ's viceregents impose new laws and precepts under pain of sin" (Dulles,1978:43).

Dissimilar to other institutions which operate as democratic representations of their members, the church is a definite hierarchical authority. The following excerpt from Vatican I writings clearly attests to this position.

> But the Church of Christ is not a community of equals in which all the faithful have the same rights. It is a society of unequals, not only because among the faithful some are clerics and some are laymen, but particularly because there is in the Church the power from God whereby to some it is given to sanctify, teach and govern and to others not.*

Further characteristics of institutionalism in the church include "clericalism, juridicism, and triumphalism" (Dulles:44). Clericalism means that the clergy are the

source of all power which they disseminate in a pyramidal fashion with the laity at the bottom in a passive role. The church patterns its juridical format on the secular state ruling its domain by laws and penalties which include not only the governing aspects but also the teaching and sanctifying roles. Finally, as triumphalistic, the church is portrayed as an army fighting Satan and the powers of evil (Dulles,1978:44).

This ecclesiology operates out of a static world view whereby everything is to remain the same as it originated. The Council of Trent taught that Christ instituted the sacraments and the hierarchical chain of command that currently exists.[5] By the same reasoning, all faith and dogma is considered complete with the teachings of the apostles.[6]

In Dulles' opinion, there are three main assets to institutionalism; that is, the model has been endorsed and assumed in official church documents; it provides continuity and stability in a rapidly changing society; and it offers members a strong corporate identity that sustains loyalty (Dulles,1978:47-48).

It is important to emphasize that the institutional model reflected the secular structures of the times. "When people were accustomed to being ruled by alien powers in every sphere of life" (Dulles,1982:3), institutionalism gained ascendance in theological thinking and pastoral

practice. It was taken for granted in church councils convoked during the period, from the late middle ages up until Vatican II. Other models, reflective of changed social conditions and theological developments in studies in theology, history, bible, etc. were then introduced.

Because of these contemporary unfoldings, Dulles has found several serious shortcomings to the institutional model of the church.

1. It is difficult to prove the institutional church's position that doctrinal, sacramental and governmental structures are found in scripture and the early church tradition.

2. In spite of Jesus' critical stance against institutional religions of his day, the institutional church accentuates the importance of human authority and power over others.

3. Missionary efforts and the incorporation of large numbers is necessary to justify the role of the clergy since visible numbers are paramount.

4. Attempts by the laity to surpass their obedient and docile roles are viewed as insubordination to the hierarchy.

5. Theologians who think critically and innovatively rather that defending the status quo are held suspect by institutional authorities.

6. The church focuses on its esteemed past and is not in tune with the present aversion to and suspicion of institutions (Dulles, 1978:45-50).

In summation, Dulles sees the institutional model as out of touch with the present and primarily bound in defending past practices and structures, particularly the

hierarchical system. As such it seems "designed to control and crush rather than to nourish and satisfy the needs of the spirit" (Dulles,1982:4).

Dulles frequently voices his concern that the institutional image of church has lost its relevance to speak to the life experience of its members. Most people relate to the church primarily in institutional terms and see it as a "huge impersonal machine set over against its own members" (Dulles,1982:3), seeking to control them and their faith growth and even to restrict the freedom of the Spirit to lead and direct the institutional church. Some of the causes for this concern are reflected in the following:

> Priestly and religious vocations have notably declined...A high percentage of "under forty" Catholics no longer regard themselves as members of the Church. Many Catholics who enter mixed marriages drift away from their former religion. Among Catholics who persevere, a large number reject the official teaching of the Church on issues such as divorce, contraception and to some extent, abortion. Dogmas such as papal infallibility are widely misunderstood and disbelieved...with the increasing influence of mass media on communications, the Church finds it increasingly difficult to transmit its doctrine and values to its younger members. It does not seem to be forming a sufficient body of new leaders to assure an effective apostolate for the coming generations (Dulles,1982:2).

Other authors express and develop at length perspectives on the institutional model similar to the presentation and evaluation by Dulles. They not only expand

upon his theological criticisms, but also emphasize how the model translates into the day to day operation at the parish level.

William Bausch, a parish priest who is a trend setter in community building, repeatedly challenges the institutional model. He questions why it is no longer credible to nearly two-thirds of the Catholic people (Bausch,1986:187). The answer to this question could very well begin with the underlying premise for its operational structure.

The institutional model of the church reflects a prior and no longer appropriate hierarchical socio-cultural situation. Yet with some exceptions, the majority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the present pope included, tend to think and act out of the institutional model. According to Eugene Kennedy, a respected challenger of the institutional system, the leader, Pope John Paul II, envisions the church as "a vertical rather that a horizontal reality, a *communio* of hierarchical character rather than a People of God in collegial relationship with each other" (Kennedy,1988:162). Bishops and priests are likewise trained in obedience to this model. The net result is to expect passive acceptance from the laity as their underlying behaviour. Since they have no voice in the decision-making process, the lay role is assumed to be acceptance of all laws. Moreover, any diversion from total agreement with the doctrines and canons

is seen as disloyalty and possibly dissension. Consequently Kennedy suggests that "the institution and the people are moving at a constant rate away from each other" (Kennedy:188).

Obvious signs of discontent described by Dulles include vast numbers of people leaving the church, noticeable shrinkage in attendance at mass, vital decrease in members seeking ordination, and the restlessness of the average Catholic (1982:2). Yet there is no committee or process in place to offer a critique and to evaluate the situation consistently. Rather, such losses to date are virtually unquestioned.

In his book *Hopeful Imagination*, New Testament exegete, Brueggemann "seeks to make a hermeneutical move to our own theological situation by drawing a 'dymanic equivalent' between Israel's exilic situation and that of the American Church" (1987:ix). He supports Dulles when he describes the clergy as engaged in denial, self-deception and wishful thinking (Brueggemann,1987:12). The leaders do not notice the grief of their people because "they are too busy, too sure, too invested, too ideologically committed. They misread so badly" (Brueggemann:34). Old promises sound so appropriate to the guardians of the status quo. They deceive themselves into believing that there is no illness. In its pursuit of self-interest and security, the ecclesial hierarchy has become untrustworthy (Brueggemann:37).

In a similar vein Gerhard Lohfink, a New Testament scholar, agrees with Dulles' criticism of the institutional model when he writes,

> It is foolish to look to the historical Jesus for a formal act of founding the church. But it is very meaningful to ask how Jesus gathered Israel and how he envisioned the community of the true Israel, because right here we reach the ultimately decisive question of what the church should look like today (1984:xi).

Lohfink further supports Dulles in his perception that the institutional model has one blind spot--domination, which does serious harm to the gospel message (1984:120). Unaware that it could be an alternative type of society based on service to one another because of the paradox of the cross, the institutional church is not cognizant that it is not truly reflective and faithful to the New Testament origins of the church on which it was created. Lohfink expresses the situation rather accurately when he analyzes the practices in the parish which are fashioned on the institutional model.

> We take for granted our huge anonymous parishes, well administered but largely without communication, and perhaps even assume that this is God's will. We no longer even notice how little requirements of New Testament community life, such as those mentioned in the following list, can occur at all in this type of parish:
>
> live in harmony with one another (Rom.12:16)
> have the same care for one another (1Cor.12:25)

build one another up (1Thess.5:11)
confess your sins to one another (James 5:16)
admonish one another (Rom.15:14). (Lohfink:104).

Instead of fostering the above qualities the church, patterned on the institutional model, has developed into a system of images dealing with unquestioned authority, paternalism, clericalism and an overt hostility towards women (Lohfink:125,174,185). Thus, the institutional church has become a "castelike structure" which is gripped by its own need to control (Kennedy,1988:75). Members of the hierarchy, in Dulles' estimation, "are prisoners of the system they impose on others" (1982:3). He continues, "They do what makes for law and order in the church rather than what Jesus himself would be likely to do" (Dulles,1982:3). This is not a healthy model, for control leads to manipulation and manipulation in the church controls through the use of guilt and fear. Such authority, as Kennedy describes, deprives its subjects of their senses, refuses to let them hear, see and inspect (1988:108,110,131). Protesters are silenced and measures are taken to keep them inaudible and invisible (Brueggemann,1987:43).

In its arrogance, the church today is insensitive and pharisaic towards its prophets, poets and their books (Brueggemann112). Moreover few bishops tolerate the formation of lay movements for fear of losing further control (Hennelly,1983:61). Attempts at new visions are

stifled and people cease to risk challenging the existing structure. Instead North Americans leave the church.

Remaining faithful to the institutional model assumes ultimate conformity as the basic requirement for the laity-just keep the rules and follow the practices (Boff,1986:1). As a result, people eventually are closed off, pick and choose what they want from the church in its sacramental cafeteria, and go on their way uncommitted.

William Burrows, who has assessed the global situation with regard to base communities, thinks the present parish structure, which perpetuates institutionalism, is usually understood as the locus for the clergy to operate their sacramental system (1980:157). However in doing so, the clergy keeps imperialism alive in the church (Burrows:24). Sometimes the institutional model has been referred to as a service station where the attendants are active and the paying customers passive (Burrows:115). With little involvement of the laity in the sacraments, the sanctuary dominates or as Palmer Parker, a strong advocate of community building in America, suggests, the liturgy assumes an actor/audience relationship (1982:159).

Statistically, the institutional model does not fare well. Bausch writes of a modern survey entitled "Institutions That Wield the Most Influence" in the world (1982:71). Organized religion ranked twenty-sixth in a field of twenty-nine. To most people today the institutional model

"no longer exudes happiness and joy only respectibility and weight" (Boff,1985:154). It is currently too far removed from the lives of ordinary people and dwells in a world of pure theory (Rahner,1973:76,79). In its abstractions it maintains authority which is ineffective.

In summation, since Vatican II, there has developed a widening chasm between the polarized images of the church, that is, between Dulles' institutional and community of disciples models. In essence it is the polarities between "personal charism and the authority of office, religious freedom and submission to God's law, creative theology and mandatory teaching (Dulles,1982:x). The true thrust of Vatican II has been "toward a church that was charismatic, democratic, participatory and pluralistic," but "the majority of the bishops, pastors and church going faithful remained attached to the preconciliar ecclesiology" (Dulles,1982:6). The theological criticism of Kennedy, Brueggemann, Lohfink and others is in part an assessment that the institutional model as distinct from institutional elements, is the reflection of political and other structures of a past age and inappropriate for the present time.

This paradigm shift has filtered to the laity. Catholics are beginning to take a critical look at the institutional model. "Increasing numbers of well-educated men and women perceive themselves as embodying the mystery

of a church that is different from the structured organization that is popularly called the church" (Kennedy,1988:xiii). These Catholics do not "accept the controlling, authoritarian style of institutional bureaucrats as an adequate or healthy substitute for generative authority" (Kennedy,1988:xiii). They see the need for a new model of church, in Dulles' terms, a community of disciples.

2. CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES

As noted earlier, Dulles first elaborated five distinct models in order to articulate the best intentions of Vatican II ecclesiology. A few years later, he developed the community of disciples model as central for a comprehensive ecclesiology today. This image is biblically rooted, speaks to contemporary experience, and is able to harmonize the differences among the other models.

The community of disciples model has a biblical basis and "can be traced to the New Testament and even to the earthly ministry of Jesus" (Dulles,1987:207). Vital to this model is the recognition that "Jesus did deliberately form and train a band of disciples, to whom he gave a share of his teaching and healing ministry" (Dulles,1982:8).

To situate the circumstances for Jesus' community, Dulles begins his study in Palestine where it was customary

for a Jewish boy to learn his father's trade. By analogy, Jesus' induction into his heavenly Father's work began at his baptism when he received a "powerful call from the Father and in response he retired for a period of solitude in the desert, at the end of which he emerged with a firm sense of mission" (Dulles,1982:8). Jesus saw himself as a disciple of the Father and his mandate to teach people to love as the Father does. In his comprehensive study of ministry, Bernard Cooke affirms Dulles' position: "the very heart of Christ's action was to establish a community with the heavenly Father and his beloved disciples" (1976:37).

With its exceptional lifestyle, the community of disciples inevitably attracted attention to itself. Dulles writes that Jesus' disciples were of various kinds and degrees and that discipleship itself was multi-dimensional (1987:209). For the apostles, response to the call of discipleship meant a "radical break from the world and its values" (Dulles,1982:9), and a "total commitment to Jesus and the Kingdom" (Dulles,1982:9).

There was also an outer circle of disciples, a large number of men and women, who "accepted Jesus as teacher and sent from God" (Dulles,1987:208). Because "they found in Jesus and his community a new family, with spiritual ties closer than those of flesh and blood" (Dulles:210), the disciples gave up their familial ties to be with him and eventually to merit in heaven the promised treasures that

would surpass all they had surrendered (Dulles:210).

After the resurrection, the notion of discipleship underwent a major shift and became a much broader concept. As Dulles explains, Jesus was not absent but present according to his promise, wherever two or three were gathered in his name Mt.18:20, (1987:210). With the outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus on Pentecost, the presence of Jesus prevailed everywhere. "One could follow him by faith and worship and inward transformation, without having to go to Galilee or Jerusalem or any other place" (Dulles,1987:210).

Consequently, the notion of discipleship was enlarged and as Dulles presents, "in many New Testament texts, the term "disciples" may be taken as a virtual synonym for Christians or believers" (1987:211). The very community of disciples speaks of a journey, of people who in Dulles' words "haven't arrived yet" (1982:10), but are intent in pursuing the gospel as the core of their lives and together are on the way to "full conversion and blessedness of life" (Dulles,1982:10).

Today's believers have little difficulty in identifying with the first disciples. Dulles proposes that they are also asked to be a company of witnesses in difficult times. They have likewise received a personal call from Jesus the Lord of the church, and are encouraged to respond to it freely in the circumstances of their lives (1982:9).

Dulles does insist that membership in a community of learners is not "passive acceptance of a list of doctrines nor abject submission to a set of precepts," but the "adventure of following Jesus in new and ever changing situations" (Dulles,1982:10). In addition, discipleship demands that its members speak out and challenge the religious establishment when necessary. It is important to correct what is faulty in the institutional model of the church. Through education, the disciples are encouraged to go beyond, to stretch their faith, to prepare for the future. Such a call is both "personal and demanding" (Dulles:10) but together in community it is possible.

As well, Dulles is fully cognizant of the necessity of formation and education. He pictures an assembly gathered for instruction and intimate converse, and actively using the new challenges in ministry and mission (1982:10). Furthermore he advises that "young Catholics if they are to become true disciples must undergo a demanding course of induction equipping them to profess faith" (Dulles:11). He continues, "They must develop a sense of solidarity cemented by affective relationships with mature and exemplary Christians who represent Christ and his way of life" (Dulles:11). In other words, "the church cannot perpetuate itself except through a living chain of discipleship" (Dulles:11).

To facilitate this understanding, Dulles maintains that

the church needs an "abundance of leaders having various degrees and types of responsibility for the community" (1987:217). For faith can be adequately transmitted only through affiliation with a praying, worshipping community.

It is here that Jesus continues to shape the disciples by word and sacrament. "Jesus speaks to the community when the scriptures are read and applied" (Dulles,1987:215). Through homilies, discussions and personal intentions of asking for healing and help, the community responds to the living word. Moreover, every sacrament is a "transaction between the living Lord and the community of disciples" (Dulles:215).

Community: Core of the Sacraments

Dulles has developed the community of disciples model to be the core of the sacraments as described below.

> Baptism marks the entrance of the individual into the community of disciples. It is the welcoming community that assists in the formation of the person.
>
> Confirmation gives the disciple a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Christian and involves a mutual commitment on the part of both the individual and the church.
>
> Eucharist is the opportunity for the disciple to share fellowship and the love of Christ through the reception of communion.
>
> Penance welcomes the repentant disciple back into

the community.

> The Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament of healing in which the ill disciple is prayed for, blessed and encouraged to unite his/her sufferings with those of Jesus for the benefit of others.
>
> Marriage is the commitment of two individuals who engage in joint discipleship to follow Jesus together in an intimate relationship.
>
> Ordination is the sacrament for those selected to minister in a faithful and self-effacing manner to the community of disciples (1982:13-14).

Through each of the sacraments, the members of the community of disciples are able to establish new relationships with one another and the Lord. However, discipleship is a gradual conversion that is personal, demanding, and communitarian. In responding to the gospel, each person is expected to be both a believer and a "doer of the word, a wayfarer with Jesus" (Dulles:11).

Realistically, Dulles states that total harmony is never possible in human history. There will always be conflicts and tensions between the axioms of the world and the fidelity of the disciple of Jesus. But the community to which the disciple belongs will give the necessary support and be a credible sign of people in tune with the world, yet walking with Christ. It is within the community that the Spirit acts and calls forth multiple charisms and vocations and directs them for the good of the members and the world in which they live.

Because of its corporate vision, the network of

interpersonal relations, prayer, scripture and worship, the community of disciples resembles the community life of Jesus and the twelve on which it is based. Although this model is found mostly in prayer groups and covenant communities in our country, since Vatican II the concept has been very successful in base communities on several continents (Dulles:218). As a grass roots expression of church, it continually motivates the members to imitate Jesus in their personal lives and provides then with a feeling of at-homeness in the group (Dulles:223).

Another aspect of discipleship developed by Dulles is mission. Dulles emphatically states that discipleship would be stunted unless it included mission "which implies both evangelization and service" (1987:220). Since Vatican II, there has been a reassertion that every disciple, like the first believers, is called to spread the faith. In their enthusiasm for the message of hope, the early community members proclaimed the love of Jesus in all aspects of their lives. Dulles is convinced that this is the challenge for today's believers if they are to replicate the good works of Jesus.

Dulles reasons, that combatting poverty and disease, showing compassion for the sick and dying and giving assistance to those in need, as well as struggling for justice, development, peace and liberation can once again make the church a vital, attractive society (1987:222).

Dulles insists that it is the personal obligation of each disciple to join a group involved in eliminating oppressive situations. The community of disciples model of church offers the structure to address such injustices.

Community: Foundation of all Models

In fact, Dulles maintains that the "community of disciples has the advantage of being closer to our experience and of suggesting directions for appropriate renewal" (1987:222) than all of his previous models. The following presents the community of disciples model as the foundation and underpinning of all models of the church.

1. The Institutional Model
   Discipleship is an institution but it is not to be rigid, alienating or lording over its members. The institutional elements are at the service of the interpersonal relationships developed in community. The dogmas are not to be viewed as strict formulas that test loyalty but expressions of a common faith that point to a mystery that is ever to be discovered anew.

2. The Communion Model
   The community of disciples model is an expansion and variant of the communion model (1987:206). Communion is not only for the sake of its own members but in the spirit of ecumenism to restore all disciples to a universal following of the gospel.

3. The Sacramental Model
   The discipleship model finds its origin in Christ and thereby has a sacramental component. As the members live their lives under the direction of the Spirit, they are a sacramental sign of

Jesus' presence in the world and Jesus is constantly empowering their labours to bear fruit (Dulles:223-224).

4. The Servant Model
Besides prayer and worship together, the community of disciples develops a service project whereby the group may reach out in a meaningful way to the oppressed, ill, unemployed, grieving etc. In so doing, the person of Jesus becomes present in human problems. Through combatting poverty and disease, giving assistance to those in need and compassion for the dying, the community of disciples replicates the work of Christ.

5. The Herald Model
The members of the community of disciples are called to be witnesses to Christ in all aspects of their lives whether at work, worship, recreation or in suffering. Through their word and example, others will seek to know more about the joy, peace and unity found in the community.

Thus, Dulles has shown that the community of disciples model of church has the potential to be the most relevant for the Roman Catholic Church today. It is scripturally based, commissioned and exemplified by Jesus, is sacramentally rich, is the essence of all the other models, and addresses the needs of American Catholics for participation and formation.

Why then are the attempts at building communities of disciples so sporadic in North America? Walter Brueggemann believes it is because we take the present definition of reality given by the institutional model of church too much for granted. We suffer from "amnesia, have forgotten, disregarded or jettisioned the tradition" (1987:122). The church has lost sight of its call to be a community.

The result of its amnesia is that the institutional church has "come to be viewed as permanent, enduring, absolute, perpetual" (Brueggemann:123). Consequently a lack of memory leads to "an absence of openness to [a] new historical possibility" (Brueggemann:123). Without the critical function of memory, the historical process is perceived as closed and settled. "There is no leverage for any change" (Brueggemann:123) which eventually leads to despair. Remembering can bring newness and hope when none seems possible.

3. NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES PERTINENT TO COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES MODEL

Certain scripture passages in the New Testament, particularly those referring to the mission of Jesus and those pertaining to the activities of the post Easter community, describe in effect the community of disciples model of church. It is these passages of the canon that will be discussed in the light of recent New Testament essays.

Lohfink

Lohfink, a New Testament exegete, also stressed the importance of remembering when he says that "what is needed is a greater awareness of our own tradition" (1984:5). Where does the idea of community shine forth more clearly than in

the Scriptures, particularly in "the praxis of Jesus himself" (Lohfink:5)? This observation leads to the inevitable questions, "What did Jesus think of community? How did Jesus will community" (Lohfink:5)? Undoubtedly answers to these questions "would shed light on our contemporary situation and could illuminate the road which lies ahead" (Lohfink:5).

Lohfink describes Jesus' beginning as similar to that of John the Baptist. He wanted to gather Israel in "view of the coming reign of God and make it into the true people of God" (1984:9). Moreover, Lohfink surmises that Jesus deliberately selected the Twelve to represent the twelve tribes of Israel (1984:11). They were from separate factions, from different regions of the country and had a variety of occupations to make obvious the gathering of all Israel. Gathering the Twelve was a much more powerful symbolic and prophetic sign then, than it is today. The Twelve represented the entire people of God, the scattered flock. It was an eschatological sign that salvation was open to all Israelites. "Jesus believed that the gathering of the people and the kingdom of God were occurring through him" (Lohfink:16). This gathering of Israel, of the people, is a gathering of a community which was to be a recognizably visible and tangible sign of a salvation that is universally intended.

Toward the end of his public life, Jesus realized he

had to abandon his mission of gathering all of Israel, but he did not forsake the idea of community. Instead he concentrated particularly on his circle of friends. "He bound the reign of God to his community of disciples" (Lohfink:29). For Lohfink, it is Jesus' instructions to his disciples that show more exactly and decisively how Jesus sought to gather the true people of God, how he willed community.

Lohfink writes: "Jesus must have appropriated personally this prophetic interpretation of God's history with the world",(1984:29) for in Israel there were basically two groups who heard Jesus and believed in him. There were those, as Lohfink describes, who came to hear him as he taught from town to town but they remained home and kept the spirit of Jesus alive in their daily lives. "Wherever Jesus appears, he leaves behind followers who wait with the families for the kingdom and who accept him and his messengers; people like this are all over the country especially in Galilee, but also in Judea, in Bethany for example and in the Decapolis" (Mk.5:19-20), (1984:31).

On the other hand, there was the circle of disciples who literally followed Jesus in a teacher-student relationship, but not in the strict sense to study the Torah, but it was because of the attractiveness of his message regarding the imminence of the reign of God (Lohfink:32). Unlike other rabbinical students, the

disciples did not seek Jesus but were called by him (Lk.9:59). He called them to a discipleship which required them to give up their prior occupations and families (Mk.1:16-20), for "common life with Jesus took the place of all previous ties" (Lohfink:33). Jesus' demand on his disciples was a community of destiny. "They enter a new family of brothers and sisters, a firm and supportive community" (Lohfink,42). They had to be prepared to suffer what he suffered, even persecution and death (Mt. 10:38).

Despite the radical demands, the number of disciples was quite large. We are told of the seventy-two sent out two by two to preach Jesus' message and to heal the sick (Lk.10:1). We are even given the names of several men and women disciples, in addition to the pre-Easter Twelve : Cleopas (Lk.24:18), Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias (Acts 1:23), Mary Magdalen, Johanna the wife of Chuza, Susanna, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Lk.8:1-3;Mk.15:40-41), (Lohfink:33).

Their task was to reap the harvest, that is, to gather Israel into the people of God of the final age. When Israel as a whole did not respond, the circle of disciples received a new function. Their task now was to represent symbolically what should have occurred in Israel as a whole and what Israel was to become: "complete dedication to the gospel of the reign of God, radical conversion to a new way of life, and a gathering into a community of brothers and sisters"

(Lohfink:34).

What were the distinct characteristics of the community charged to embody the reign of God? Lohfink has drawn out several features of the community of the true Israel envisioned by Jesus.

1. First of all the fame of Jesus and the disciples is attributed primarily to their healing power. The miracles of Jesus and the community were signs that the kingdom of God has already come (Mt.12:28). "In the eschatological age of salvation, no disease is permitted" (Lohfink:13). The healing power of God's reign also reaches into the social dimension of human existence, freeing people from the isolating and destroying dimensions of a sick society and freeing them for a new community (Lohfink:83).

2. Fathers are not mentioned in the new community family which is associated with Jesus. In Mk.3:33-35 we read "whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister and mother." Fathers are deliberately excluded because they are too symbolic of domination. For the community of disciples there is to be only one Father in heaven (Mt.23:9). Power and rule belong exclusively to Abba who is kind and caring, not authoritarian and in whom they can place unconditional trust. "Patriarchal domination is no longer permissible in the new family, but only motherliness, fraternity and childlikeness before God the Father" (Lohfink:49).

3. In the same vein, relationships and structures of domination are not allowed. The first shall be last, the greatest shall be your servant (Mt.23:11). Jesus gently and humbly served his disciples and did not seek to overpower them. "They later termed their own offices *diakonia*, services (Lohfink:47).

4. Jesus firmly taught his community not to answer violence with violence (Lohfink:52). Followers were to suffer injustices rather than impose their rights through violence, either

> internally or externally (Lohfink:55). By their example they were to be a light, a difference, a city on the hill (Mt.5:14b) a sign that God was with them. They were to be an alternative society, in the world but not conforming to its structures.
>
> 5. In the new order of the reign of God, there would be no discrimination against "women, the poor, the unsuccessful or children" (Lohfink:92). There would be a new relationship, a new social structure among disciples, a reconciled community in which all privileges and discrimination were excluded, and in which all persons have responsibility for one another (Lohfink:77,87,102).

Fiorenza

Elizabeth Fiorenza, a New Testament scholar, presents another perspective on the Jesus community. She stresses the non-exclusive and all-inclusive character of the community. Jesus willed the undesirables to be a part of his community.

> Sinners, prostitutes, beggars, tax collectors, the ritually polluted, the crippled and the impoverished--in short, the scum of Palestinian society--constituted the majority of Jesus' followers. These are the last who have become the first, the starving who have been satisfied, the uninvited who have been invited. And many of these were women (1985:129).

She stresses that the God of Jesus is a God of all inclusive goodness who calls forth human equality and solidarity especially among the outcasts and marginal people. "The God of Jesus," she states, "wills the wholeness and humanity of every one and therefore enables the Jesus

movement to become a *discipleship of equals*" (Fiorenza,1985:135). The outcasts "had community again" and experienced "the gracious goodness of God who had made them equal to the holy and righteous in Israel" (Fiorenza:136).

Thus, the community of disciples established by Jesus was very different from the general expectations of those faithful to the Jewish religion. As Lohfink and Fiorenza write, this community had specific objectives: to be non-chauvinistic, non-violent, non-domineering, and all-inclusive and egalitarian in structure. It was rooted in gentle love and service to one another, and was to be a distinctive society, a specific witness to those outside--a community of equals.

These same characteristics continued after Pentecost, when the Christian community members became known as the "saints" (Lohfink:77). They had a self-consciousness of being the true people of God-- an *ekklesia*. Many specific details regarding the post-Easter community are available to us from a number of New Testament scholars. Let us review the distinct situation of the early church.

In spite of opposition and even persecution from Jewish authorities, the early Jewish Christian disciples began to meet in the private homes of well-to-do members. Groups of thirty to forty people could assemble for worship. "The domesticity of such location in private homes gave a sense of hospitality and intimacy" (White,1980:85).

Fiorenza states that "the house church, by virtue of its location, provided equal opportunity for women because traditionally the house was considered women's proper sphere, and women were not excluded from activities in it" (1985:176). Fiorenza emphasizes that the Christian community met in women's homes, where there was "an equal share in the life of the association for all members" (1985:180). Such equality in Fiorenza'a view was "especially attractive to those who had little stake in the rewards of religion based either on class stratification or on male dominance" (Fiorenza:181).

At the meetings, the community retold the circumstances surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus and shared a meal in which "God was blessed for past events, made present in the ability to save, and implored to confer future benefits" (White,1980:206). Extra food was sent home to the poor and the needy. It was common to have a meaningful homily at the gatherings or a story about Jesus by a visiting apostle. The needs of members were brought forward and met with compassion. Beyond their shared belief in the truth of Jesus' message, they were united "in an unparalleled instance of human community " by their conviction that the person of the risen Christ "abided with them and gave them his very Spirit" (Cooke,1976:37).

Similar to the beginnings of the faith groups initiated by Peter in Jerusalem, Paul's communities were

house churches equally versed in hospitality and intimate relations. They met on the first day of the week and greeted each other with a holy kiss (Rom.16:16). All the Christians in one city, for example, Corinth, were considered an *ekklesia* (Lange,1975:22). They met in groups in the homes of wealthy men and women because large numbers prevented a common assembly.

In his study of the emerging Pauline communities, Robert Banks maintains that they understood their mission as the "edification of its members through their God-given ministry to one another" (Banks,1980:93). Sometimes they gathered to share a meal, to strengthen charisms, to enjoy gifts, to settle disputes, or to pray in a crisis. Ultimately both the physical and spiritual needs were constantly intertwined. There was no regular order to the gatherings. The structure varied from community to community depending on the particular combination of gifts to be expressed.

Who presided at the sacred meals and prayer services? In Bank's opinion, "No priestly celebrant is in view in any of the contexts where the meal is discussed...general arrangements were in the hands of the 'host' [or hostess] in whose home the meal was held" (1980:85). 1Cor.11:5 tells us that both men and women prayed and prophesized at the gatherings.

Fiorenza expands this concept by saying,

> The Pauline literature and Acts still allow us to recognize that women were among the most prominent missionaries and leaders in the early Christian movement. They were apostles and ministers like Paul, and some were his co-workers. They were teachers, preachers and competitors in the race for the gospel. They founded house churches and as prominent patrons used their influence for other missionaries and Christians (1985:183).

For both women or men, charisms were seen as gifts of the Spirit rather than church appointed ministries (Acts 18:26;21:9). The entire community lived in wonder at the visible attributes of Jesus that were evident in their lives. They were amazed at the multitude of gifts they had received.

> Those who found that they have the charism of preaching, giving instructions, speaking words of prophesy, healing physical or spiritual illness, praising God in strange tongues, performing works of mercy, leading people, administering programs...are called by the Spirit to use them in the service of others (Martos,1983:150).

Instead of individual glorification or sanctification, the charisms were for the service of the entire community. Each sharing of gifts was to influence others, so they also would reach out in both word and deed. Ideally, Jesus was the central focus of their lives. There was no difference in demeanour and outlook whether the person was at work or gathered for worship (Banks,1980:91-100).

In Paul's communities, both men and women had the

responsibility to impart their particular insights to the rest. All were called to instruct one another, to speak God's word, to teach, to admonish the offender with wisdom, and while doing such to rely totally on Christ (Banks:141). It was a consciously complementary and interdependent community with many visible ministries. "Since all had a function or responsibility to perform, there were no mere spectators but only active participants" (Banks:113).

Although the language of priesthood is found in Paul's writings (Rom.15:16), it does not refer to a distinct caste. "Instead, the individual believer, and the community as a whole ...are priests in [Paul's] sense. Religious commitment, charitable actions and apostolic vocation are all priestly functions" (Banks:132). Official priesthood which exists to mediate between God and people was shared by the whole community as a common priesthood, with no distinctions or terminology such as clergy and laity (Banks:133).

Moreover, in Paul's early communities, relationship with God is not limited by sexual differentiation, racial disparities or citizenship. In Gal.3:27-28, we read,"You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed with the life of Christ himself. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free, between men and women you are all one in Christ Jesus." All are on equal footing in Christ (Banks:118).

Cultural differences are allowed as long as each person acted with integrity before God. Paul "does not deny the continuing legitimacy of national, social and sexual differences--[he] is no advocate of a universal, classless and unisexual society--he merely affirms that these differences do not affect one's relationship with Christ and membership in the community" (Banks:118). Lohfink expands on the scripture. "Only in the Spirit is it possible to dismantle national and social barriers, group interests, caste systems and domination of one sex over the other" (1984:93). Thus, an "antisociety" is to exist in the midst of society.

In his extensive study of the Johannine epistles, Raymond Brown points out that there is "virtually no attention to the category of 'apostle' and makes 'disciple' the primary Christian category" (1979:86). He also adds "there is much in Johannine theology that would relativize the importance of institution and office" (Brown:87). Unlike Paul's image of the body in 1Cor.12, which incorporates a multitude of charisms, "The Johannine image of the vine and branches places emphasis on only one issue: dwelling on the vine or inherence in Jesus" (Brown:87). "The category of discipleship based on love makes any other distinction in the Johannine community relatively unimportant" (Brown:87). In this community the ultimate "teacher is the Paraclete who remains forever within everyone who loves Jesus and keeps

his commandments (Jn.14:15-17); he is the guide to all truth (Jn.16:13)" (Brown:87).

The New Testament ideal of a community of equal disciples can be summed up[9] as follows: in truth, Jesus was their model. To love as he did and repeat his actions of healing, forgiving, breaking bread, and sincere concern for the poor and needy were to be their daily priorities. As a community they were to share "faith" grounded in the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, "hope" in the second coming to enable them to suffer the temporality of persecution, and a mature "love" for one another to be exemplified in good works. They were to live and pray, work and celebrate as living signs of the spirit of the risen Jesus who was with them.

4. EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES MODEL

In elaborating and advocating the community of disciples model as the most appropriate image for the church today, Dulles has assigned considerable importance to the role of small faith communities in forming and sustaining a mature Christian faith. New Testament scholars depict the circles of disciples that Jesus formed and the early post-Easter house churches along similar lines. Many other theologians have also been influenced by such developments in theology and biblical exegesis, as well as by

contemporary social movements and the keenly realized need for the experience of faith communities that ground a solid spirituality and a strong sense of social justice. These authors regard community based models as most appropriate for an authentic understanding of church and for its actualization today and in the future.

In the present section, I shall look at four variations of such communities presented by contemporary theologians: Leonardo Boff's basic ecclesial communities, Mary Malone's communities of equal disciples, Eugene Kennedy's Culture Two Catholics, and Rosemary Ruether's question of whether such communities should remain within the institutional Church.

Basic Communities

A specific reaction to the institutional model of the church is the emergence of basic church communities, *comunidades eclesiales de base* (Boff,1985:9). Leonardo Boff describes these intimate communities of gospel reflection, mutual support, and social action as a new experience of church, "a renaissance of the very church" (Boff,1986:1), a starting the church again (Boff:2). He relates that the formation of these small groups arising among the poor, is "based on ecclesiology that is grounded in the categories of People of God, *koinonia* (community), prophecy and *diakonia* (service)" (Boff,1985:9).

One of the underlying reasons for the existence of this new vision of church is the scarcity of ordained clergy with the ensuing consequence of entrusting the laity with greater responsibilities. Even though most of the basic church communities were founded by a priest or religious, they "basically constitute a lay movement" (Boff,1986:2). In contrast to the existing ecclesiastical system that rotates on a sacramental, clerical axis, basic church communities revolve on the axis of word and the laity (Boff:2). In other words, the goal is "building a living church rather than multiplying material structures" (Boff:4). Base communities are content to gather in a store which doubles as a school, a craft area and a place of worship. "Christian life in the basic communities," according to Boff, "is characterized by the absence of alienating structures, by direct relationships, by reciprocity, by a deep communion, by mutual assistance, by communality of gospel ideals, by *equality* among members" (Boff:4). These communities exist in sharp contrast to the "rigid rules, hierarchies, prescribed relationships in a framework of a distinction of functions, qualities and titles," (1986:4) as found in the current institutional model.

Like Dulles, Boff does not expect a future classless society, free of conflicts and particular influences. However, it is realistic to struggle on behalf of a communitarian spirit within the institutional church in

order to overcome structures that control its members and diminish the actualization of full potential of the spirit of Jesus.

To be most effective, Boff recommends that the groups remain small and constantly evaluate their existence to prevent absorption by the institution (Boff:6). Smallness, he explains, will assist in the avoidance of bureaucratization and allow a personal relationship among members. To be true to their founder, Jesus, base communities operate horizontally, formulated on "human respect and generosity, a communion of sisters and brothers and simplicity in relationships" (Boff:7).

Nevertheless, Boff articulates a necessary cooperation between the institutional church and the base communities. The latter are to be primary, existing with the constant support of the institution. Yet there is to be a balance, each expressing an interdependence on the other. "More and more the institution is discovering its meaning and responsibility in the creation, support, and nurture of communities" (Boff,1986:8).

Existing in unity with each other, not side by side, the two models of church will be pressed to examine significant issues such as "the ecclesiality of the communities, their contribution to a transcendence of the church's current structure...the historical Jesus and the institutional forms of the church, the possibility of a lay

person celebrating the Lord's supper. and women's priesthood and its possibilities" (Boff:3).

With regard to Christ's role as founder of the church. Boff stresses that in its essential elements, especially in its liberating message of divine grace, pardon, unrestricted love, which invites human response, the church springs from Jesus. Its historical form was actualized by the apostles, enlightened by the Spirit in response to the needs of concrete situations. Today the emergence of basic communities as a new process of church witnesses to the Spirit's continuing activity (Boff.1986:9-22).

On the question of Eucharistic ministers, Boff points out that the chronic lack of ordained priests and the emergence of lay coordinators of basic communities warrants a new solution. Since the Eucharist is the basis and centre of Christian communities according to Vatican II, lay coordinators should be authorized as extraordinary ministers of the Lord's supper. These would be valid Eucharist celebrations even though they lack the full sacramentality accruing from the presence of the ordained minister (Boff,1986:61-75).

Finally, the increasing societal awareness of women as persons, and of the fundamental equality of the sexes, as well as the emergence of women to leadership functions in the base communities, raise anew the issue of women's priesthood. Boff concludes that there are no scriptural or

theological grounds for refusing the ordination of women. It is simply a matter of an historical, sociological custom that can be altered. However, the priesthood of women should not simply duplicate the present form which bears the stamp of male celibacy, but women should articulate it in their own way. Such developments, moreover, will occur within a broader understanding of the nature and forms of ministry within the church (Boff,1986:76-95).

Boff stresses that these ecclesial groups are not closed sects but open-ended communities whose reading and sharing of the gospel leads to social action. When problems suffered by the members are reflected upon in the light of the gospel, their causes and effects are named for what they are, and action is taken to resolve them. Moreover, a new type of society that overcomes the unjust relationships prevalent in the larger society is taught in these communities, "through the direct participation of all members of the group, the sharing of responsibilities, leadership, decision-making, and through the exercise of power as service" (Boff,1985:129).

Based on the Word of God and rooted in life's experiences, Boff's community of disciples model is a pilgrim church developed from the bottom up. "It means accepting the coresponsibility of all in the upbuilding of the church, not just a limited number belonging to the clerical institution" (1986:25).

Exploration of this model will lead to greater equality, affirmation and appreciation of the charisms of all its members as well as their roles within the ecclesial communities and with regard to the wider society.

Community of Coequal Disciples

In the Catholic Church a new consciousness is arising among women. They are members of a church where there is no opportunity of equality. Historically, linguistically and liturgically they are denied a presence. Keeping a group out of view is a definite symbol of control and oppression (Malone,1985:126).

As Mary Malone alleges, the place of women is a central issue in the church (1985:126). More than being a women's issue, it is a fundamental human one that calls to question all forms of oppression. She proposes a vision of a "new community of coequal disciples" (Malone:126) where everyone attempts to live as disciples, fashioning their lives on the gospel message and together growing in faith as equal members in the church of Jesus Christ.

Characteristic of this model is the firm denunciation of patriarchy, paternalism and the present institutional structure which is unjust and dehumanizing to over half of the church's members.

Furthermore, Malone expresses the concern that women

should define the dimensions of their own humanness. Women theologians over the past few decades are retrieving the circumscribed heritage of their ancestors and are contributing to the richness of theology from an alternate voice, a voice that has not been heard before (Malone:127). "Women theologians are not intent on doing theology just for women" (Malone:129). Theirs is an inclusive message that encourages both men and women to reclaim the gospel message of freedom and justice for all people.

Moreover, women have an awakening that "the image of God is fully realized in the being of women" (Malone:129). Women as well as men are God-like. God's nature is present in women and women in God. Through baptism women, like men, are immersed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Obviously this discovery has serious implications for the prayer life of women. As Malone masterfully summarizes: "How do women pray at a male-led liturgy, worship a God addressed only in male language, enter into public prayer which can be led and articulated only by ordained males expressing the experiences and reflection of these males" (Malone:133)? In a community of coequal disciples, the God language will have to be more faithful to the attributes of a non-sexual God who is more than male and female, and who needs to be addressed as both mother and father to express the utmost in human language. Moreover, for the God revealed in Jesus, "the attribution of justice, love, compassion and

reconciliation are more important than...infinite power and infinite knowledge." Such a God "calls us to love tenderly and to act justly" (Malone:135).

These realizations are a breakthrough for many women in the Church. With a liberating spirit, women are eager to enter into profitable dialogue with the ecclesial authorities so that the community of coequals can be actualized. And as they awaken to a new awareness and responsibility, they realize "a new sense of solidarity with all the silent suffering of the world," and practice an inclusiveness that gives a new definition to the word neighbour (Malone:136). They are aiming for a new understanding and enfleshing of the words of Jesus, "May they all be one," (Jn.17:21) both men and women one in Jesus.

Culture Two Catholics

In his book, *Tomorrow's Catholics Yesterday's Church*, Eugene Kennedy writes about an emerging type of Catholic to whom he gives the neutral nondescript title of Culture Two. Unlike Boff's and Malone's, small faith community concept, Kennedy's Culture Two Catholics are members of the Catholic Church who are not afraid of expressing an attitudinal difference. They may or may not find themselves in smaller groups of like-minded people.

He describes them as people who are selective, who do not buy into the old system of total acceptance of all doctrines, laws and practices of the Catholic Church. These are the educated, who think for themselves, disagree with the pope, bishop or priest, forge their own moral choices, and in general are not concerned with the institutional model of church but more importantly are seeking the grail as "the spiritual meaning of existence" (Kennedy:xiv). They are searching for spiritual mystery in the natural events of life. They are seeking a Christian vision and way of life that addresses their mature experience and the issues of the age in which they live.

By questioning and challenging or simply ignoring the non-relevant aspects of the church, Culture Two Catholics are not dissenters. Their reaction is a sign of healthy people who have outgrown the institutional mode of operation, with its accent on literal interpretation of doctrine and authoritarian control (Kennedy:101). Rather they are attuned to the mystery that permeates everyday existence, and seek a sacramental source of meaning and an agent of support in their life tasks (Kennedy:18-19;101-103).

Culture Two Catholics read books other than strictly Catholic religious materials; they yearn for a variety of artistic religious experiences; they frequent meaningful liturgies in other parishes. They are not worried about

parish loyalty. They are in search of Christian maturity and want to be democratically part of the process of church. In their perspective, current authority structures in which final decision-making remains solely in the hands of the clergy is totally unjust (Kennedy:38). Not only in church but in all aspects of life, they believe that dominating "hierarchies are doomed in every range of endeavour" (Kennedy:78). Culture Two Catholics are restlessly reacting to a model of church organization that is no longer relevent, workable or wholesome.

In their opinion, spiritual authority concerns not whether the leaders are capable of explaining doctrine or dogmas but "whether they demonstrate any understanding of the way people actually live" (Kennedy:169). Cultural Two people are busily caught up in the balancing of work, family, community concerns and the variances of life in general. Kennedy clearly explains,

> They look to the church for support in carrying out their responsibilities to their families, and in the work force and the professions. They expect that the church can speak to them with wisdom, and encouragement about the great moral issues of the day. They expect that the church will comprehend tragedy and joy and that it will stand with them in both (Kennedy:19).

In other words, they want a personal relationship with the church in a community of equal disciples. Culture Two Catholics want to feel connected with other members, and

simultaneously included in the leadership process. They search for a meaningful church experience that will provide such care and inclusion of mature Catholics. However, this connectedness is that not of a child pursuing a pseudo-parent but of adults who have put away the things of a child and expect to be treated as adults (Kennedy:175).

Included in the adult world are faith-filled, mature spiritual women. Kennedy firmly states that "an institution like the Catholic Church that lays claim to moral leadership and at the same time rules out the full participation of women is bound to fail. There is no way that the institution is defensible in the way it deals with women" (Kennedy:41). As a consequence of this attitude, Kennedy judges that in the range of sixty to sixty-five percent of its members are moving away from the institution (Kennedy:41).

Like Malone's invitation for dialogue between the church and the community of coequal disciples, Kennedy as well declares that Culture Two Catholics are eager to communicate their position (1988:177). They are anxious to pursue a vision of Catholicism that unites rather than divides, and this means a death to the antiquated institutional church and a resurrection into the hope of a new Pentecost (Kennedy:194).

Should Communities Leave the Institutional Church?

Rosemary Ruether stresses the importance of base communities of equals who overcome all forms of patriarchal domination and who embody mutual support, sharing of gifts, and social outreach (Ruether.1987,ch.8;1985,ch.5). At the same time, she very keenly questions whether such groups should continue to maintain any form of affiliation with the institutional church. Why bother with the Catholic Church at all (Ruether.1987:63)? Recognizing the discouraging efforts of those challenging the church on behalf of liberalism, feminism and justice issues, Ruether questions whether such groups should continue to pursue changes from within the institution or simply find a supportive base and renounce it from without. Ruether states that as a "collective organization of hierarchical, patriarchal, clericalism, the Roman Catholic Church is an outrageous institution undeserving of our loyalty" (Ruether:65).

Rather than loyalty to the institution, Ruether recommends loyalty beyond the institution to the Good News of Jesus Christ and solidarity to a human community in need (Ruether:65). How can the institution become a servant to a community of faithful people intent on following the gospel? First of all Ruether suggests that the laity begin to ask some fundamental questions. We need first to ask not what we should do "for the church, but what we should do for

ourselves.

> 1. What is it that we need to nurture and express in our Christian vision? What do we need from a community of faith?
>
> 2. What kind of liturgical community would make weekly worship a feast for the soul?
>
> 3. What kind of ministry do we need to support our personal, moral and spiritual development in community with others? (Ruether:66-67)

Ruether stresses that the starting point in the reflection "must be a claiming of ourselves as church" (1987:76). This means that we know that we are the people of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit and as such can "create for ourselves the expressions of worshipping community and ministry that we need" (Ruether:67). Once we have the understanding that we are Church, then we can set about forming "communities for worship, for consciousness-raising and mutual support; for study and discussion...or more total communities for living together, worship and ministry...not under patriarchal control" (Ruether:67-68).

After reappropriating[10] the needs for supportive communities of worship and action, and seeing our lives as the center rather than the periphery of the meaning of being church we can then address the issue of how basic communities can or should relate to the institutional church (Ruether:69).

In Ruether's experience, there are advantages to being

attached to the institutional church: a new life of the Spirit will impact the church and, simultaneously, the small group will profit from historical endurance and longevity. The real concern will be "how to use institutional networks creatively, rather than feeling powerless before them" (Ruether:71). She suggests, "We can do this by creating new vehicles of ministry, community and communication, and then 'attaching' them to the edges of the existing historical Church, so they become new vehicles within and for the whole Catholic community" (Ruether:72).

Conclusion

What can we conclude to draw together the reflections of this chapter? In Roman Catholic ecclesiology, there is a distancing from the long dominant institutional model of church and a convergence towards the community of disciples model. This model is seen as rooted in the practice of Jesus and of the earliest Christian communities. It stresses at once the essential equality of all members and the plurality and diversity of their gifts and ministries. This model also underlines both the mutual support and challenge within the community and the outreach to the wider community especially in matters of social justice.

In reflecting upon the experience of community itself, this model focuses upon the shared journey of followers of

Jesus in their common quest to live and embody a Christian meaning of life. The issue of equality particularly addresses the situation of women in the church and the plight of all those who are oppressed or afflicted. While recognizing the essentiality of institutional elements in ministries of word, sacrament and organizational structure, proponents of this model firmly assert that such elements need not and should not result in a division of the church into two classes of rulers and ruled, and indeed that all structures of domination are to be overcome. They underscore the importance of recognizing, developing and sharing the gifts of all members for the benefit of the community and the wider society.

In all instances, there is an emphasis on establishing smaller groups for formation, support, challenge, social outreach and the mutual sharing of one's faith journey. To some extent they see such communities as being in tension with the present institutional structure of the church (fashioned largely according to the institutional model) and invite these groups to assume the tasks of creative ferment, dialogue, and source of challenge to, and transformation of, the existing structures. In effect, as Rahner suggests, the local church, regarded as a community of equals, is not merely an administrative subdivision of a wider organization, but a fundamental actualization of the church itself (1973:3;24).

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

1.In this thesis we are dealing specifically with the Roman Catholic Church. While some of the sources obviously predate the church as presently identifiable, and much of the material has application beyond Roman Catholic confines, the Roman Catholic ecclesiology does remain the focus of this thesis.

2.Y.Congar, *Lay People in the Church* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1962),p.39, as quoted in Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Books, 1978),p.41.

3.J.Neuner and H.Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y.:Alba House, 1967),No.361,pp.213-214, as cited in Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Books, 1978),p.41.[hereafter abbreviated *NR*]

4.*NR*,p.369. quoted in Dulles, *Models of the Church*,p.43.

5.H.Denzinger and A.Schonmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*,32nd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1963) [hereafter abbreviated *DS*] nos.1760 and 1775; *NR* 413 and 637, as cited in Dulles,p.45.

6.Dulles,p.213 "Even the Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are claimed to have been revealed by God (*DS*,3803,3903;*NR*,325,3340). This is to be reconciled with the assertion that revelation was complete with the apostles (*DS*,3421).

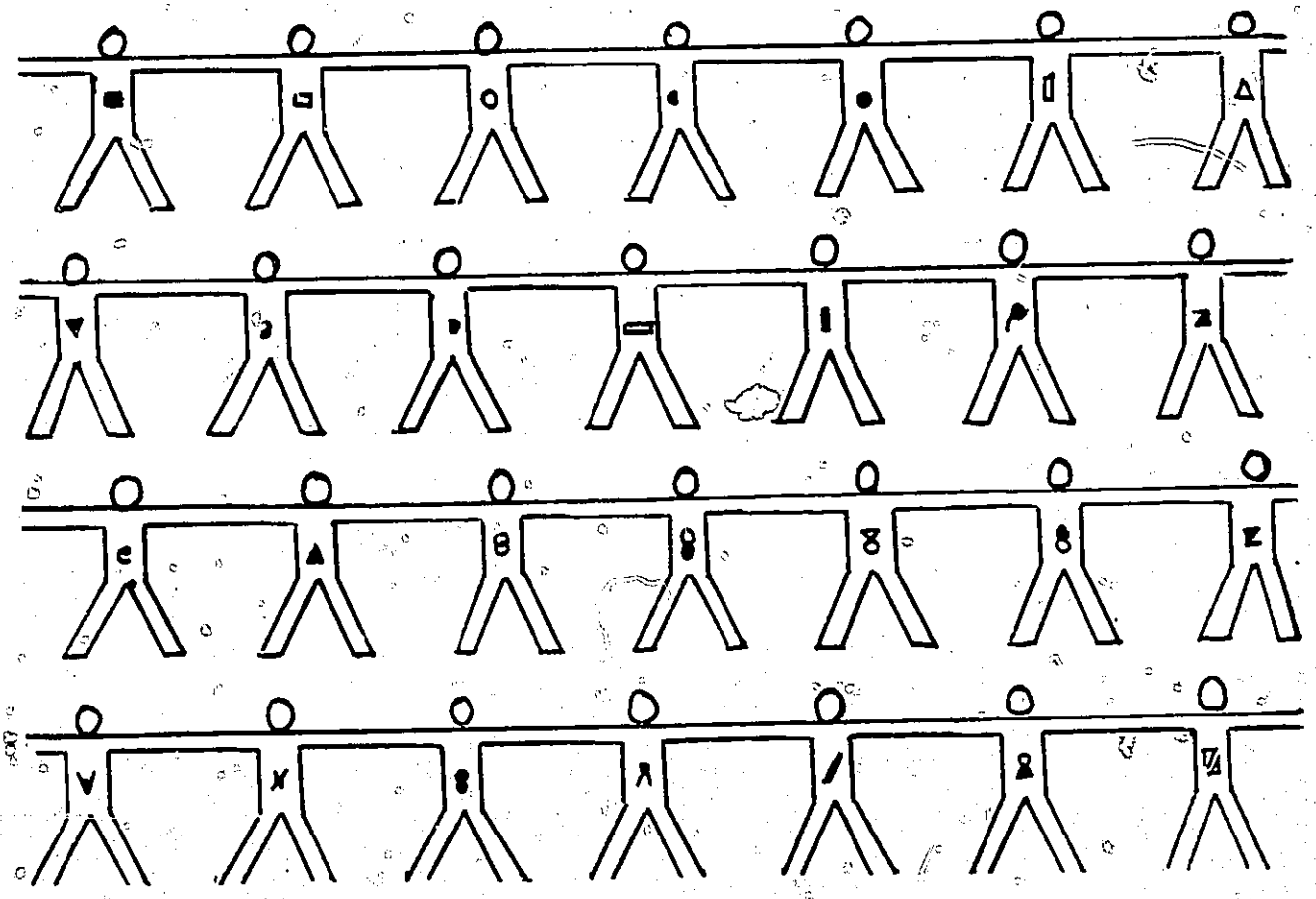
7.See Avery Dulles, *A Church to Believe In* (New York: Crossroad, 1982),pp.14-18, for a complete understanding of how the community of disciples model can be the underlying factor of each of the described models of church.

8.Dulles draws heavily upon the work of Lohfink, without making as strong an emphasis on the equality of disciples. Compare Dulles' *Models of the Church*,1987,pp.207-212, with Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*,1984,pp.1-132.

9.While the limits on this thesis do not permit further elaboration of the matter, it must be noted that the community of equal disciples is in fact an ideal model and that support for hierarchical structures can also be found in the New Testament. The New Testament itself indicates the presence of divisions and variations on the actual level of practice the groups achieved. This is essentially a

distinction between the understanding of the community proposed and the actual living out of that understanding. At the same time, certain strands of the biblical material give evidence of a more hierarchical approach which did in fact to some extent prevail at the end of the New Testament period and was instrumental in defining the scriptural canon itself. As we have indicated, however, there are solid New Testament grounds for affirming the notion of a community of equal disciples.

10. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Contemporary Roman Catholicism Crisis and Challenges* (Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed & Ward, 1987), p.67. "Reappropriation theology means a basic spiritual revolution in our consciousness that puts our lives, as the community, at the center of the meaning of being church, rather than seeing ourselves at the periphery, banging on locked doors, ever asking for permission to breathe from those we imagine own the conduits of the Spirit." The Italian Basic Christian Community Movement coined this term.



CHAPTER 2

MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN CONTRASTING MODELS OF CHURCH

1.NATURE AND FORMS OF MINISTRY

Introduction

The views of the nature of ministry and the forms in which it is expressed differ widely from the institutional to the community of equal disciples model of church. Chapter Two will examine these differences and expand the treatment of ministry in the light of postconciliar studies which stress the ministerial responsibility of all Christians and the diversity of its forms. It will focus upon community building as the foundational ministry in the church. It will also consider the notion of leadership and concentrate on the idea of servant leadership as the basic form of authority in a community of equal disciples.

Dulles

In his presentation of contrasting models, Dulles states that within the institutional model, ministry is regarded as the sole responsibility of the clergy. "Priesthood is viewed primarily in terms of power. The threefold power of teaching, sanctifying and ruling is concentrated at the top, in the pope and bishops"

(Dulles,1974:169). Dulles contends that all functions of the bishop or priest are "juridicized" (1974:169), that is, members of the church are to accept the doctrines, teachings, and dispersal of grace because of the power that is held over them by church officials. Resisting the priest's commands is considered equivalent to rebelling against God (1974:169). Dulles points out that the New Testament "does not impose the three tier hierarchical system [bishop, priest, deacon] today familiar to us" (1974:170). Furthermore, Dulles insists there has been "an overemphasis on the institutional element in the church, to the detriment of effective service" (1974:169). In other words, the institutional church has become modelled on the secular state and in this condition is unable to "do justice to the spiritual mission of the church and its connection with the mystery of Christ" (1974:169).

When discussing the community of disciples model, he states that "power and authority in the church should be vested only in mature and faithful disciples" (1982:11). Dulles is convinced that "authoritarianism, which seeks to keep the general body of Christians in a state of servile dependence, can have no place in the church as a community of disciples" (1982:11).

By situating ministry as discipleship, Dulles avoids making too sharp "a distinction between the minister and those ministered to" (1982:12). In this model of the church,

all are ministers and all are ministered to. This concept of discipleship "undercuts the illusion that some in the church are lords and masters" (1982:12).

Furthermore, authors who adopt the community of equal disciples model of church see ministry as relevant to the needs of the group, and authority as essentially a horizontal, servant-leadership, which operates through equal participation of the clergy and the laity in the decision-making process (Boff,1985:129). Because of their unity of faith which is the basis of all ministry, and by virtue of their baptism, all Christians are called to build up the community of disciples through service to one another and to the world (Doohan,1989:11).

Definitions

Ministry is an old church word with a repertoire of meanings. Like the words faith, sacrament and liturgy, ministry has been redefined repeatedly over the centuries with each cultural and theological shift. Today the fluidity and lack of agreed meaning concerning the concept of ministry are indicative of a period of transition in church life (Bausch,1982:13).

The term ministry derives from the Greek word *diaconos*, meaning one who serves (Fenhagen,1977:21). However, this term has more than one meaning. Dulles gives three senses to

the term: "work done not freely but under orders; work directed to the good of others rather than to the worker's own advantage; and work that is humble and demeaning ('servile')" (1974:105). In the first sense, Dulles proposes "neither Christ nor the Christian is supposed to be the world's servant" (1974:105). Like Christ, we are "called to be servants of God" (1974:105). Secondly, Christ and the Christian work for the good of others. Thirdly, "Like Jesus we are called to wash one another's feet" (1974:105).

Fiorenza cautions against uncritical use of the term service because of its different connotations for men and women, clergy and laity. For instance, she explains, "the 'Holy Father' has supreme authority and power in the Roman Catholic church but is at the same time called *servus servorum dei*, the 'servant of God's servants'. However as long as actual power relationships and status privileges are not changed such a servant rhetoric must remain a mere moralistic sentiment and [have an] appeal that mystifies structures of domination" (Gardiner,1988:87).

One contemporary author, Roger Haight, drawing upon the resources of liberation theology, defines ministry as the actual service by Christians aimed at fostering the Christian life itself and the church's role in the world. More specifically, it is a function performed in the name of Christ which is directed toward the freedom of others in its personal, social and transcendent dimension (1985:206-207).

This definition stresses first of all the performance of a service by Christians who sustain a common faith. Secondly, it promotes freedom or empowerment in those served, so that they may have the courage to initiate other endeavours rather than be passive members of a master-servant relationship. Hobday further spells out this service to include "managing, officiating, directing, and other understandings such as helping, assisting, serving" (Eigo,1978:1).

Richard McBrien summarizes certain points regarding ministry that are virtually agreed upon in recent theological writings and ecumenical documents. McBrien stresses that all ministry, both general and particular, flows from the Holy Spirit for the benefit of those ministered to, not primarily for the minister (1987:21).He emphasizes that all ministry is for the sake of the kingdom of God, the redemptive presence of God in all dimensions of human life. This is the object of the church's mission.[1]

New Testament Roots

Recent studies accentuate a renewed understanding of ministry in the New Testament portrayal of the activity of Jesus and of the early communities. Of course, the New Testament evidence is ambiguous and flows in two directions. We find both an emphasis upon Christian freedom and

egalitarianism and an assertion of the need for clear lines of authority, church structure, and the interpretation of the Christian tradition (Carmody,1986:52).

In speaking of Jesus' ministry, Doohan affirms that all of Jesus' activity can be described as ministerial. "Ministry is so much a part of Jesus' life, that it is inseparable from who he is" (1989:5). Cooke observes that in all the ministries he performed, whether preaching, teaching, or healing, Christ worked to break down estrangement among people. Ultimately, along with Lohfink, Cooke holds that Christ's most basic ministry was the formation of a community (1977:37).

In calling and guiding his followers, Jesus did not spell out in detail his understanding of the nature and forms of ministry. He gave "no structure or order to ministry nor did he establish any specific offices beyond the general designations of disciple, apostle and the Twelve" (Doohan,1989:6). Christ made no references to a ministerial priesthood, no specification for an elitist inner group, and "no distinctions between a passive laity and an authority-bearing clergy" (Doohan,1989:6).

Schillebeeckx states that the "healing ministry of Jesus and the whole of his life-style, freeing people from need and distress are part of his commission" (1985:22). This is also shown by the fact that "Jesus does not send out his disciples purely with the task of handing on his message

but also with the task of 'healing people and making them whole' (see Mark 3:14-16;6,7ff)" (1985:22).

"Jesus laid the foundations for a community of disciples" (Doohan,1989:6). Included in his community were cripples, the poor, social outcasts and women (Schillebeeckz,1985:20-21). The nucleus of the whole of Jesus' ministry was to make the people aware of God's great concern for them, and, as a people of God, in turn, to be like God, concerned for each other (1985:24). Schillebeeckx affirms: "Jesus' ministry gives rise among men and women to a new relationship to God, and the comprehensible and visible side of this new relationship to a new relationship among men and women within a community of peace, which brings liberation and opens up communication" (1985:24).

After the Pentecost event, the Christian community understood itself as the body of Christ with the kind of unity proper to a living organism, that is, each part having an important function. As Cooke relays, "There is to be no division between the rich and the poor, between the strong and the weak. There is to be a basic equality, a basic reverence for one another as persons and fellow Christians." (1970:16) for Christ came to break all walls of division among people.

Fiorenza describes several significant elements of the early community. "Their self-understanding as the new eschatological community, the new creation, the new

humanity, in which the social-political stratifications of religion, class, slavery and patriarchal marriage are abolished, and all are equal in Christ, was an alternative vision that clearly undermined the Greco-Roman patriarchal order" (1985:265).

For women and slaves, Fiorenza clarifies, the early Christian community was particularly attractive "because it promised them freedom from the patriarchal order and gave them a new freedom in the community of equals" (1985:265).

In agreement, Schillebeeckx writes, "Early Christianity was a brotherhood and sisterhood of equal partners. Theologically on the basis of the baptism of the Spirit, and socially in accordance with the Roman Hellinistic model of free societies, called *collegia*" (1985:47).

The Book of Acts shows the early disciples grouped together in a closely knit community united by the spirit of Christ which overflowed into their sharing of earthly goods, care for the poor and the sick, praying and eating together and their constant witness. Members were encouraged to develop their charisms for the glory of God and to build up the community. For example, in the early church the charisms of virgins, widows and teachers were not inferior offices and they did ministry (Bausch,1982:78) because "ministry was a right from baptism not a privilege of position" (Bausch,1981:116). Ruether further elaborates, "the Spirit is no discriminator among persons on the basis of gender but

can empower whomever it will. Ministry is proven by gifts, not by its credentials" (Bausch,1983:197).

Doohan describes a variety of church structures and ministries among Jesus' followers, and stresses the fluidity of these forms: "James governed his province with a college of elders. Matthew's church is led by prophets and teachers. Paul retains a personal authority...his letters are never addressed to individual church leaders. John's communities seem to be led first by charismatics and later by chief elders" (1989:6).

Thus, neither Jesus nor the earliest apostles saw the need for a permanence in office nor conformity in structure. Moreover, all the followers shared in decision-making, mission priorities, and ministry, as well as in the choice of community leadership. Nevertheless, by the time of the later letters of Peter and James, "an institutionalizing of ministry and a primacy of presbyteral order" is evident (Doohan,1989:7). "Charismatic leadership has gone, the general faithful are dispossessed of their shared authority and organized ministry takes on structures Jesus had deliberately rejected" (Doohan,1989:7). Jesus' original message of equality for all without distinctions had disappeared. Paradoxically, Whitehead points out, "Soon the expanding Church was complementing its convictions about its member's equality in Christ and its servant leadership with the vertical structure of a hierarchy" (Cowan,1987:25).

Subsequently, over the centuries, the community of disciples model in which everyone shared in the decision-making and ministerial aspects of the group, gave way to a hierarchical, clerical institution. Solemn distinctions were drawn between those with power, the clergy, and those without, the laity; between those who performed all ministry, the clergy, and those who passively accepted ministry, the laity. Thus, the priests lived apart, were considered superior and were not to be tainted by the laity. Moreover, they were to avoid all contact with the wicked world and especially with women. As well, ministry became exclusively priestly and the sacraments were reduced to a magical moment over which the priest had sole power (Doohan,1989:9). Perceived to be above and beyond the evaluations of others in the Christian community, the priest's call to ministry meant "entry into the profession not excellence in performance" (McElvaney,1981:97). Clericalism was in full operation.

New Directions

However, in recent decades, the adequacy of the hierarchical model of ministry and leadership has been severely questioned. While Vatican II retains a certain ambiguity in this regard, the Council has provided a new impetus to the understanding of ministry. As Doohan

succinctly describes.

> the Council's vision of the church as the People of God, primacy of baptism as the sign of dedication, universal distribution of charismatic rights, priesthood of all the baptized, focus on the local church, and acknowledgement of laity's specific role in church ministry, contributed to a new approach to ecclesial ministry (Doohan,1989:10).

Most importantly, the Council proclaimed the "universal call to ministry based on baptism not on mandate" (Doohan:11). No longer can the laity be referred to as nonordained, because in baptism, they also receive "the laying on of hands and anointing that sets them apart for ministry" (Doohan:11). Thus "the source of ministry is Christian initiation, not ordination and ecclesiastical mandate" (Doohan:12). Doohan reiterates this concept when he states, "The source of ministry is found not in ordination or profession, since these are possible without ministry, and ministry is possible without them. Rather the source is Christian initiation" (Doohan:12).

Furthermore, Doohan believes "the succession of apostolic ministry is found in the whole church, not through mandate or delegation or participation in the hierarchy's ministry, but through the lived gospel values of untold numbers of faithful" (1989:13).

In this light, Doohan goes on to propose what he regards as some serious questions concerning ministry.

> We should ask not is it institutionalized, but is it relevant? not is it controlled, but is it facilitated? not is it official , but does it come from a loving church? not is it always the same, but is it changing with changing needs? (Doohan:18).

Hughes proposes that ministers incarnate the gospel in their lives in such a way that they make the life of Christ attractive to others. Thus, the great moments in ministry are not found in domination of others through controlling and imposing from above, but in a community of equal disciples, displaying reciprocal support for one another (1979:15).

Dulles has appropriately challenged the institutional model and advocates a reestablishment of the community of disciples model to narrow, once again, the gap between the clergy and the laity (1982:12).

While Dulles objects to institutionalism, he does nevertheless accept that ordination "signifies the authority of Christ in the persons who succeed the Apostles [and] is appropriate for those who have permanent charge of communities of faith, and who lead such communities in public worship" (1982:12). He insists, "Whether or not the Church eventually ordains women or admits married men to priestly orders in the Latin rite, a self-denying imitation of Christ whom they represent as teachers, liturgical leaders, and spiritual guides, must continue to be exacted

from all those who hold office in the church" (1982:12).

In assessing the qualities of spiritual ministers, McBrien recommends characteristics of a spiritual perspective as well as good leadership skills[2]. He includes at least seven fundamental criteria that the Church "must employ in its recruitment, training, selection, certification, and evaluation of its ministers,

> (1) basic human wholeness, (2) theological virtues, (3) moral (cardinal) virtues, (4) a positive sense of the Church, (5) communication skills, (6) sound theological competence and vision, and (7) social, political, and cultural awareness (1988:72).

To apply these qualities, McBrien has developed two distinct categories.

> *Christian/universal ministry* is any service rendered in Christ and because of Christ, rooted in baptism and confirmation, and to be [performed] by every member of the Church.
>
> *Christian/specific ministry* is a Christian service rendered in the name of the Church and for the sake of its mission, rooted in some act of designation by the Church, and to be [carried out] by relatively few members of the Church (1988:22).

Dulles believes that every formed disciple is called to be a minister i.e., to build up the community of disciples. By viewing all ministry as discipleship, it becomes the common factor uniting all Christians as followers and learners in relation to Jesus. As disciples all must help, using their talents for the benefit of the rest. Everyone is

called to service. As Doohan asserts, this call implies a "serious questioning of the traditional clerical monopoly of ministry" (1989:11).

If the church is to return to a community of disciples, Dulles further states that authoritarianism which seeks to keep the general body of Christians in a state of servile dependence can have no place (1982:11). Instead, all committed and mature Christians are to be treated with reverence and respect. Imposing conformity in disagreements undermines the integrity of all.

Such maturity is evident in Boff's description of the church in the Third World. Here lay persons are discovering their importance as successors of the apostolic teachings and are co-responsible for the growth and faith of the community. Discipleship is the characteristic not only of the clergy but of the entire church rediscovered in an ecclesial community.

Boff believes that the communitarian way of living out faith gives rise to the creation of many ministries which he names services or charisms. All services are understood as gifts of the Holy Spirit and are for the benefit of the whole community. Consequently, the church "becomes more than an organization but a living organism that is renewed, nourished and recreated from its base" (Boff,1985:128).

Moreover, all members share in the responsibility, leadership and decision-making of the local church where the

exercise of power is seen as service (Boff:129). Having a fundamental equality, people are growing in consciousness of their direct share in Christ's love without mediation. The formalized ministries of bishop, priest and deacon are nowadays a "small part of the ministerial vocation of the church. They are important but still secondary; they serve the nonclerical ministers who form the prime priestly reality of the People of God" (Doohan,1989:13).

Doohan asks some fundamental questions: "What ministries do we want clergy and religious to perform for us today" (1989:20)? Congruent to this answer is a definition and clarification of the vocation and ministry of the laity. Nevertheless, members of the laity can only claim their rights through a current refocusing and identification of their own understanding of priestly ministry (1989:20).

> What is their model of priesthood? What do they value most in the priest? Does their family benefit more or less from priestly ministry than they did five years ago? What are the priest's most important services: spiritual leadership, sacramental and liturgical presiding, social action or something else (Doohan:20)?

Answers to these questions identify changes in the institutional image of the priest. Lay ministers are now doing what was formerly the sole responsibility of the priest. Some ministries performed by the laity are valued more than the priests and some of the priests valued

ministries do not require ordination (Doohan:20).

"While ministerial priesthood is essentially different from the priesthood of all the baptized, it is not greater than it" (Doohan:25). Moreover, with regard to availability, when married couples minister to a congregation, the parishioners clearly conclude that celibacy has no relationship to increased time spent with them (Doohan:26).

Many laity feel called to share in the services of teaching, sanctifying and organizing the community which leads to a decentralization of church authority and a reversal of the traditional pyramid to the following: (Boff,1985:133).

CHRIST-HOLY SPIRIT

COMMUNITY-PEOPLE OF GOD

BISHOP-PRIEST-COORDINATOR

Variety of Charisms

For Boff the Holy Spirit is the source of strength, essential to nourish the faith and to make visible the charisms. The term charism is derived from *charis* or *chairein*, words used in both the Old and New Testaments, "meaning gratuity, benevolence, and God's gift that is granted to the individual" (1985:156). "Paul introduced the word *charism* in the context of the organization of the

community" (Boff:156). A charism, then, is a "manifestation of the Spirit's presence in the members of the community, causing everything that they are and do, to be done and ordered for the good of all" (Boff:158). Therefore, every person is charismatic. No one possesses all the charisms but each person has a few to be exercised in the service of the entire community.

"The hierarchy is only one charismatic state in the Church, one that must not (as sometimes happens) step on the toes of other charisms that the Spirit raises in the community" (Boff:157). Boff warns that the constant temptation of the church is that of having power over others, of one charism silencing others (1985:159). This is particularly true in the First World where the church runs the risk of ignoring the community of disciples and operating from the institutional stance of dogmas, laws, and rites.

Hence, charisms are meant to build up the community in a horizontal dimension which includes laity, priests and bishops in a cross-network of groups. As previously stated, "charism includes the hierarchical element, but not exclusively" (Boff:159). Boff emphasizes, "Charism is more fundamental than the institution" (1985:159). It keeps the institution alive and is at the root of all institutions and hierarchy. Rather than a group of rulers and ruled, the charism of faith is the unifying force giving rise to

equality among all church members (Boff:159-160). For charisms come from God but are meant to build up the community (Boff:162).

Frequently, the institutional church has used the charisms for its own interest. Niebuhr warns: "the church loses its character when it concentrates on itself, worships itself and seeks to make love of the church its first commandment" (1956:30). According to Burrows, it is clericalism in the institutional model which will continue to lead to undesirable consequences (1980:74). In hierarchical structure, style of clothing, and male domination, the church is still operating out of the Middle Ages (Burrows:126). Instead, it should conduct itself out of culturally accepted norms of a given people where worship, teaching and gospel values interact with daily life.

Through this interaction, the substance of the church, which is ministry, is rooted in service within the community and expanded to include the outside world. Ideally the function of the hierarchy is not accumulation of power, but integration of the spirit of unity and cohesiveness, which implies listening, dialogue, patience and serenity (Boff,1985:164).

Continuing to develop this concept, Haight points out that the purpose of ministry (charisms) in the institutional model of the church has been to multiply conversions and to maintain a large church of the masses in

a condition of passive reception of sacraments. In contrast to this vastness and impersonalism, he suggests that the community of disciples should be small enough so that all members know one another, and that these communities may or may not be clerically led (1985:212). Usually groups are centered around scripture, shared goals and prayer rather than the Eucharist. Their ministry is governed more by spiritual leadership than by office and they enjoy a certain autonomy. Yet, they are still attached to the institutional church (Haight,1985:213), through such means as newsletters, visiting missionaries, district celebrations and workshops for the lay leaders. As exhibited in the post-Easter communities, every aspect of human life is addressed in their ministry, not just the spiritual, because all ministry is grounded and functions in community. "Each member is actually a minister to the others and to the whole" (Haight:213).

With first hand experience in Africa and South America, Kasper observes:

> Here Christians, mostly without priests, gather together to read and interpret holy scripture, to pray, sing, prepare for worship, to advise and make decisions concerning concrete questions in the church's life and to address and grapple with a variety of human problems. Here lay activity and responsiblity is most intense and expressive. Here the church as *communio* lives anew (1988:137).

In support of Kasper, Haight believes that "passive

Christianity is a contradiction of terms" (1985:223). For too long the institutional church has engendered and ministered to a spirituality of passivity for the laity and dependence on clerical sacramental services. In a few areas where lay spiritual servant-leadership is emerging, the clergy is being challenged to follow the laity's example of not being set apart and above the people but at the service of the community. The function of leadership is to empower people, to serve them and to give them the opportunity to serve cooperatively. Besides suggesting a focus in the world to correct injustice, Haight exhorts the institutional church to witness to society, yet, at the same time, to acknowledge and struggle against sexism, totalitarianism, suppression, censorship, negation of human rights and human dignity in its own midst (1985:229).

Such an assessment of its own areas of injustice should, in Ruether's opinion, begin with the dismantling of clericalism in the church. In essence, clericalism is an "understanding of leadership as rule that reduces others as subjects to be governed" (1983:206). Clericalism disempowers people and turns them into laity who are dependent on the clergy. It assumes that "people have no direct access to the divine" (1983:207). Only the clergy have power and authority in all areas. While male laity may be allowed subordinate roles in the institutional system, "women become the archetypal representatives of the passive recipients of

clerical sacral power. Clericalism is built upon and presupposes patriarchy" (1983:207).

Ruether alleges that clericalism contradicts the New Testament concept of ministry as *diaconia* or service, which is self-emptying of power or domination. Ministry in its true sense "transforms leadership from power over others to empowerment of others" (1983:207). Intrinsically, "ministry overcomes competitive one-up, one-down relationships and generates relations of mutual empowerment" (1983:207).

This understanding of ministry recognizes that some people have special gifts and may play particular and different roles, such as teachers, administrators, liturgical poets, creative artists, and community organizers. In each case, the charism is for the sake of the whole community (1983:207).

Ruether insists that liberation of the institutional church from clericalism "also means reclaiming the sacraments as expressions of the redemptive life of the church that the people are empowered to administer collectively" (1983:208). Certainly the community may designate specific people to develop and lead liturgical functions at different times, but it does not mean that they have a special sacramental power that no one else has. It means, rather, that "these persons represent and gather into a collective experience the sacramental life processes of the people" (1983:208). Leadership and ministry then, in

Ruether's observation, are "called forth from within the community rather than imposed on it in a way that deprives the community of its own self-articulation" (1983:210).

It is important to note that women are anxious to be involved in ministry. Fiorenza claims that "ministry as service is a powerful symbol for Christian feminists" (Gardiner,1988:89). She makes us aware that there is a distinct difference between the New Testament understandings of *diakonia*-service and *douleia*-slavery, which is servanthood without a choice (Gardiner:89). Servanthood with a choice, *diakonia*, is an act of the total self which allows us to look beyond ourselves to see the needs of others and be able to respond with empathy towards them.

Fiorenza recommends a redefinition of ministry, one that is consistent with building the community. Instead of 'power over' as in the institutional model of church, she concentrates on 'power for' (Gardiner:90). This notion of service repudiates the idea of self-sacrificing service for women and other subordinate groups but encourages empowerment for all people. In order to transform the patriarchal church into a discipleship of equals, Fiorenza suggests that the leadership titles also change to assume New Testament categories such as "apostles, prophets, facilitators, missionary co-workers and co-laborators" (Gardiner:91), all dedicated to build up the community. Doohan comments, "To the question, Did Jesus entrust his

mission to the hierarchy or to the universal church? the answer can only be the latter" (1989:7).

Mk.10:42-44 challenges those "in positions of dominance and power to become 'equal' with those who are powerless" (Gardiner:91). Not everyone in the Jesus tradition is exhorted to become servants and slaves, but only those with power and status. In addition, Mt.23:8-10 strongly puts forward a statement that popes and bishops have to take seriously, the admonition of Jesus that no one in the church is to be called teacher, father or master in the absolute sense.

Fiorenza concludes, "Ministry is no longer to be construed as 'service' or as 'waiting on someone' but should be understood as 'equality from below' in solidarity with all those who struggle for survival, self-love and justice" (Gardiner:92).

Doohan expands these issues even further and insists on "radical equality [which] presumes equal opportunity for formation, study, skill development, prayer and evaluation; it presumes equal commitment of financial resources" (1989:5). Dedication to a vision of equality assumes extensive education for the laity and the clergy. New models of ministry will necessitate a commitment to study, an awareness of the interdependence of ministry, and frequent occasions whereby support and encouragement are given (Doohan,13;18-19).

However, Bausch proposes that there are some tensions that ought to be addressed as the conversion to community of equal disciples is being encouraged.

> 1. The laity have the ministry of preparing people for baptism, marriage, dying, reconcilation, eucharist, yet they have to step aside to let the priest officiate at the sacrament.
>
> 2. Laity have the right to baptize but allowance is not given except in emergencies.
>
> 3. The laity are still divorced from meaningful decision-making powers.
>
> 4. There is an accountability required for lay leaders but not for the clergy.
>
> 5. Women resent decisions being made in their absence, low prestige categorizing, the use of sexist language, second-class status in the church and an aura of patronization (1982:87).

From the above discussion, we can see a trend emerging whereby the hierarchical institutional church is being urged to become a community of equal disciples in which baptism, not ordination, is the basis of all charisms in the church. In this model, ordination confers a particular ministry, not all ministry. Everyone in the community of equal disciples model shares in the basic priesthood grounded in the common life of the Spirit of Jesus. All ministries are aspects of this life which invariably rules out any caste system (Bausch.1982:70) and yields to personal giftedness and collegiality.

Why does the church need a new understanding of

ministry? McElvaney, who has extensively reviewed the local church dilemma, declares that the church is not professional enough in ministry (1981:89). It is ingrown, mediocre, concerned with the wrong things, unwise in the allocation of resources and naive in its conception of the problems of people. The church is fraught with what he calls individualism, which keeps the clergy blind to the insights and gifts of their brothers and sisters in Christ. As well, individualism is a form of control over the laity, in so far as any attempts at meeting, whether for prayer or discussion, without the presence of the priest are viewed as dissension.

On the other hand, individualism has produced many valid ideas by creative thinkers. But if a person has deviated from established positions, through prophetic insights, he/she frequently becomes ostracized at the diocesan and international levels of church. Yet Doohan describes the varieties of individualism found in clerics.

> Some church authorities at times portray an addictive attachment to historical forms of authority, power and money and their own selective criticism of sin...their own interpretation of teachings, their selective appreciation of tradition, their unwillingness to eliminate sexism, their circular use of Canon Law[a]...their encouragement of ultra conservative bounty hunters for those who dissent (1989:xii).

Kiefer accentuates these comments with the concern that

almost nothing in our present eucharistic pattern gives any play to a sense that members of the laity have a ministry to one another (1982:106). Cooke offers hope when he responds that new ministry will come into existence as the laity in the church become conscious of what needs to be done, and seek guidance from whatever agencies in the church exist to provide guidance, but resist the attempts of the church officials to control their activity (1977:206). The laity must make the move to promote the shift of ministerial responsibilities from the church officials to the community as a whole. The laity needs to develop a firm consciousness that it is the church, which means the church is to be lay centered and community centered. Kennedy claims that "nothing will be achieved out there before we give birth to it within ourselves" (1988:77). This birthing process coexists with an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of the laity.*

Bausch succinctly clarifies the idea: when the non clergy are willing to move up, and clergy are willing to move over, then all of God's people will together move out to bear witness to the gospels (1981:109). Only if the laity are a prayer-filled people and insist on spiritual formation will they be able to take their places as servant leaders in the twenty-first century.

2. MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

Introduction

Increasingly, the laity is becoming enthusiastically involved in ecclesial ministry. Doohan identifies two trends: "a growing awareness that service for others is a necessary part of baptismal dedication and a realization that in these years God is calling men and women to make service for others a professional commitment" (1989:12). He distinguishes further between "a spirit of service and a ministerial commitment" (1989:12).

A spirit of service is in every mature Christian and "shows itself in selfless service at work, in one's family, in civic life, or in the Church community. A ministerial commitment grows out of a spirit of service" (1989:12),

> and has its source in Christian initiation, manifests itself through gospel values, is a professional dedication that can be full or part-time, is lived in ecclesial interdependence, and is ecclesially authenticated (Doohan,1989:18).

Doohan explains, "Ecclesial authentication implies evaluation and accountability for one's ministry" (1989:14). Such evaluation applies indiscriminately to both lay, religious or priestly ministers. Furthermore, "ministries do

not exist because clergy share their power. They exist already" (Doohan:14), and bishops and priests simply recognize them without having the right to manage them. In other words, the role of church officials is to maintain good order.

An important part of this authentication is the allowance for new ministries to arise as the need dictates. Doohan argues, "We cannot stagnate but must discover new ways to live ministry" (1989:20); "some of today's most powerful ministries have never received designation or authorization" (1989:27). A key aspect is that today's ministries "are increasingly situational and not permanent, and some of the most dedicated and professional ministers work in volunteer ministries" (1989:27).

Community Building as Foundational

Ministry, in Haight's terms, is the essence, the very substance of the church. "What the church is is decided and determined by its ministry" (1985:210). What is the fundamental ministry necessary to challenge the present hierarchical institutional model of church and be the catalyst for the evolution into a community of equal disciples model? According to recent studies, it is the ministry of community building itself. Community building, rooted in Jesus' own ministry, is the foundational ministry

and a dimension of all ministries.

First and foremost, Jesus understood community as "gathering the people of God" (Lohfink:71), so that the reign of God might be exemplified among his chosen. As a group they were to live out the two dimensional aspect of his instructions--to love God and their neighbour. Lohfink writes, "precisely to the degree that the people of God let itself be grasped by God's rule it would be transformed--in all dimensions of its existence" (1984:12). Jesus initiated a contrast society--a family of brothers and sisters--a community which formed "a living arena for faith in which everyone draws strength from each other" (1984:62). In Jesus' community, social relationships differed from the rest of society. There was no retribution, and no structures of domination (1984:72). They became the salt of the earth and through their love for one another, had the potential to transform humanity (1984:66).

Jesus' ethic was not aimed at the individual, for an individual cannot procure a dramatic change by living the reign of God alone. Rather, the message was directed towards a group--his beloved disciples. Moreover, belonging to Jesus' community was invitational and not forced on all of society (1984:72). So successful were Jesus' efforts that his initial communities blossomed into hundreds of household churches in the post-Easter era.

Rosemary Ruether similarly sees community building as

central to enflesh an alternative vision of church today. "All the functions of church...are simply expressions of entering and developing a true human community of mutual love" (1985:87). Along similar lines, McElvaney asserts, "Whatever else the church is called to be, nothing is more central than to become a loving community of Jesus Christ" (1981:143). He further postulates that caring is the underlying premise of the community. Caring and being cared for has its ups and downs, its times of exhilaration and discouragement (McElvaney:146). Caring is an active goodwill through serving of and non domination towards others. It includes the immediate support and help from other Christians that soften the stresses and difficulties in the rest of life.

Moreover, community is multi-dimensional. Its diversity is reflected in the specific focus portrayed in the following definitions. Bernard Cooke, a sacramental theologian, situates community building Christologically when he writes, "Christianity began [as a] people who shared an experience of the risen one, shared a vision of what human life was all about and shared Christ's own spirit...They were communities animated by the Spirit, given them in a continuing Pentecost by the risen Lord" (1983:70). Understanding its complexity, Joseph Martos a contemporary scholar, sees community as "an invitation to a multi-leveled unity, embracing common experiences, common ideas, and

common values" (1983:188). One of the most famous community builders, Jean Vanier, the renowned founder of the l'Arche communities for the handicapped, expresses community as an opportunity for "interpersonal relationship and a sense of belonging" as well as an "orientation of life to a common goal and a common witness" (1979:ix).

Scott Peck, who believes that peace in the world can be attained through community, states in his book *The Different Drum*, that "There is no such thing as instant community...It takes a great deal of work for a group of strangers to achieve the safety of true community" (1987:67). In an authentic community, the members have learned how to listen to each other, how not to reject each other, how to give up cliques and factions (1987:71). Peck understands community as a safe place.

> When offered the opportunity of such a safe place, most people will naturally begin to experiment more deeply than ever before with love and trust. They drop their customary defenses and threatened postures, the barriers of distrust, fear, resentment and prejudice. They experiment with disarming themselves. They experiment with peace--peace within themselves and within the group. And they discover that the experiment works (1987:70).

In other words, "A community is not something we create" (Fenhagen:10); rather it is a gift, a sign of the Spirit's presence in the church. It is not a program, but, it can be initiated through a program. It is more of a

process, an attitude, a group's way of life. It is not something we grasp, and announce that now we have attained community. For community is ever changing, ever evolving as the needs, aspirations and outreach of the group unfolds.

As we have seen, community building in the church springs from Jesus and the gospels. It is the basic starting point of all ministries, the very substance of the church. There is no sphere of church life that does not call for community building. Nor is it limited and directed only inside the church, but the function of the community of equal disciples is to make the vision and way of life of Jesus real for the surrounding world.

Aspects of Community Building

The quest for community is an integral part of modern life, and the experience of community responds to a profound human need. In spite of the vastness of structures in society, many Christians want to live more immediate and interrelational lives (Boff,1985:125). Because lay women and men do experience intimacy, support, acceptance and availability in family life, they seek the same in their Christian communities" (McBrien,1988:118). The formation of a community of equal disciples in their parishes is an answer to this desire. Such a community permits not only participation in the liturgy but in the decision-making as

well.

Today it is widely held that community does not rob us of our individuality but enables us to be our true selves, as Parker Palmer describes.

> We are formed by the lives which intersect ours. The larger and richer our community, the larger and richer is the content of the self. There is no individuality without community; thus the surprising finding that an affluent suburb with all its options, but without community may nurture individuality less than a provincial village with few choices but a rich community life (1980:74).

In a Christian theological framework, moreover, God is discovered within community. Paul Hinnebusch, who has had extensive exposure to Charismatic communites, indicates that familiarity within a Christian community is to be at home with God, Jesus, and our brothers and sisters in the family of God's children (1975:8). He declares that the experience of genuine community permits a freedom, a sense of comfortableness, a trust where a person is allowed to be known, loved and received. This loving response from those with whom we share a common spirit and goal is truly an expression of the reign of God with us (1975:8). Hinnebusch explains, "God's full image is in any segment of humankind which exists as a family or community in loving relationship with the Holy Spirit...God is three Persons existing in the fullness of loving community with each other. God is community" (1975:73). Only in the baptized community of the

body of Christ are we the fullness of God's image and likeness. Engaging in various ministries of love, the Christian community continuously receives the life-giving spirit of the risen Lord. Through their mutual giving they grow in friendships with one another in God. Human friendship encourages us to hear and respond to the needs and joys of others--to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom.12:15). This sensitivity enables the fullest growth of a network of loving human relationships.

"The joy of Christian friendships is the image of God as Friend rejoicing in friendship with the people" (Hinnebusch:91). When these friendships become a reality, "when Christian communities are again transformed into true communities, wonders will begin anew" (Lohfink:87). Such an image previews a quantum leap to a repeated Pentecost experience.

Insofar as Christian community is an expression of the spirit of God and an encounter with God, it is a gift or sign of the Spirit's presence in the Church (Fenhagen:10). However, community building does not just happen. It requires honest and open communication with one another and with the living God who connects all. Communication enables the group to share life at a deeper level, to overcome separation, to identify the needs of the group, to address conflict as it arises, and eventually to arrive at consensus

for an appropriate mission endeavour. As White indicates, "The Christian community cannot long survive unless it experiences the power of ordinary language to unify, to heal, to reconcile, to edify, and to give themselves to one another" (1983:19).

Palmer includes intercessory prayer on behalf of each person's needs and for the union of the community itself as intrinsic to its sustenance (1980:83-93). Prayer needs a people and becomes the life blood of community building. "Because the spiritual life is a personal life and because personal life is impossible without the neighbour, there are resources for it in all community life" (Fielding,1966:169).

Here the spirit of Jesus is alive and active. For both internally and externally the fruits of the spirit will be evident--the love, joy, peace, patience...(Gal5:22-23) of the community are the direct experiences of the personal expression of God's presence with the people. It is here that God's love is made evident through the various charisms.

Just as every person's gift in the early church was necessary to build up the community, the same idea applies today. Boff roots the basic equality and collegiality of all members of the church in the active presence of the Spirit of the risen Christ in all the brothers and sisters. The presence of the Spirit is made visible by the plurality of gifts, charisms, or services that respond to the needs of

the community.

Charisms come from God and are a function or service either for building up the group itself or as outreach to the world. Boff advises that if a work or service unifies and builds the community it is an authentic charism (1985:162). Each person has a few charisms that need to be identified and encouraged and placed at the service of the group. Community building is the charism, the pneumatic force, that gives impetus to all ministries. It is the spirit of unity that encourages all other charisms or ministries. Not only does it give shape to ministries, it has the potential to revitalize the local church.=

In the new vision of parish life, small groups of equal disciples entice people to experience the Emmaus event of finding Jesus in "the breaking of the bread, in applying the message of scripture to daily life and in giving hospitality to the stranger" (Geaney,1987:135). Hospitality is a paradox for it allows the stranger to remain free and unattached and, yet it invites an openness a warmth that encourages one to linger. This implies a unity "in the very root of the word hospitality, for "hospes" means both host and guest --the two are really one" (Palmer,1981:69). A spirit of hospitality is vital to community building.

Sacramental Dimension of Community Building

Another element of community building is its share in the sacramental life of the church. The primary sacrament that Christ established was the community of equal disciples. Through their daily words and actions, the community of disciples made Jesus "present anew as they lived under the direction of his Spirit (Dulles,1982:16). The early communities were a sign of his great love for all people. When he said, "Do this in remembrance of me," (Lk.22:19) he was asking his disciples to serve one another, celebrate and eat together, love and support each person (White,1983:54-57). In doing these activities, they would be living under the direction of the Spirit and responding to life with a believer's faith. Reconciliation was a public practice at their meetings. Lohfink declares: "the courage to admonish others fraternally and the humility to let oneself be corrected are among the most certain signs of the presence of authentic community and of consciousness of community" (1984:106).

Dulles points out the church as a whole when operating as a commmunity deserves to be called a sacrament (1982:169). Community building is a living sign and action (service) of Christ's presence in the world. Martos develops this notion further when he states, "First and foremost, our sacramental actions call us... simply to be a community"

(1983:187). Our sacraments if we understand their rich symbols assume that the gathered are a spirit-filled, communicative, reconciling, serving community. "When we look at the sacraments concretely and existentially," Martos maintains, "it is not the sign that makes the sacramental reality present, but rather it is the presence of the reality that makes the sign sacramental" (1983:193).

Hence, Dulles brings out that, while still falling short of the ideal, the community of disciples does make Jesus present anew insofar as its members' lives are gradually transformed under the direction of the Spirit. Haughey augments the idea when he points out that attempts at community building nourish sacramental practice itself and contribute to its transforming effect on the members. Community building enriches the sacramental gestures for at these events we can love one another creatively. By being loved because of our very presence in the community, "the whole person is invited into a new way of seeing reality and relating to it with a different spirit and from a new angle of vision (Haughey:23). New possibilities in familiar sacramental scenes would emerge. Hearing the word of God, breaking bread together and sharing ones life's stories instills renewed faith and joyous expectance.

A community of disciples can be called a sacrament of Christ to the extent that its members follow Jesus' invitation to see their lives as bread and wine; that is,

accept their lives with gratitude, break them open and pour them out to share with others, and express and deepen this living reality in the Eucharist and the Scriptures.

For affluent North Americans, John Haughey brings a fresh insight when he states,

> Your wealth is in the members of the community now rather than in your money. You see yourselves, your money and others with wholly new eyes, eyes that see the eternal significance of being in this relationship to one another in Christ. Your money and possessions now have a purpose. Make friends for yourselves by sharing your goods with others (1986:27).

By handling our material goods in a Christian manner, we can become "instrumental to the Lord in his pursuit " of the beatitudes on earth (Haughey:75). It is here that we encounter Christ in the other or as Haughey describes in a spatial image, "transcendence is now horizontal" for love transpires in deeds as will as words (1986:198).

A New Way of Being Church

How does one begin to build community in a parish? It would be a fallacy to believe that the present structure of the parish itself can be a community per se. The current situation as we know it is ineffective. To become a community of equal disciples the parish must be reorganized.

God and Jesus become real and alive when faith stories

interconnected with daily life are shared. The more faith and love are experienced in a parish, and this can happen only in small groups, the more conscious people become of being church. Living in an unreflective society, such discernment and sharing "actually demands a counter-cultural way of life that can only be maintained with group support" (Baranowski:100). Thereby, Christian community becomes a "buffer zone" against the trials and troubles of life (Palmer,1980:75).

Rather than simply becoming small groups, the community of equal disciples becomes church in a different and deeper level and is capable of manifesting all the "activities of the larger church: worship, formation and service." (Baranowski:16)

Geaney observes that the best church liturgies today are found where genuine community exists, as it is an opportunity to draw on the gifts of the members for worship (1987:138). The willingness and warmth with which the gifts are given brings a joy and enthusiasm to the celebration. Martos is cognisant of the reality that "in order to be a community at Christian worship, we must first of all be a Christian community" (1983:191). For it is important for liturgy to "pull together the experience of Christian living that is present in the communities' expression of life" (Geaney:138).

Boff affirms this concept when he writes, "communities

in all theological rigour are true, universal church, concretized on this small group level" (1986:20). A community of equal disciples can emerge from "basic elements like faith, the reading of the word and meditation on it and mutual assistance in all human dimension" (Boff,1986:23). Communities are the promise of the "reinvention of the church;" (1986:20) a "leaven of renewal;" (1986:33) the possibility for the process of decentralization by restoring to God's people the rights that have been deprived in the institutional linear structure; (1986:32) and are possible through equality in conjunction with a face-to-face communion of members (1986:30). Boff continues, "there is nothing about the participants to indicate any threat of breach with the oneness of the church"(1986:37). Following the hologram concept, each group and each individual in the group is the church.

In Boff's experience, Christian life in the basic communities is characterized by "the absence of alienating structures, by direct relationships, by reciprocity, by a deep communion, by mutual assistance, by communality of gospel ideals, by equality among members" (1986:4). In contrast, the specific aspects of institutionalism i.e., rigid rules, hierarchies, determined relationships as distinguished by functions, qualities and titles, are absent (Boff:4).

Within the parish structure, potential communities are

present in the context of each ministry. Usually after a retreat experience or a parish mission or renewal, the local church is ready to undertake ongoing community endeavours. How the parish establishes its communitarian groups is not important. What is vital is leadership training, commitment to the cause of community building, and a willingness to begin.

In Geaney's experience, formation can be as packaged as the RCIA program or as varied as the specific needs and interests of the community. Each community can undertake its separate educational stance according to its level of faith development (1987:139). Furthermore, service or outreach again depends on the talents and concerns of the community. For a time, until it is confident in its own right, it may choose to service itself. However, as church its mission is to be a light for the world, an example of the kingdom in the midst of life (1987:140-142).

Strengths/Weaknesses in Small Communities

In his book *Community and Growth*, Jean Vanier suggests that we do not seek ideal circumstances and people to form community with, but rather, to love those God has sent to us for they are the signs of God (1979:16). He postulates that the ideal community does not exist and can never be found. The cross cannot be escaped by joining a community but the

support in carrying the cross can be found there. Perfect peace and harmony remain with God, not with humans, even those who try to be Christian. There will inevitably be many death and resurrection experiences for the community members (1979:16).

Each community grouping includes both the strong and the weak. One cannot exist without the other for each is dependent on the other. Nevertheless, it is essential for each person to feel needed, to share and to use his/her gifts. "So it is important that all members know what their gifts are, use them and take responsibility for developing them" (Vanier,1979:20). In this manner, the whole community grows and benefits from the sharing of charisms and each person can attain both wholeness and holiness. In order to develop to one's fullest potential and in accordance to one's faith, many warm, caring and open relationships in a community are essential (Bausch,1986:130;187).

In 1Cor.12:8-11, Paul describes the variety of charismatic gifts that were inherent to sustain the early Christian communities. In addition to these Bonhoeffer speaks of other attributes necessary for community building:

> holding one's tongue, humility, tenderness, silence in the face of critism, listening, constant readiness to render small services, support of brothers [and sisters], forgiveness, proclamation of the word, speaking truth and authority."

In the body of Christ there are different gifts and different functions. But as Pentecost people, we are all storytellers, all value bearers and all community builders (Fenhagen:31).

Some gifts may not be linked to a function--for example the gifts of compassion, discernment, hospitality. Nevertheless, each gift is important, is rooted in God and needs to be acknowledged. Fenhagen stresses that community building is a "ministry that requires skills in group development, conflict management, interpersonal awareness, as well as a profound and growing openness to the Spirit" (1977:29).

To caution us in the ministry of community building Palmer has outlined some mistaken notions that may mislead us.

> 1. Community is a creative luxury which can be added to a life of other luxuries...But in truth community is another one of those strange things which eludes us if we aim directly at it. Instead community comes as a by-product of commitment and struggle. It comes when we step forward to right some wrong, to heal some hurt, to give some service...For the world teaches us to go after what we want--directly, aggressively, single-mindedly. But community approached that way, stays constantly beyond our reach...precisely because the foundation of community itself goes beyond selfishness into life for others.
>
> 2. Community equals utopia, that in easy access to one another supportive relationships will result and we will find ourselves brothers and sisters again. For those who come into community with only that dream will soon leave, hurt, resentful and

> probably lost to the cause of community building... Community always means the collision of egos...In this process there is the pain of not getting our way, but the promise of finding the way.
>
> 3. Community is an association with people just like ourselves...In a true community we will not choose our companions, for our choices are so often limited by self-serving motives...Often they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world...In true community there will be enough diversity and conflict to shake loose our need to make the world in our own image. True community will teach us the meaning of the prayer, "Thy will, not mine, be done." (1980:80-82.

Thus, community building is a process that promises diversity and tenseness7 as well as fulfillment and joy in a multi-cultural, technological society. Various authors, nevertheless, emphasize that just as there are gifts that are to serve community, so too the actual realization of community is the work of the Spirit and happens when people are released from bondage into a freedom that encourages care of and trust in one another and thereby a deeper understanding of God (Fenhagen:71).

Furthermore, the community building ministry could involve

> visiting the sick and shut-ins, staying in touch with the membership and reaching out to new-comers or fringe members in an effort to include them in the common life of the congregation. Such a ministry would also include addressing those points where tension has arisen in an effort to find resolution before dislocation occurs (Fenhagen:72).

Maturity, skill and wisdom are necessary to allow conflict to surface and then enable others to work towards reconciliation.

As James Fenhagen so appropriately summarizes, "community building is a ministry of many dimensions and many skills. It lies at the heart of what it means to be church." It is a ministry of hope and has the potential to give a new life, a new spirit to the individual, the group of equal disciples and the entire parish. With hope comes a renewed energy and freedom to love God and one's neighbour (1977:76).

Community building promises a communitarian spirit for those seriously seeking to live the discipleship of Christ. It aspires to an equality of members which in turn will assist in the declericalization and decentralization of the church. The axis is beginning to shift from a hierarchical institutional model to a community building praxis. In my opinion, we are witnessing the awakening of a new era in the church. Community building will be the leaven that shapes the ministries and the entire church of the future. To use Boff's expression, community building is an "ecclesiogenesis", an opportunity for the church to be reborn, to begin anew to clean up its image and once more be a credible sign in the world (1986:35).

Community Building as a Specific Ministry

Fenhagen mentions that just as there will be a variety of approaches, levels and commitments to community building, there will also be a specific ministry itself which has as its overall goal community building in the entire parish (1977:72). A *koinonia* would be an appropriate term for this ministry since it describes a group of people who are energized by the love of God and express it by their concern for others (Fenhagen:71).

Once the parishioners undergo an extensive catechesis, or experience community building in a smaller gathering, Bausch recommends that the entire congregation should be installed as community builders at a special Sunday liturgy (1981:107). From this time on, life is enhanced as the whole congregation works at sustaining community. By its very nature, the church is called to be a Christian community and through baptism we are to be responsible and committed builders.

When there is a specific group that has chosen community building as its special ministry in the parish, it is not to negate the vibrant relatedness that exists in other ministries or services. Its role is to transfer some of this commitment, this *shalom* to the parish at large so that each group will not lose its connectedness to other groups and at the same time it will reinforce the hospitable

relations on a large scale.

At each parish celebration these ministers will attempt to overcome the isolation and separation that people experience when they worship with large numbers. Their presence will be a reminder of each person's commitment as common journeyers in community building. Through various spiritual and social endeavours, they will encourage the parishioners to follow their role model, Jesus, who was a person for others through his availableness and openness. Jesus constantly calls us out of ourselves to a relationship with others (Fenhagen,1977:71-72).

3. LEADERSHIP:EMERGING FORMS

Leadership in Early Church

The understanding of community life has with it a particular expectation of leadership and power. In developing the nuances of this new vision, James Whitehead questions, "Does the power associated with leadership belong to individuals, or is it a part of a community's self-possession and maturity"? (Cowan:23). In the post-Easter era, the early Christians modelled their communities on the informal leadership style of Jesus. Whoever was hosting the meeting, whether a woman or man, was virtually the leader for the occasion. Since the format was

flexible--to share a meal, pray together, admonish sinners, listen to a visiting apostle, or collect food and clothing for the less-privileged--the sharing and input from a variety of disciples was common. Each person was considered equal and a vital member of the community.

In his book *The Church With a Human Face*, Schillebeeckx develops the idea of leadership as presented by the evangelists. In Mk.10:45, Jesus answers the sons of Zebedee by insisting that Christian leadership of a community must be service. Schillebeeckx points out that "Mark here is clearly in the tradition of the early Christian communities in which there was leadership and authority but no official status of power in contrast to subjection" (1985:87). Schillebeeckx maintains,

> Throughout the New Testament ministry is nowhere conceived of as a structure in accordance with the worldly model of 'leadership', in the sense of rulers being over subjects. On the contrary, as all three synoptics say (Mark 10.42f.; Luke 22.25; Matt. 20.25f.), 'It shall not be so (as is the case with worldly rulers) among you' (1985:88).

John 13.1-17 elicits how Jesus, by washing the disciples' feet, stands the social norms on their head. "Leaders of the community must perform the work of slaves, without this service of love, no one shares in Jesus' work of service. There speaks the Johannine Jesus" (1985:94).

However, the importance of maintaining a continuity

among the groups, the need to organize a rapidly expanding church, and the necessity of preserving the purity of Jesus' message from heresy and manipulation, all led the small house communities to converge into a single large community under the role of a community leader (Cowan:27). In this transition, a number of significant events occurred. Following the structure of the Roman state and the idea of priesthood found in the Jewish heritage, the leaders, called presbyters, deacons and bishops assumed a privileged and hierarchical position over the communities. Power was handed down by God through the clergy, who mediated God's presence to the people. All of the gifts, once active in the members, became coalesced into the leaders who ministered to increasingly passive communities. "Eventually this minister should be expected to act as teacher, healer, administrator and prophet for a community that otherwise seemed to lack these gifts and services" (Cowan:28).

Further separation involved the leaders' abstinence from sexual intercourse with their wives prior to celebrating the Eucharist, which eventually led to celibacy as a requirement for leadership. Other distinctions were the clerical garb, the priest with the sole authority to say Mass, and the distinct removal of the altar from its central location in the church to one end of the building. A more fundamental difference was the laity's requirement to address the clergy as 'Father', whereby the followers were

made to feel and act like children (Cowan:29;26). The patriarchy of society had entered the church.

Patriarchy and Paternalism

"By patriarchy we mean not only the subordination of females to males, but the whole structure of father ruled society" (Ruether,1983:61). Ruether contends: "Ruling-class males have built social structures and systems of cultural justification to assure that they would monopolize the cultural, economic and political power of the society" (1985:58). Most significant is the fact that "others are forbidden access to this power and are confined to auxiliary status as physical laborers in production and reproduction, while the ruling males own and command the fruits of this labor" (Ruether:58).

Ultimately, "Women are not authentically included in Church unless Church means a community that seeks to overcome patriarchy as the root expression of oppressive relations between men and women, between generations, and between those who are powerful and those who are weak" (Ruether:64).

Evelyn Whitehead, in her paper "Leadership and Power", describes paternalism as an "image of leadership in which both power and maturity belong to the leader alone" (Cowan:40). The paternal leader assists the group but "only

according to the leader's idea of what is best and only so long as the group recognizes and accepts its own impotence" (Cowan:40). Hence, "The group needs the leader, since the leader alone is imaged to have power; the leader needs the group to reinforce this image of unequal power." Moreover, "Paternalism is a leadership of false love: where genuine love wants the continued growth of the beloved, paternalism wants continued dependence" (Cowan:40). Essentially, the "group stands without the power it needs; power is outside the group" (Cowan:41).

Ruether has a similar approach to this topic. "What we see in all forms of paternalism and clericalism is the relationship of a dependent adult to a dominant adult being assimilated into that of a child to a male parent. Because the power exercised by the father is presumed to be benevolent and wise, it is psychologically and culturally difficult to criticize it" (1985:76). Whitehead stresses, "nowhere are the limits of paternalism being experienced as keenly and challenged on as many fronts as in the community of faith" (Cowan:40).

Over the centuries, leadership in the institutional church has become identified with hierarchicalism, paternalism, clericalism and a *Father Knows Best* mentality. Security was a consequence of this model. Everyone knew their place and their role in the pyramidal structure--the clergy were clearly superior, as they had the potential to

climb to the top, while the laity remained securely at the bottom.

Radical Mutuality

There is however, another model of leadership arising in the church that has received its impetus from Vatican II's concept of the People of God. James Whitehead, a pastoral theologian, terms the leadership style "radical mutuality" (Cowan:31). The basis of this image is found "in the early church's sense of unity and equality in Jesus Christ" (Cowan:31). Gal.3:27-28 indicates that "when followers of Jesus are baptized, they enter a way of life that knows no distinction of class, privilege or status" (Cowan:31).

After the Second Vatican Council, a semblance of the early church's reality has begun to emerge in some areas of the church's structure. The collegiality of the council translated into parish councils which are "enthusiastic about the possibility of shared decision-making and leadership" (Cowan:32). A prime example of this process exists in base communities where discernment and decision-making does not descend from the leader to the group but arises from the community of faith (Cowan:32). Consequently there is a strong sense of belonging in the community of equal disciples of being beside one another,

reversing the above-below trend of the institutional model of leadership, J.Whitehead describes several distinct characteristics of a radical mutuality style. It operates with the altar turned around and toward the centre of the church, team ministry exists, and gifts of the faithful are encouraged (Cowan:33).

A most important feature is that power belongs to the community and moves among the people. J.Whitehead affirms, "Differences in power and weakness bound [the people] together rather than separating [them] as superiors and inferiors" (Cowan:33). Imaging a mutual group, Whitehead sees the leader as emerging from among rather than above, and as maintaining an intimate role with the group. Similar to other group members, the leader is holy but also wounded. He/she is less a "mediator and more a coordinator of its many gifts and ministries" (Cowan:33). In a hierarchical image of the church, relief from the burden of all the ministries was attained by the pastor distributing, sharing and delegating various ministerial tasks, tasks which belong essentially to his priesthood (Cowan:33).

Power in Religious Groups

As a social scientist, E.Whitehead incorporates the findings of contemporary social-psychology and theology. She presents the interrelationship of two opposing movements of

power in religious groups. First of all, to preserve the initial experience of God, "the religious group must develop structures to help guarantee that its present is connected with its past" (Cowan:44). Such a preservation movement becomes the "development of centralized patterns of social power in the group" (Cowan:44). Secondly, the group must foster the relationship of faith among small groups and give it priority over the institutional commitments. This then is the decentralization element. "It confirms that these smaller groups may have the power and even the responsibility to stand 'up to' and even 'over against' the established social power within the organization" (Cowan:45). Thus, there is a general power manifested in the organization and a particular power present in the small group. E.Whitehead states the tension found between these entities cannot be resolved but both must consciously portray the power of God (Cowan:45).

Throughout the church's history there have been specific events that emphasize different power periods. E.Whitehead postulates that the structural process of centralized power reached its apogee at the Council of Trent, while the reforms of Vatican II encouraged decentralization and a recognition of the pluriformity of God's power among us (Cowan:45-46).

Recently, there has been a development in the understanding of leadership and power within groups.

E.Whitehead states that, with all the focus and attention on the designated leader, the dynamics within the group proper have been missed. She confirms: "Leadership is not just what one person in the group has; it is something that people in a group do together" (Cowan:47). There is a shift, then, from seeing leadership as an attribute, towards understanding it as a process that goes on among a group of people to mobilize their power, to achieve their common goals (Cowan:47;49).

Not everyone in the group possesses the same strengths. Such irregularity of strengths is best assessed in the bilateral quality of power. For bilateral power is relational power which takes into account the feelings and values of another and thus includes them in one's own world of meaning and concern." E.Whitehead concludes that there is an irony that exists between the unilateral power structures of the institutional church and relational, bilateral power images which are at the core of its religious belief (Cowan:51). This tension in styles of power is likewise portrayed between the hierarchical, institutional model and the community of equal disciples model of church.

In his paper "Liturgy and Empowerment," David Power gives a subtle example of the conflict that exists between the two models--of how one is called to be a Christian but virtually denied the right.

> A radical sharing in this power is given through the sacraments of initiation. It is celebrated in daily prayer and in the Eucharistic memorial, at the common table of the covenant people. It is a power that reconciles, makes one, and allows the Spirit-filled community to witness in hope to Christ's unique lordship. It is given social and ritual expression in an act of worship in which the Word is heard, the Cross remembered, bread broken and shared, the poor cared for, and prayer uttered in an exercise of a variety of gifts. To be forgiven is to be received by this community. To be loved is to be invited to share at its memorial table. To be sent forth is to go out on mission with its blessing on one's head. To serve is to build up its unity and apostolic fidelity, in a communion of charity with other communities (Cowan:83).

After reading such an enriching and utopic description, one is tempted to ask, where do such blessed communities exist in the church? In reality, the laity experience a restricted empowerment. "It is equally regrettable," D.Power admits, "that the laity's role in ministering the cup or bread at the Eucharist is made to seem like a substitution for priest or deacon, whereas it is better conceived as a normal part of their presence in the assembly" (Cowan:89).

In J.Whitehead's image of church as radical mutuality, as termed in this thesis a community of equal disciples, believers come "to be recognized as gifted for ministry not by delegation from the community leader but from the Spirit, the giver of gifts" (Cowan:33-34). The role of community leader becomes in Whitehead's terms "more functional as coordinator of ministries and less cultic as the sole celebrator of the Sacrifice of the Mass"

(Cowan:34). Consequently, Whitehead determines that vocabulary changes need to accompany the mutual image, "guiding and maintaining" replace "molding and ruling"; "reverend and father" are appropriately changed to "brother and sister"; and presbyter, signifying maturity in faith replaces the more cultic title of priest" (Cowan:34).

Overall, Whitehead's leadership model is ancillary--standing alongside other ministries more in a service to others than commanding them (Cowan:34). Whitehead describes the "virtues specific to this role of servant leadership [as] the abilities to coordinate--thus the necessary skills of communication and conflict resolution --and to celebrate--thus the required grace of public presence and presiding" (Cowan:34).

Facing reality, Whitehead experiences the shift from a hierarchical vision of leadership to a more mutual, community of equal disciples as a "hesitant shuffle" (Cowan:34). The rhetoric of collegiality and shared leadership has in most cases not translated into the institutional parish life, where there still exists among the clergy a monopoly of power, a fear of losing security and a solid commitment to the status quo.[10]

Due to the decreased availability of the Eucharist, and the increased importance of scripture to both individuals and small groups, the central role of the priest as sacramental minister is waning in peoples' minds. "It is

difficult to maintain the centrality of the Eucharist when laity see that celibacy is actually considered more important" (Doohan,1989:134).

One of the main reasons for the perpetual gap between the laity and the clergy is that priests and religious operating out of the institutional model have not been trained to live and work in a lay-centered church. In the quest to "retain power and maintain control over vision, future development and financial resources", many clerics would prefer to "dry up and die rather that see others take up their vision and mission" (Doohan:35). Laity in these circumstances do not work with the clergy but under their authority and rules. There is definitely no equality or unity but a hierarchically controlled environment. Kasper remarks, "The common responsibility of all members of the church should come to expression in pastoral, diocesan and lay councils and, according to the new Canon law, by the laity's participation in synods." Participation means equal voting power, equal representation, the freedom to be a delegate in the manner allowed to clerics. To date, participation has been restricted to an observing or token position (1988:135).

Practices similar to the above will be continued as long as seminarians are being trained to work in the institutional church "governed on a pyramidal model in which the clerical manager is presumed to be the leader, even

though leadership skills are rarely included in seminary training" (Doohan:68).

Rather than a shared team vision for the parish, priests prefer to think of lay leaders as an extended arm of the clergy, or with no real authority but instead as participants in the tasks authorized by the hierarchy in the institutional model. Priests, sometimes with less education, have veto power over those with a greater variety of gifts and more qualifications. Too much emphasis is placed on "ecclesial jurisdictions and insufficient considerations of charisms" (Doohan:155). With these conditions, Doohan's appraisal is quite accurate: "the Church, with all its love, hope and mutual service, can easily become for the minister a place of hurt and abuse, with little support and little love" (1989:167).

According to Doohan, a recent exploratory survey found that lay men and women ministering in institutional parishes, diocesan offices and a wide range of Christian agencies identified "political issues, such as clericalism, sexism, problems with authorities and structures as the most critical and emotionally intense issues they have to deal with" (1989:135). All too often in church ministry, lay leaders are evaluated and dismissed if their performance conflicts with the clerics, and yet the priest's role remains unexamined.

In his address to the Renew Convocation, Archbishop

Hurley of South Africa[11] asked a thought provoking question when speaking about the Whites in the apartheid situation. "But can't you see that 5 million Whites cannot hope to go on ruling a country of 25 million Blacks? The answer is they cannot see. The irrational predominates" (1989:3). A similar question can be asked of the officials in the church--But can't you see that 8 thousand clergy cannot hope to go on ruling 110 million laity in the North American Catholic Church?[12] Hopefully the answer is collaborative leadership.

D. Power insists the ultimate criteria for the transformation of power in the church will be determined by a change in the choices of candidates for ordination. "At present the power of women and the power of the poor do not figure among possible qualifications for ordination" (Cowan:104). He reasons, it is only when the power of the underprivileged is allowed to witness in the church as "candidates for ordination to Eucharistic ministry that the true power of the ordained in the church will come to light" (Cowan:104).

Servant Leadership

As the church begins to recognize the community of equal disciples, it will as well ascertain a different style of leadership. Based on the consensus of several authors, leadership in the community of equal disciples is based on

serving others not on power over them, with the result that the whole group in a ripple effect becomes servants to one another. A servant leader is an energizer, someone who empowers and releases a potential in a follower (McGill,1980:1). This is the style of leadership enacted by Jesus in his community. In Mt.20:28 we read of Jesus' mission, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." We are called to lead through service and ransom--to release and liberate the members of the group to do likewise.

Greenleaf states the test to determine whether the administration in the church is manifesting servant-leadership are the following questions.

> Do they [the followers] while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived (Greenleaf:14)?

In fact servant-leadership converts the institution from people-using to people-building (Greenleaf:40). By offering greater creative opportunity to its people, the church ultimately "builds a society that is more just and more loving" (Greenleaf:50).

He continues, "servant-leaders are healers in the sense of making whole by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would likely attain for

themselves" (Greanleaf:227).

The aim, according to Greenleaf, is to make the individual community and the entire church "stand out in the world as exceptional because of those who work in them, or are involved in them, find, through their participation, that their gifts are recognized, enlarged and fulfilled in a way that they could not find by acting independently" (Greenleaf:238). When there is a high level of trust between the servant-leaders and the servant-followers, activities are approached with a joy that flows from serving others, and further results in an affirmation and beauty possible in the members of a community of equal disciples.

Servant-leaders are both gifted and flawed and thus with an openness to the community, not isolated in their own power and thereby hiding their weaknesses, will be more ready to draw forth the weaknesses and gifts available in the community.

Doohan gives a precise description of servant-leadership.

> Those who are attracted by a new vision of participatory leadership are people who have a good sense of task-oriented skills and interpersonal skills; they are men and women who have integrated knowledge, intimacy, peer support and team support in their ministerial commitment; they are men and women endowed with creative skills and sharing skills. These new creative and caring skills are specifically Christian and allow a person to become a servant leader; they are participatory or collegial in style (Doohan:140).

Currently, the Christian call to leadership is servant-leadership which calls for a shared responsibility by the community group or parish team. It can be summarized by the term collaboration which means working together (Doohan:34). "Collaboration is a communal expression of the priestly, prophetic and servant responsibilities of all the baptized" (Doohan:36). It is a sign of equality in faith (Doohan:36). Most importantly, "Christian collaboration is not possible between unequal parties" (Dooham,37). The collegial spirit is the underlying premise of the community of equal disciples, for it is by mutuality, serving and concern for the common good that one builds up the community. Furthermore, the church is a "community of disciples with equal dignity and rights before it is a hierarchical structure" (Doohan:38).

Servant-leaders have collaboration as the basis of the community. Collaboration in ministry means "learning to trust others deeply enough that we can communicate freely, work together pleasantly and caringly, serve each other, be demanding on each other, tap each other's talents, and pray for each other" (Doohan:44).

Ultimately, "restructuring parish leadership is a higher priority than recruiting new priests" (Bausch,1986:50). In other words, there needs to be a new style of priesthood--one that is complementary, not

autocratic, one that is based on service and enablement, not on autonomous power and imposition, one that is holy and saintly not afraid of a close relationship to Christ (Bausch:70). Actually, priests need to reposition themselves, not as the funnel of charisms but as official footwashers (Bausch:71). The priest's time needs to be spent in prayer, study, preparing homilies and collaborating with the parishioners. It is for these activities that priests should be accountable. While Bausch speaks of these activities as priestly in terms of ordained priesthood many of these tasks could by accomplished by a variety of ministers as will be considered in Chapter Three.

Bausch has developed six criteria that could be used to indicate the necessary movement from the institutional model to the community of equal disciples.

1. from power to service
2. from dictatorial to participatory
3. from closed to accountable
4. from presumed to earned
5. from privilege to access
6. from solo to collaboration (1986:90)

In these new understandings of leadership as servant, the role of the priest has the potential to change to that of a prayer-centered person; one who perceives the benefit of retraining in order to reclaim the style found in the early New Testament. Retraining will broaden the clergy's "attitude and understanding of who they have been so they

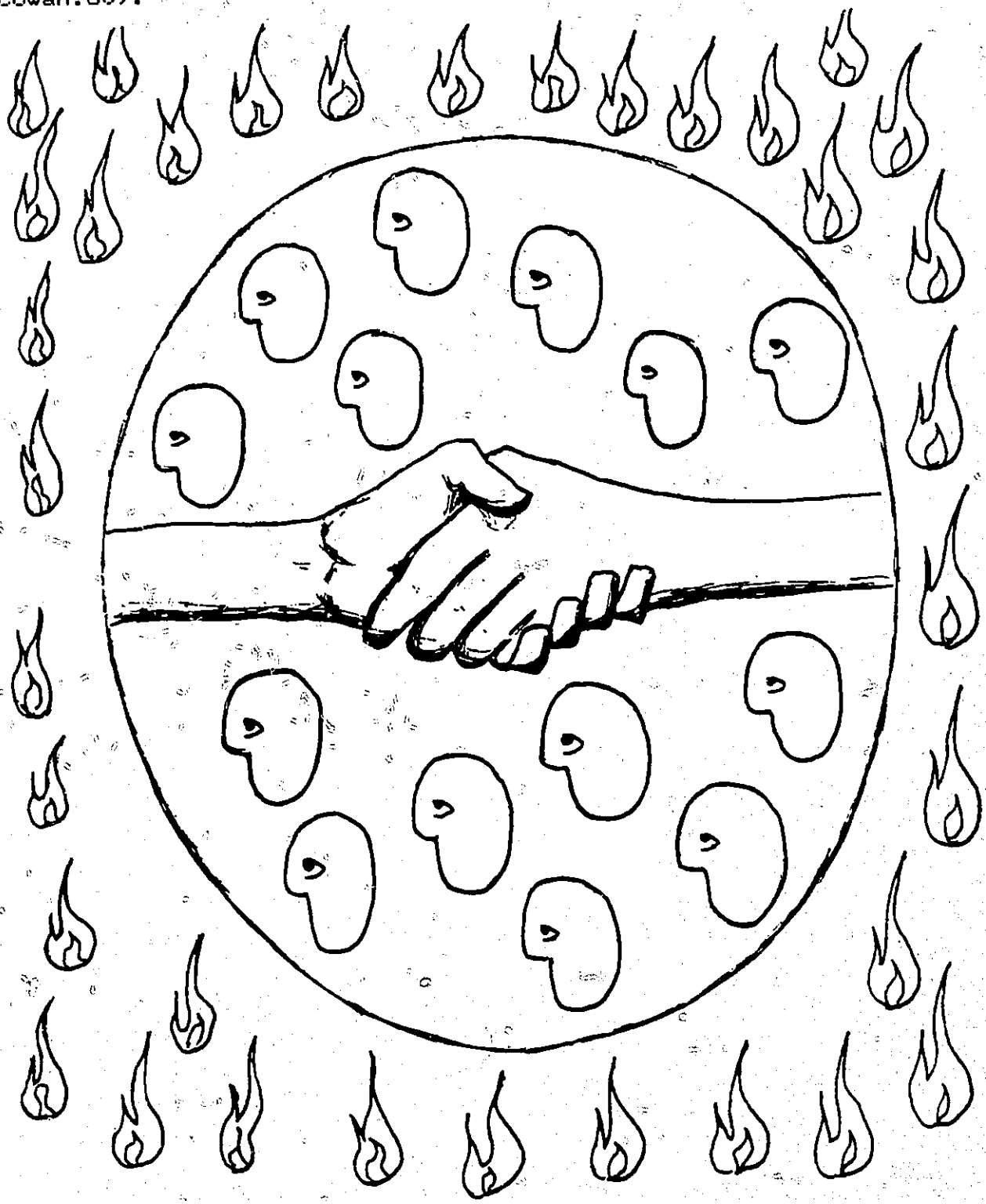
can accept the challenge of becoming who they should be."[13]

Bausch (1986:193) repeatedly proclaims that the future role as a servant-leader "in a shared and collaborative ministry of local community," which enables and frees the charisms of the people, is "positively joyous" (1986:193). He reassures the clergy that "there is a joy in not being the whole orchestra" (1986:193).

As a member of the orchestra, the priest will have a role in the community of equal disciples and not be above it. Equality of membership will allow the priest to be human and show both strengths and weaknesses, and will acknowledge laity who can lead and teach the clergy. Together, the laity and the clergy can co-share the sacramental and liturgical responsibility in a parish. They can transform the church with servant-leadership--a leadership rich in compassion. Together in collaborative ministry, they can become a partnership of co-responsibility--challenging, interacting and enjoying one another as they grow in their love of the Lord in a community of equal disciples.

With the empowerment of the individual members in a community of equal disciples, leadership will belong more to the group than to an individual, more to each member than exclusively to the clergy. As different members share their charisms and their expertise, they will as well assume the leadership for their particular ministry or mission. Even though there may be a contact person for the group, the

vision of leadership will include women and men, clergy and lay in a "shared duty and a collegial enterprise" (Cowan:80).



CHAPTER TWO NOTES

1. See Richard McBrien, *Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988),pp.7-21, for an explanation of these points in McBrien's study of "What is Ministry".

2. Ibid., See Chapter 3, "What Qualities Do Ministers Need", for an explanation of each of these categories listed.

3. Leonard Doohan, *Grass Roots Pastors* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989),p.xii. "The circular use of Canon Law means, Canon Law forbids it so it can't be done, but in some cases Canon Law already says it can't be done so it won't be done."

4. Ibid.,pp.21-23, for a list of the canons explaining the rights of the laity. This knowledge can lead to fruitful discussions and justifications of the various ministries to which the laity aspire.

5. See James Fenhagen, *Mutual Ministry* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977),Chapter 5, "Building and Sustaining Community" for a pertinent and comprehensive understanding of the details of community building as a ministry.

6. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Living Together* (San Francisco: Harper & Row,1954) as quoted in Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*.(Toronto: Griffin House, 1979),p.22.

7. William Bausch, *Traditions, Tensions, Transitions in Ministry* (Mystic,CT.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1982). Chapter 5, "Tensions", examines many of the current issues in the church, for example the decline in vocations, the women's situations, reduced Mass attendance etc.

8. See James Fenhagen, *Mutual Ministry* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977),p.73-74, for specific steps in handling conflict in community.

9. Bernard Loomer, "Two Kinds of Power", *Criterion: Journal of the University of Chicago Divinity School* 15 (Winter,1976),p.23.

10. See Leonard Doohan, *Grass Roots Pastors*, pp.11-16, for an understanding of ministry and its connection with leadership in the institutional church.

11. Denis Hurley, "Church Community Transforming Social Community", *Address to Renew Convocation* (North Carolina: June, 1989),p.3.

12. See William Bausch, *Take Heart Father* (Mystic,CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987),p.8, for a summation of statistics indicating a decline in the number of priests and the subsequent growth of the Catholic population by the year 2000.

13. See Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience* (New York: Doubleday,1985), as quoted in William Bausch, *Take Heart Father*. (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987),p.109.

CHAPTER 3

MODELS OF CHURCH AND MINISTRY IN SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES IN NORTH AMERICAN CATHOLICISM

1. MODELS OF CHURCH IN SPECIFIC SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES

Small faith communities are emerging in several different styles in North American Catholicism. Chapter Three will assess the models of church found in small faith communities as presented in the written material of Geaney, Maney, Baranowski and the RENEW program. Specifically it will focus on ministry and leadership in these communities and ascertain if a community of equal disciples does exist.

Before delving into the literature, it is necessary to capsulize the characteristics formulated in a community of equal disciples. In my understanding, a community of equal disciples translates into a small faith group of ten to twelve members who meet weekly or bi-weekly to share a common vision, common values, life's experiences and outreach endeavours. They are a group of people intent on relating the gospel to their everyday lives. Besides a strong sense of belonging which permeates a group built on trust, the community is also open-ended, willing to include additional members and subdivide if numbers warrant. Such a community also has an educational or formation element, whereby, as mature adults they are interested in

ascertaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of God and God's interrelationship with the group.

Moreover, leadership which is based on collaboration and mutual servanthood expressed in the gospel emerges from the community as one of the many charisms. Its purpose is to coordinate and encourage the multiplicity of gifts found in the group. As well, leadership is the connecting source with other aspects of parish life. Ideally, leadership could be a five year commitment, so that the initiatives set by the group can be appraised and completed, or continued with a new leader.

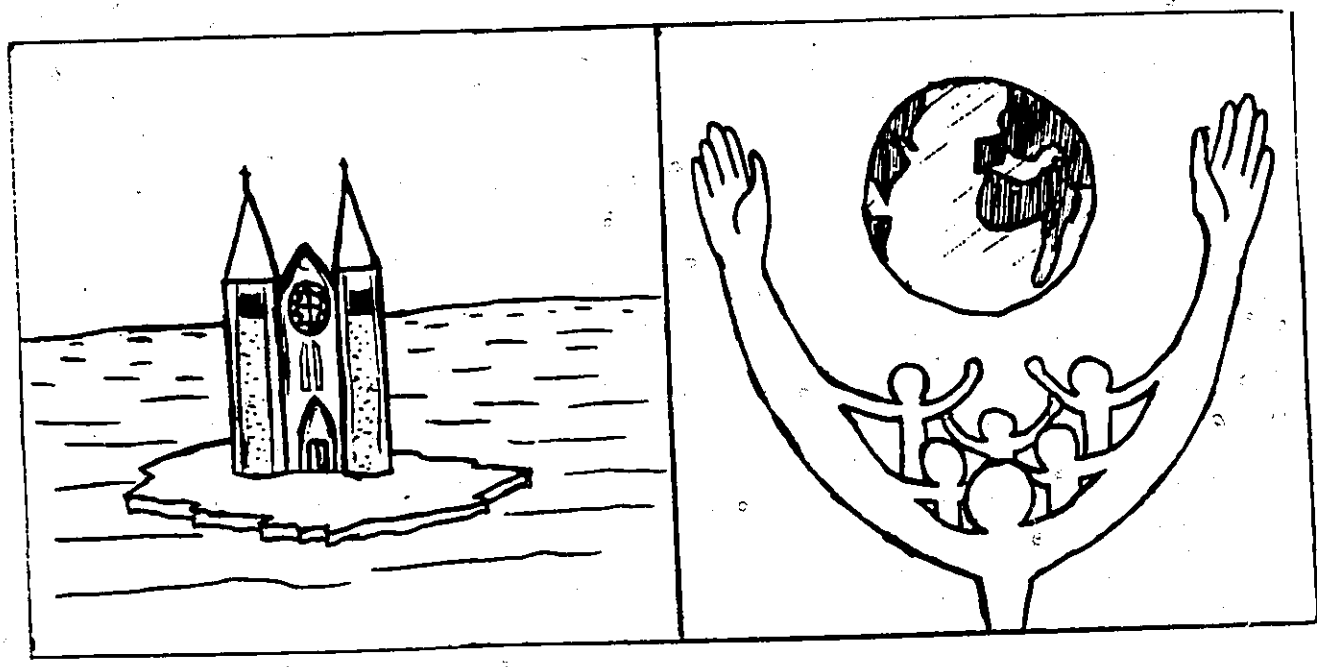
Leadership does not assume a monopoly of all the gifts. An Eucharistic minister could be in charge of regular paraliturgies whereby the bread of life is shared. Another person with a background in scripture might lead the gospel study for the group. Others with a strong interest in justice would pursue the outreach arrangements. Community building and hospitality are integral qualities and the innate responsibility of all members. In other words, those who have gifts or skills related to a particular ministry, which arises from the needs of the community, assume leadership for it. At times, the various members lead the group and other times, they follow. In brief, leadership is related to function and tends to be rotational. A necessary component of each session is a period of reflection. Its purpose is to assess the group's progress or lack of it, and

to raise conflicting issues and begin to deal with them.

Communities of equal disciples do not exist in isolation. They gather for weekly celebrations in the parish, and are linked to other groups through courses offered by the diocese for a family of parishes, through various ministries at the parish level, and through large parish functions.

Many of the ministries previously combined in the ordained priesthood may once again be shared on the basis of gifts and talents of the members of the community of equal disciples. If and when this perspective is initiated the nature and function of ordination may be altered.

The following chart suggests the transition of the traditional eccesiology to a community of equal disciples model of church:



Community, Ministries, Justice

CRITERIA	INSTITUTIONAL	C.E.D.
Structure	hierarchical, centralized around clergy	equality, decentralized, around C.E.D.
Ministry	charisms of clergy	charisms of all members
Doctrine	rites, codes, doctrines	gospel
Formation	of clergy	of clergy & laity
Sacraments & Liturgy	clergy run	clergy & laity
Laity's Role	passive, dependent	active, mutuality
Priority	maintain status quo	support C.E.D.
Gatherings	large, weekly impersonal	large, weekly, & small C.E.D.
Outreach	non-existent, individualistic	organized by C.E.D.

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from: sexist to non-sexist

clericalized to declericalized

paternalistic to egalitarian

institutional to communitarian

In certain circumstances, the parish may be organized with lay leaders or parish administrators who are voting members of the pastoral deanery. Ordination is not an absolute requirement for the parish to function successfully. In essence, the distinction of roles between the clergy and laity will be blurred and the notion of clergy transformed. It appears that many lay people will necessarily be employed part-time or full time by the parish to coordinate the various ministries.

At first, the transitional phase and process from an institutional parish to a community of equal disciples may be staggered and experimental. A more thorough and economical approach consists of a family of parishes beginning the program and the accompanying formation together. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the important point is to begin, if the Roman Catholic Church hopes to retain its influence in North America. Let us now turn to the literature to examine some initial ventures.

Geaney

In his book *Quest for Community*, Dennis Geaney describes three specific small base communities: the Spirit of Peace (a church with many ministries without the overhead expenses of owning its own building), St. Catherine-St. Lucy (coordinated by two sisters), and Our Lady of Guadalupe

(made up of half neighbourhood groups and half friends and relatives groups). Each of these groups began from a different premise but all have established themselves according to the house church model of the early church. Similar to the early Christians, the groups meet weekly or bi-weekly in homes to study and reflect on scripture, pray, share faith at a personal level, enjoy refreshments, build relationships, socialize and over time develop an outreach dimension. The structure of these parishes is a network of small base communities. Fundamental to each group is "a basic desire to be a part of a smaller unit they can trust and where they can experience their faith at a base level" (Geaney:105).

"While each community makes decisions about the content of its meetings, there is an overarching structure for all communities" (Geaney:99) which is approved by the parish. Like a family, each group has its own name, its own covenant describing the commitment required, and develops a life and spirit of its own (Geaney:102). "Bible readings, song, quiet time and prayers of petition are part of all meetings" (Geaney:99). As well, a scripturally based book is "recommended annually as discussion material for all communities" (Geaney:99). "At the end of each year, the covenant is reviewed and discussed before it is renewed" (Geaney:99).

Although the groups meet independently with trained lay

leaders, they are very much affiliated with the parish structure for the large gathering of all the groups. They assemble for weekly liturgies and for bible studies sponsored by the local church. "When one joins the parish, there is an invitation, if not an expectation to join a small community" (Geaney:100).

Geaney captures a sense of joy and enthusiasm as he relates the bonding exhibited between the priest and the laity. There is an inevitable change in the role of the pastor. As one priest remarks: "My goal is to help people develop skills, to feel responsible and assume leadership roles in the parish" (Geaney:83). Another priest asserts, "I do not see myself as a priest" (Geaney:78). More important than his ordination is his baptism which gives him equality with every member of the parish. Such a "vision makes collaborative ministry possible by striking at the roots of clericalism" (Geaney:79). A further priest in Geaney's study perceives his authority to be vested in him by the parishioners, the neighbourhood, as well as the bishop (Geaney:79).

In the Spirit of Peace parish, religious education and sacramental preparation are done within the small groups (Geaney:99). A team member meets with the parents who do the "majority of the preparation in a group and volunteer their homes" (Geaney:100). Even though the parents, who may also be leaders, catechize the children, they are not allowed to

administer the sacraments. This is an example of the institutional model prevailing over the community of equal disciples.

Geaney envisions the preparation of lay men and women for leadership in a parish as both a parish and a diocesan responsibility (Geaney:108). He maintains that all theology schools should open "their enrollment to lay people on an equal footing with those preparing for ordination" (Geaney:108).

What keeps the people faithful to the base communities? Geaney proposes a variety of answers. For some it is outreach, "that as a community goes beyond itself in service to others the group becomes a much stronger community" (Geaney:100). Their ministry is as varied as "building an emergency shelter, remodeling a home to be used for battered women, to helping refugee families in Thailand" (Geaney:100).

Geaney observes, "the glue that holds these small groups together, besides the structured meetings, liturgies, sacramental preparations and outreach projects, are the holiday potlucks, parish soup suppers and relaxed get-togethers among the families in the summer" (Geaney:101). In other words, it is the parties and phone calls, the scripture and faith commitment that give strength to each person and create a bonding (Geaney:103).

In reality, Geaney's small faith groups have most of

the elements of a community of equal disciples of the early church, that is, prayer, opportunities to share one's story in relation to the gospel, and mission endeavours both for its members and to the outside world.

Maney

Another approach is Thomas Maney's "Parish Neighbourhood Renewal Ministry", which begins with a presentation to the parish council given by a outside team of experts. With an affirmative response to the presentation, the whole parish is enrolled in the prayer preparation. This is a theme prayer to be invoked daily for the success of the renewal (Maney:29). Presentations are then given at Sunday liturgies to invite parishioners "to volunteer to work in the renewal as home visitors or to offer their homes as host homes for a five day neighbourhood mission" (Maney:29).

Maney reflects that people look forward to the home visit by other parishioners. "Just the fact that someone comes and announces the Good News of the gospel" (Maney:35) and prays a blessing on their family, shows that someone cares for them. While people are actually making the home visits, there is a back up team praying for their success.

After an agreed upon time and date has been established, the Core Team of consultants begins the five

week neighbourhood mission. "The thrust of the mission is basic evangelization that brings each person into contact with Jesus and his word" (Maney:43). Neighbourhood missions are positive faith experiences in a parish and attain two significant goals--personal conversion and formation of community (Maney:44-45). The role of the team is "to help form and then leave a community empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue sharing Christian life" (Maney:48).

At the end of the mission, servant leaders are chosen by the community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Maney stresses that the term servant leader is like the cross, a contradiction of servant and leader (Maney:46). However, Maney insists (in the traditional patriarchal, model of church) that two men be chosen first to ensure the involvement of men in the process. This procedure is definitely a discrimination against women.

After the servant leaders are trained and are ready to commit themselves for one year, the faith sharing community is ready to begin in the neighbourhood. Every group meets weekly and allots time for group prayer, petitions, scripture and reflection, and the sharing of daily joys and problems. They also enjoy celebrating "marriage anniversaries, birthdays, liturgical feasts and national holidays" together (Maney:49).

Since the inception of the Neighbourhood Church Community, Maney elicits a changed role for the pastor.

During the monthly meeting with the priest, the servant-leaders chair the meeting on a rotating basis and conduct the session similar to the format of the mission gatherings. However, a portion of the meeting is "often used for teachings on leadership skills, spiritual growth and resource services for the neighbourhood church" (Maney:51). The priest "is an active participant in the meeting, but his greatest gain comes from listening and observing" (Maney:50)

Because the parish makes a serious commitment to support the Neighbourhood Church Community it is up to the parish members to assume the responsibility for it. Maney explains: the "renewal program is not designed to dump a whole new work load on the pastor or parish team. In reality, it should make their work easier as new leaders emerge within the parish" (Maney:50). This process offers a "new apostolic network" (Maney:50) through which the laity and the priest can communicate. Maney cautions that to be effective the servant leaders should meet monthly with the pastor to "permit a flow of information among the groups themselves and between them and the pastor" (Maney:50). There are two vital dimensions to the monthly meetings: first the mutual sharing and affirmation of group leaders among themselves and secondly the affirmation of the leaders by the priest and a presentation of the global picture in the parish (Maney:51).

Maney insists that the pastor's role shifts from

planning, guiding and directing the program to working with and supporting the Neighbourhood Church Communities. The priest's principal role becomes that of spiritual leadership; helping his parishioners to be open to the spirit and the presence of God in their lives (Maney:51). "As the laity fulfill their true vocation of apostleship and begin to share many priestly day-to-day tasks, pastors will become freer to recognize and call forth the gifts from an ever-growing number of the laity" (Maney:51). Besides calling priests to a deeper spirituality, Maney has proof that the Parish Neighbourhood Renewal Ministry can actually revitalize the total life of a priest.[1]

An additional aspect is the fact that the leaders are also a faith community which meets monthly with the pastor. At this meeting, which is chaired by a lay person, the priest assumes a non-directive role. Moreover, the meeting is led by alternating servant leaders. At these sessions, the priest is a part of the lay community and shares faith and life experiences with the group. This feature is a significant inroad in the breakdown of clericalism and the building of a joint venture of the laity and clergy sharing in the leadership and decision-making of the parish.

One factor relevant to collaborative ministry and to a community of equal disciples is the principle of subsidiarity which was approved by the Second Vatican Council (Maney:58). "This policy simply means that actions

should be done and decisions should be make by the lowest competent authority; higher authority is not to usurp the decision-making competency of lower authority" (Maney:58). Making the transition from the institutional model to the community of equal disciples is takes considerable time in which a whole different mindset develops. Just the fact that Maney continues to quote statements in which the terminology "higher and lower authority" are used suggests a continuance of hierarchical thinking. In the traditional model of church, the priest is the ultimate decision maker for the parish and bypasses the church of the faithful. Maney states, "Since the Neighbourhood Church Community is truly church, pastors must make an effort to return decision-making to it" (1984:58), for the ministries of the church flow from the small group.

There are many tangible and visible results of the establishment of Neighbourhood Community Churches. Maney concludes that lay leadership gives new ideas and a new boost to the parish spirit. Staff members exhibit "increased freedom and joy in their work" (Maney:70) and are "challenged to continue growing with the people" (Maney:71). Lay people experience "more happiness, peace, faith, openness and they pray spontaneously" (Maney:71). "Loneliness leaves the renewed person" (Maney:71) as he/she senses God's presence in the Neighbourhood Church Community. Families are reaffirmed by other families and a sense of

friendliness and responsibility permeates the environment. Members of the entire parish are enriched (Maney:71).

Although each small community will have an outreach towards its neighbours, Maney stresses that "its first love and service should be toward its own members" (Maney:59). He continues. "Unless there is a deep sense of love and concern among the participants, a group will not be a Christian sign for those outside itself" (Maney:59). As a group matures in spirituality and unity, its ability to reach out in service to others grows.

The community is virtually empowered by the Spirit and thus it is able to "respond to those who are hurting: the poor, the lonely, the sick, the aged, the oppressed or weak" (Maney:62). Moreover, in the conversion experience the community discovers "how to become effective in relieving needs and in facing social issues" (Maney:63). Christian service reflects one's relationship with God and people. It emerges from the discerned needs of the small community. As each group has a personality of its own, its service will reflect its own individuality. Maney states: "The community arrives at its identity as deep prayer, Bible sharing and personal sharing build up the levels of trust and love among its members"... "Only then will the experience of the first communities of the Acts of the Apostles be repeated today" (Maney:59).

Maney's Neighbourhood Churches are well on the way to

being a community of equal disciples. The relationship between the clergy and the laity has made great strides. Further collaboration at liturgies would be a significant step toward equality. The major drawback is in its selection of lay leaders which is not based on competence and leadership ability but on gender. Another concern is that Maney takes great pains to stress that the laity are to assist the pastor with various ministries so the priest can pursue the spiritual leadership dimension of his role. Even though the laity are seen as group leaders, they are not officially recognized as spiritual leaders, which in Maney's program, remains the prerogative of the clergy.

RENEW

Currently there are a number of programs being developed to facilitate the initiation of small group structures. RENEW is one such process that is dedicated to strengthening faith and commitment among practicing Catholics. It was co-founded by Monsignor Tom Kleissler and Monsignor Tom Ivory (Geaney:62) in Newark, N.J. in 1978 and has spread to many dioceses in the U.S. and Canada.

RENEW is a parish based experience which consists of five, six-week sessions. These gatherings called seasons, are centered on the "Lord's Call, Our Response, Empowerment by the Spirit, Discipleship and Evangelization."[2] Each theme

has specific outlines and questions to facilitate discussion.

In any parish there are four forms of involvement which encompass the entire program. The first is the Sunday liturgy and the Scriptures. The second involves take-home materials, which are often included in the Sunday bulletin, dealing with the particular RENEW theme of the week. The third comes from large-group activities, such as Bible vigils or ecumenical services. Last and most dramatic is small group activities, in which participants are able, in a prayerful way, to relate the Scriptures to their own lives.[3]

The entire program lasts two-and-a-half years and is conducted during Advent and Lent successively throughout that period. Each meeting involves ten to twelve people and is approximately two hours in length. The purpose of the group is to reflect together on what it means to be a follower of Christ as an individual, and in the context of family, parish, neighbourhood and world.

RENEW is considered a preliminary process to enliven a parish before small faith communities are considered. It is a revitalizing venture that leaves the parishioners with a hunger for more. RENEW is the leaven upon which small faith communities are built. Once a parish is revitalized, it is eager to share its enthusiasm with others and thus evangelization which is the fifth theme is its ultimate goal--to welcome back those who have left the church and to

invite others to "Come and See" what the revitalized parish has to offer.

In relationship to the institutional church, the RENEW program does not automatically evolve into a community of equal disciples because it does not have a continuity factor after the program is complete. Archbishop Weakland indicates that RENEW used the same basic small group lay structure as the Latin American *communidades de base*. He expresses that because of RENEW a new type of leadership has emerged among the laity. This is a leadership more interested in the spiritual than in the financial and organizational aspects of parish life, and more concerned about the connection between the gospel and social action (Weakland,1989:13).

Baranowski

Another leading promoter of small communities in the local parish is Arthur Baranowski. In his book *Creating Small Faith Communities*, Baranowski devises a plan for restructuring the parish and renewing Catholic life. He believes that "faith and love are experiences. The more these experiences are shared, and this can happen only in a small group, the more people notice God and God's call to be church for one another" (Baranowski,1988:4). Restructuring the church into smaller churches, into basic faith communities, is necessary, in Baranowski's view, to create a

better church. He is firm in his description that the groups are not strictly "prayer groups, not Scripture study groups, not another program of any kind--but permanent or semi-permanent small faith communities" (Baranowski:6). He attests that the groups include all these features in addition to friendship and support along life's journey.

According to Baranowski, the first step in becoming better at church is to discern God's personal daily call in one's life. "Every baptized person has the right to tell his or her faith story; to get a hearing in the faith community" (Baranowski:9) and then to relate the personal story to Scripture, the sacraments and tradition of the church. This process takes about two years (Baranowski:16).

In Baranowski's program, the leaders are called pastoral facilitators, whose purpose is to link the small groups to the larger church. He recommends the selection of a couple as pastoral facilitators if the group is made up mostly of couples. They assume the leadership in this position for several years. Baranowski stresses that the pastoral facilitator is "not the expert, not the problem-solver, not the counselor, not the teacher" (Baranowski:53). The term "facilitate means to bring out the best already present in people through a process of interaction" (Baranowski:53). Facilitators encourage the members to contribute to the group and take responsibility for other members.

The word pastoral refers to "tying this small church to the larger church" (Baranowski:53). Even though various members may rotate in leading the session, only one person or couple is the community's pastoral link to the parish (Baranowski:54). Their role is to "enable each person to bring his or her gifts to the entire group; help people in the church listen to each other; keep the vision of church before the members; connect this level of church to other levels of church" (Baranowski:54).

Baranowski suggests that another way of connecting the groups is through parish religious formation programs for all ages to provide the larger experience of church, which complements the small church experience (Baranowski:16).

Since the leaders are "pastoring the church with the pastor" (Baranowski:55), the "training and ongoing formation of the pastoral facilitators becomes the top priority of the parish and staff" (Baranowski:55).

After the initial training program,* the ongoing support and formation from the parish consists in monthly meetings and annual retreats. In addition, a parish staff member needs to be readily "available for one-on-one advice giving" (Baranowski:55). Consequently, the pastoral facilitators belong to two small faith communities, the one they were trained with, which meets monthly with a staff member, and their own community that they lead (Baranowski:61).

Following the traditional model of church, where the hierarchy makes all important decisions, Baranowski insists on the parish team selecting the pastoral facilitators, because he states that the staff must be able to work with them. Even though the premise is solid that the "church deserves good pastoral facilitators" (Baranowski:59), controlling the selection of leaders does not promote nor recognize the ability of the adults in the parish to chose their own leaders. It does not encourage a community of equal disciples who are able to make their own decisions and tends to allow the selection of only those who are the priest's favourites, those who will persistently defend the present structures and practices and not challenge the system. Perhaps an alternative built into the process would be a system whereby the initial leaders are chosen by the parish team and subsequent leaders chosen from among the group members.

After the groups have been together for several years and have experienced a variety of programs[5], Baranowski advises that the group continue to meet together but it may be ready to split during the meeting from a group of eight to twelve members to three or four, in order to share faith at an even deeper level.

Ultimately, the most important work of the staff is to gather the people so they can be church for one another. An interesting development occurs: instead of depending on the

staff or the priest to handle everything, the people of the base church actually minister to each other (Baranowski:20).

"The larger parish community and its pastoral leaders become more important--not less important--once this pastoral plan is set in motion" (Baranowski:16). Each parish activity and ministry is thereby assessed by the staff in the light of the goal of small churches within the larger parish. As well, it is essential for the staff to epitomize the basic experience of church by regularly sharing faith and praying together (Baranowski:38).

Moreover, the small faith communities become a great source of strength for the priests and staff of the parish. Restructuring allows both the laity and the parish staff reciprocally to give and receive strength and support from one another (Baranowski:57). Baranowski's plan for developing small faith communities is a three-phase process.

> Phase One: A Beginning Experience
> The important requirement for the initial experience, whether it follows RENEW, Genesis II or other such programs, is that the participants gather weekly. "The goal is to foster a sense of belonging to the group and to help members develop these skills: listening to others, paying attention to one's own experience and priorities, and self-affirmation" (Baranowski:24).
>
> Phase Two: Praying Alone and Together
> In this stage the focus is on prayer. Specific prayer manuals are available. The goal is to "bring people together every two weeks to practice the art of listening and responding to God's moment-to-moment revelation in ourselves, others and the world" (Baranowski:25).

> Phase Three: Being Church for the Long Haul
> Meeting every two weeks, the group "breaks open the Sunday Scriptures with the help of specially-prepared focus questions. The goal is to support the small church for the long haul" (Baranowski:25). It is in this phase that the small faith community can be identified as base church.

From this program a new image of church evolves, "ordinary Catholic people can become the church rather than go to church" (Baranowski:viii).

Summary

In summation, responses from those who have experienced the above four programs were expressed with great enthusiasm and praise both from the individual and the group as a whole. A very real need is beginning to be met in the parish--the opportunity to share faith and life in small groups. Hearing the description of the experience in glowing terms reaffirms the concept of small faith communities and gives hope to the building of a community of equal disciples.

Geaney, Maney, Baranowski and the RENEW program write about experiences of a church in transition from the institutional model to a community of equal disciples. Their programs indicate a significant development in the areas of servant leadership, outreach programs, communal prayer,

scripture reading, and a recognition of a plurality of charisms in the people. On the other hand, improvement can still be made between the two models in the elements of decision-making, equality, formation and education, and liturgical leadership.

2. MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP IN SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES

Collaborative Ministry

Through a multitude of examples and quotations from life experiences found in the RENEW program and in the works of Geaney, Maney, Baranowski and Bausch, who are the current visionaries in the development of base communities in North American Catholicism, we may conclude that ministry in small faith communities is rooted in collaboration and a sense of belonging. Hence, "The belief that every baptized person is gifted and called to ministry is the basis for collaboration" (Sofield,Juliano,1987:11). Although collaboration has been mentioned by Doohan in an earlier context, its understanding mandates reiteration and expansion, as it is a fundamental characteristic of a community of equal disciples. Collaboration can only be realized when people have a profound sense that they are the church.

In 1985 the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops affirmed

this premise and exhorted all the faithful to "participation and co-responsibility at all levels".[7] "Implementation of collaborative ministry calls for efforts to enable all Christians to respond to their baptismal call and engage in ministry with others in the Christian community" (Sofield,Juliano:16). It is no longer feasible to address by oneself the world's critical issues such as hunger, poverty and injustice. To make inroads into such problems will require the combined efforts of a plurality of men and women, lay and clergy.

Commitment to collaborative ministry demands time and financial support. Except for the few outstanding parishes mentioned earlier, to date, little if any systematic attention has been given to collaborative ministry by parish leaders. Actually, it is because they have been taught to work independently themselves and find a "more mutual and shared approach to ministry difficult" (Sofield,Juliano:21). Formation programs for parish teams and for parishioners, as well as for seminarians and members of religious communities, are necessary to promote a collaborative spirit in a parish.[8]

When establishing a vision statement dealing with collaboration, it is important that those potentially affected are involved from the beginning. First of all, collaboration assumes an opportunity for people to discern, share and clarify their gifts before they are to be used in

ministry.[9]

If formal training in dealing with groups is lacking, it should become a priority before the selected leaders take over the operation of the small faith communities. In Sofield and Juliano's opinion, "the ability to work effectively with groups is the most important of all the skills required for collaborative ministry" (Sofield,Juliano:83).

Belonging

Besides collaboration, the other vital characteristic of the community of equal disciples is a sense of belonging. Due to the size of today's parishes, and the economy of time, it is impossible for the parish team to establish and maintain a sense of belonging for all church members. "Only participation in a small group can bring it about successfully"[10].

Belonging is a fundamental attitude that was repeatedly reinforced by Geaney, Maney, Baranowski and the RENEW program. It is a core component that enables members to feel committed, responsible and even indispensalbe in their community. The *Quebec Parish Document* stresses particular features of belonging.

1. Members sees themselves as being part of the

> group; they identify with it, recognize themselves as part of it, and are proud of it.
>
> 2. They accept the values of the group, receive motivation from it, draw inspiration, behaviour and preferences from it.
>
> 3. They take part in its activities.
>
> 4. They experience interpersonal relations with at least some of members of the group.
>
> 5. The group welcomes, understands and inspires them (QPD,1987:10).

When the concept of belonging is applied to parishes structured on the institutional model, anonymity results. People do not feel that they belong, are not recognized by the parish team, have no voice in the running of the parish, do not know other parishioners to any real depth, and consequently infrequently attend the services.

Parishes based on a communitarian principle, as described by Geaney, Maney, Baranowski and the RENEW program, seem to be at a honeymoon stage of faith development. Both the laity and the parish team interpret their involvement, their belonging in positive, superlative terms. There must be a contrast in one's faith journey when there is suddenly acceptance, affirmation and the opportunity to communicate openly with other Catholics.

This broader vision of spirituality "allows for the reality that God touches people's lives in strictly different ways" (Sofield,Juliano:67). The group needs to acknowledge and be sensitive to the mysterious workings of

the Spirit. "Many Christians do indeed judge their spirituality by frequency of attendance at Mass. (Sofield,Juliano:67). These authors caution that "establishing Mass attendance as the sole criterion for spirituality belittles the spiritual life of many persons for whom daily or frequent Mass is not possible" (Sofield,Juliano,67). Rather, "developing greater collaboration in ministry calls for a spirituality that does not over emphasize any one particular means, such as liturgy, to the exclusion of all others" (Sofield,Juliano,67). Doohan further develops this idea, when he states, "Much of the present theology is not representative of lay experience, but through quality lay leadership we see a self-determination and self-direction of laity in spriituality, worship, ethics, and professional life" (1988:xiii).

In essence, the goal is to be a community of equal disciples which means growing in faith and service as individuals and as a whole group. In the community, both challenge and comfort will be found. The challenge is to live out the gospel values and the comfort shared through intimate relationships.

Empowerment

In a parish structured on a community of equal

disciples, ministry is shared by both the clergy and the laity with an inevitable change in the role of the pastor. Karen Lebacqz, an ethicist, makes a significant contribution to the understanding of structures. She says that the first obligation of the professional is to "empower the client, enhance autonomy and close the power gap (Lebacqz.1985:132). Bausch echoes these statements when he writes,

> If as a leader I do not funnel the Spirit, then I can share in evoking it. If I do not invent or confect the sacraments, I can mutually and cooperatively celebrate them with the people of God. If I do not have all power, I can recognize it where it exists in others (Mt.9:39). If I am not sole practitioner of all ecclesiastical matters whatsoever, I can be open to shared and collaborative ministry. If I am not the power broker, I can be the servant broker (Bausch,1986:69-70)

Bausch challenges the traditional position when he says, "We have to remember that the charism of priestly leadership is one of them, not all of them" (Bausch:71). The laity and the clergy are to assimilate complementary roles not competitive ones (Bausch:71). Rather, we have to "start out precisely building on the gospel principles of dialogue, collegiality and collaboration to be true pastors" (Bausch:88).Of course a more intrinsic issue may also be raised. Certainly we may ask what roles clergy and laity may fill in a community of equal disciples. Yet, the more fundamental question is whether a discerning of needs and

tasks, and a fostering of ministries to respond to these, may not supercede and make irrelevant the very notion of clergy and laity as they now exist.

Lebacqz cautions the church to be honest in its intent of enablement. She writes, "Enablement can suggest something the professional does to (or gives to) the client" (Lebacqz,1985:131). She warns that "one must be careful not to subsume a paternalistic approach of beneficence under the label of empowerment or enablement" (Lebacqz:131). She makes a significant point when she asserts,

> True liberation suggests a model that asks not, How can I help this person? but, How will liberation happen here? How can I be a catalyst in the process? This may seem a subtle shift, but it can have serious ramifications.

Bausch proposes another perspective, "If you accept the phrase people of God with all of its implications, then the sole, monarchical, unilateral pastor is not only passe, but un-Christian as well" (Bausch:88). To change this philosophy, re-education of the clergy is needed. Bausch strongly declares, "this re-education is not just to learn collaboration, but to truly become very professional ourselves with a strong sense of our identity, competence and abilities" (Bausch:172). Pursuing this attitude will lead to a "new way of seeing, a new way of being church" (Bausch:181).

In a comparison between the traditional model of church and the community of disciples, Bausch confirms it was easier in the old days to "bark out orders on Sunday and go to bed on Monday till the next weekend". However in the "current and future style of leadership, attention to the parish community's charisms requires much more listening and mutual respect, much more interaction and much more time" (Bausch:194). Attempting to reassure the priests, Bausch points out there are great compensations--a chance to be humanized, and a chance for laughter and forgiveness (Bausch:195). Bausch also suggests that a priest needs to be freed from many extraneous duties in order to have more time for prayer, study and homily preparation (Bausch:77).

In a survey[11] on the "Role of the Pastor", people "first saw the pastor as a person of prayer and study, one whose spirituality was real and one who conveyed that attitude to the people. Scripture was an important part of their lives, with a great concern to preach God's word in an effective way" (Bausch:123). Thereby, Bausch concludes "priestly spirituality stands out as the best mark of the priest, his most effective characteristic, above all others" (Bausch,124). One may ask, however, whether the spirituality of a priest, which has a monastic, male and celibate orientation, is appropriate for people who are chiefly married couples or single people involved in non-ecclesial occupations? Shouldn't the spirituality of the laity be

developed so they may minister to one another?

Thus we can see a new role both for the laity and the clergy in a community of equal disciples. The community has its fundamental source in ministry of the word which will become a powerful factor in their lives. As a small, loving, caring church community, it may be the only church that some members choose to attend. Maney, Geaney, Baranowski, Bausch and the RENEW program all applaud an institutional model that is willing to adjust, to remove its barriers and be the support of a community of equal disciples.

Nevertheless, ministry of the Word needs to be fed by the ministry of the Eucharist. Will the small church continue to be devoid of the Eucharist? Will the members of the small church always have to attend the large church to receive the bread of life, or will the facilitators be distributors of both the word and the bread to their community? Will the priest's role continue to evolve so that the position is one of spiritual advisor and not simply sacramental convenor? Inevitably, the very nature and function of ordination is questioned. If the tasks associated with it can be readily accomplished by mature, informed adult members of the church, should ordination as we know it be abolished? As it is, ordination in its current expression, appears to be the bastion that preserves the hierarchical, clerical, paternal, sexist structure of the institutional church. The answer to this last question,

which will hopefully entertain a variety of solutions, will be of utmost importance in the future.

3. COMMUNITY OF EQUAL DISCIPLES AS CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

There are two fundamental paradigms juxtaposed in the church today: 1)People are seeking a faith-filled community where they can participate in the decision-making, be exposed to mature faith materials, and become involved in mission or outreach in order to generate a renewed world; 2) such small faith communities must be institutionalized if they are to last.

Doohan intimates that "the future of our universal church life depends on the vision and vitality of our local churches" (Doohan.1989:104). Since many of the local churches in North America are seeking a community of equal disciples, Doohan urges them to "organize themselves in order to avoid fragmentation of their common hope" (Doohan:76).

One can conclude from the research of various authors that the institutional church needs renewal to continue to appeal to its members. In my opinion, the community of equal disciples is such a vehicle to give new life to an outdated structure. In so doing, the community of equal disciples must guard against being a sect or ghettoized in stance. While both communal and institutional elements are a

necessary complement to each other and are required for the survival of the church, the institutional model as hierarchical, clerical, etc., is the opposite of what is required. Geaney states that the "Jesus story cannot live outside of a community" (Geaney:131). Yet, without a mechanism to propagate the story, its future is nebulous.

An integration of the two elements demonstrates,

> how we can reconnect the sacramental signs to life on the street, in the home, and at work; how we can close the gap between the church ritual and the earthiness of life; how we can reshape parish life to sense that we are celebrating the presence of the risen Christ in our midst (Geaney:135).

Therefore, a transformation is necessary: from heavily institutionalized parishes to vibrant communities, from "pyramid structures to lay-centered with both women and men holding leadership roles, from worship centered to life centered" (Geaney:137).

According to Alfred Hennelly, a researcher of grassroots communties in Latin America and the United States, there is an obvious dissatisfaction with denominational traditions and structures and a search for a deeper commitment to Christ and for new forms of social action which evolve from the needs of the group (Hug,1983:152). Christians today "share a desire for something new" (Hug:152). Hennelly explains that the community draws on "the resources of the comprehensive

Christian tradition and is often at odds with particular elements of it" (Huq:152). He continues "they are not inclined to the scholarly or antiquarian revival of earlier days of ecclesial life, but they do seek inspiration and guidance from the diverse representations of the early church in the New Testament" (Huq:152) Ultimately, they seek equality and unity, a diversity of gifts, leadership capable of resolving conflict, a distinctiveness from the world, and an evangelical mission to the world (Huq:152).

By being in a democratic and basically egalitarian society, Hennelly ascertains that there is no "single pattern or ideal community [but a] plurality of models" (Huq:156) to reflect the mosaic of the culture. Facing continual rootlessness, and growing alienation, people feel an intense need to fashion satisfying forms of community, symbols, and images that endorse them (Huq:158-159).

Moreover, the major values sought by the group are images supportive of a community of equal disciples model of church. Hennelly lists them as

> participation, equality, accountability, mutuality, integrity, stewardship, sharing of scarce resources, concern for the poor, recognition of the human dignity of all, non-violence, openness, tolerance and a sense of community among low-income groups. Prominent among the disvalues...are competition, domination and centralization (Huq:164).

Vividly expressed by the groups are a "distrust of

centralized power and the desire for greater accountability [coexisting with the desire] to extend values of mutual respect, participation and openness and generosity which are effective and vibrant in the lives of the groups into the larger society" (Huq:166).

How does a Christian community arrive at this level of maturity? Blattner expresses that the "heart of being a Christian is a relationship with Jesus Christ" (Blattner:51). In the early church such a relationahip was radical and today the "church of the West includes large numbers of people...who are weakly committed" (Blattner:53).

Communities of equal disciples have the potential to lead their members towards a mature relationship with Christ and one another. In Boff's experience, "it is a new original way of living Chistian faith, of organizing the community around the Word, around the sacraments (when possible) and around new ministries exercised by lay people, both men and women" (Boff,1985:9). Boff contends that "not only are the official sacraments celebrated but the sacramental dimension of all life is cause for celebration because the community sees God's grace impregnating the concrete events of its life together" (Boff:130). There is even an extension of the official liturgy. Boff explains, "Liturgical creativity is also given its place in the community," and while the "people appreciate the canonical liturgy... they also create their own...organizing great celebrations" (Boff:130).

Furthermore, the image of a community of equal disciples inverts the schema of church. It is this feature of the model that will cause the greatest tension and resistance. In this model, everything revolves around the workings of the spirit in the people. "The church is not being thought of from the top down, but from the bottom up" (Boff,1986:15). As Lebacqz puts it, "professional power is meant to be a power for rather that a power over" (Lebacqz:146).

In Boff's opinion "the services and offices come after the community" (Boff,1985:133). There is an interrelation and communitarian mood which is flexible in "that services conform to needs as they arise" (Boff:153).

Rahner believes the church has the potential to answer needs of non-members. One of the visions encompassed in the folly of the cross is to serve those who attach no importance to it (1974:63). Communities of equal disciples have this unselfish opportunity in their outreach ministries. As Fiorenza elicits, "self-sacrificing service is central to Christian identity and community" (Gardiner,1988:84). This service "should be understood as equality from below in solidarity with all those who struggle for survival, self-love and justice" (Gardiner:84).

Moreover, for the community of equal disciples even to exist, the institutional model must undergo a "positive decentralization [that is, it must recognize that] an

intrasystemic liberation is possible" (Boff,1985:134) and necessary. With a paradigm shift, the clergy and the laity are liberated; the former no longer locked into a position of authority and ownership of the ritual, and the latter no longer locked out of spiritual leadership and decision-making.

This new praxis promotes a common formation of both the institutional and the communitarian people which will eventually evoke a change both of attitudes and actions (Boff,1985:136). Rahner elaborates that "the church of the future must grow in its reality quite differently from the past, from below, from groups of those who have come to believe as a result of their own free personal decision" (1974:57). Thereby, "office will exist in a church growing from below" (Rahner:57) with both leadership and ministry emerging from the group. For Rahner, such a feeling of solidarity is a common fidelity to the spirit of Christ and his message, translated into the expression of church of the twenty-first century. It reflects a common desire for community and equality.

In truth, it is the mission of Christ himself "that binds together those who are united among themselves, as equal, as having been sanctified, and as sharing in community with one another the living experience of the love of Christ" (Rahner,1973:26). Rahner expresses the view that "In the community the unity between love of God and of

neighbour will be experienced in quite a new way" (Rahner:26). He advises, "The community of the new church must be a community of love, and love is extremely practical" (Rahner:26). Haughey captures this idea as humanity in touch with humanity, which in turn is surrendered to God (1986:85).

Boff explains that "the principle of the structure of the church is not the institution or the hierarchy but rather the charism [of faith] that is at the root of all" (1985:159). There is not a group of rulers and those ruled but one group of faith (Boff:159). "Christ and the Holy Spirit are the Lord of the Church and they through the services and charisms of the diverse members of the community act and are proclaimed" (Boff:160). Charisms come from God and are "meant to build up the community in its horizontal dimension" (Boff:162). Every member has gifts; therefore, all are charismatic and all are called to share their gifts to build up the community and the kingdom of God.

The underlying charism of the community of equal disciples is liberation, a liberation for men and women to lead, make decisions, develop their ministry and participate equally with other faith-filled members of the church. It is a liberation of mature men and women, who invest themselves in spiritually building the community of the kingdom in the parish. Furthering the idea of liberation, Boff believes

that "woman's position in the church should keep pace with the evolution of her position in civil society" (Boff,1986:95). Lebacqz arques, "Where ministry was defined in terms of witness to God's presence, women were accepted as evangelists, preachers and healers. But where a "professional" view took hold and only those with seminary training were permitted to practice ministry, women were excluded from the profession" (Lebacqz:127).

Women easily have the same capabilities as men and there are examples of religious women who have assumed the direction of the local church (Boff,1986:94). Using their particular charisms, women can achieve the same reality in their communities as men, only they attain it differently. "Harmony, good functioning and unity" (Boff:94) are prevalent in both types of communities.

If a woman can be the principle of unity, as is shown in her leadership of a community of equal disciples, then Boff proposes "theologically there is nothing to stand in the way of her empowerment, through ordination, to consecrate, to render Christ sacramentally present at the heart of the communities' worship" (Boff:95). Bausch expands this view when he states that women's ordination question will be settled when it "arises from the community's practice" (Bausch,1981:143).

With the community of equal disciples model of church, woman's role as leader of a parish is a foregone conclusion.

Women and avant garde male theologians are very interested in dialoguing with institutional hierarchy on this subject. Rather than asssuming male ordination as it currently exists, they are seeking a model in harmony with communitarian principles. They are seeking in Lebacqz' terms "justice and liberation" (1985:136).

For the institutional and the community of equal disciples models to interrelate, McElvaney suggests their first act is to listen to one another. "They who have ears to hear, let them hear. This admonition of Jesus appears in all three of the Synoptic Gospels" (1981:111). He advances this concept by saying, "There is no discipleship that does not begin with the ear. Everything depends on hearing with understanding" (McElvaney:112). Hearing one another is fundamental. It involves "understanding, reflection, perception, discernment and commitment as response" (McElvaney:112).

Before a commitment or response is made, one has to undertake a listening attitude, which is a receiving position. Listening is a slow process which allows the direction of the Spirit to be revealed. Listening leads to healing the separation that divides the two models. Ears are to precede feet (McElvaney:112). Having specific and regular meetings between the diocesan hierarchy and representatives of the community of equal disciples, with a definite time line and procedure to transform the institutional church,

will assist in an understanding and development of the polar models. Boff maintains that a communitarian spirit can be built on "intimate, direct, trusting, informal, reciprocal, egalitarian contact, with a maximum of exchange, interchange and equivalency" (Boff,1986:5). Prayer, meditation on Scripture and direct dialogue between the laity (both women and men), and the clerical hierarchy will facilitate the process of union.

It is this visible care for one another that attains a sense of integration of the models. McElvaney aptly concludes, "Listening. Learning. Loving. Liberating" (1981:169) are the qualities whereby the converted institutional church, expressed as the community of equal disciples, can become the "leaven of hope for the future" (McElvaney:169).

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

1. See Thomas Maney, *Basic Communities*.(Minnesota: Winston Press, 1984),p.53. for a testimony of a priest, praising the benefits of the Neighbourhood Church Community.

2. Roman Catholic Diocese of Newark. *RENEW*,(New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1987). The "Seven Questions About RENEW" booklet pp.1ff. explains how a parish prepares for and experiences the program.

3. Ibid. See the booklet "Our Response To The Lord", pp.3-44. for an expansion of these topics and the detailed breakdown of an actual season.

4. Arthur Baranowski.*Creating Small Faith Communities*.(Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988),p.55. The recommended program is *Pastoring the Pastors: Resources for Training and Supporting Pastoral Facilitators for Small Faith Communities* available from St. Anthony Messenger Press. Also see p.77, for programs to assist with service: *The Beatitude Program* (1001 E. Kiefe Ave.,Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 53212), is a ten session program for small groups using ten half hour videos and *Spirituality of the Beatitudes*,Michael Crosby.Orbis--on consumerism and individualism. The first two sessions may be a bit scholarly for some groups.

5. Ibid..,p.71. Two suggested programs are: *Breaking Open the Word of God*,Karen Hinman.(Paulist Press) and *Serendipity New Testament for Groups*,(Paulist Press).

6. See Baranowski,p.25 for prayer program suggestions.

7. Extraordinary Synod of Bishops.1985. *A Message to the People of God*, Origins,Vol.15,Dec.19,1985,No.27,p.449.

8. Loughlan Sofield,Carroll Juliano, *Collaborative Ministry*.(Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press,1987). Chapters 6-8 elaborate on the necessary skills to deal with groups that have conflicts and confrontations.

9. Ibid. See p.75, for a discussion of how this is possible.

10. See Assemblee des eveques du Quebec, George Topp,trans. "Towards a Fraternal and Communal Church", *The*

Quebec Parish Document (Montreal: Loyola Jesuit Community, 1987),pp.10-18, for a development of the belonging theme as it relates to the parish, the individual and society.

11. For a fuller discussion, see William Bausch, *Take Heart Father*.(Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1986),pp.123-124, regarding comments on the 1984 National Federation of Priest's Councils Survey.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, theological reflection has moved strongly towards a community of disciples model of church and a corresponding view of ministry. In practice, we appear to be in a transitional period. The institutional model still prevails but is losing its hold. Small groups are emerging in many areas intent on implementing not just a community of disciples as understood by Dulles, but a genuine community of equal disciples. The outcome is yet uncertain. I am convinced that if the Roman Catholic Church is to continue, if it is to survive and thrive, it will be as an actual community of equal disciples.

In pursuit of a vivid image to describe adequately the antithesis between the institutional and the community of equal disciples models of church, I appeal to the contrast portrayed in the seasons. The church is being called out of the doldrums of winter--a time of solitude, of intellectualism, of coldness, of self-preservation, into a springtime of rebirth, of aliveness, of excitement, of togetherness. Routine liturgies devoid of meaning, experienced by mutual strangers and expressed in an actor/audience fashion no longer appeal to North American Catholics. There is already enough individualism, fragmentation and alienation in society. If people are to look to the church at all, it will be to a contrast society,

providing an alternative to these practices, rather than merely repeating them.

Morover, adult Catholics are not content to remain as children in the institutional church. They are educated, professional and competent in so many avenues of life and as yet have no real decision-making power, no opportunity to lead, or to share faith in a significant manner within the confines of the institutional structure.

Furthermore, increasing numbers react to the curtailing of liberties so obvious in the discrimination against women, in the alleged limited access to a God who is fully available only through celibate male mediators, in the injustice against all laity who are not allowed to penetrate the hierarchical system, but permitted to remain only passive and obedient at the bottom of its pyramidal structure.

Martos accurately describes this disullusionment for Catholics as "a loss of a sense of personal community, a disenchantment with Church authority, a weakening of institutional identity in the wake of the changes wrought by Vatican II and even the rejection of the belief that sacraments are magically effective" (1983:25).

Much pessimism and discontent abounds among those who have attempted to offer suggestions for change and are repeatedly thwarted by church officials determined to maintain the status quo. Rex Brico, in his book *Taize'*,

quotes a Roman Catholic professor who predicts: "If the tendency of the last years continues, then twenty-five years from now the institutional church will be finished. There will be no more ministers and, above all, no more church-goers. With the exception of some very conservative groups, the official church seems to be on its last legs" (1978:86).

Besides the adult members, youth are also eager for a meaningful worship service surrounded by people in tune with one another. Yet love is invisible in most churches. To love, people must have occasions to get to know one another. The institutional church modelled on governmental institutions provides few opportunities to share life and faith. It is commendable that the institutional church at national and international levels addresses many issues of injustice and speaks out in favour of human rights. However, the institution must equally and more immediately address similar issues and practices within its own confines.

The real test of the church's survival is with its youth. As they sense the constant dissatisfaction of their parents and other adults, they will not hesitate to withdraw themselves permanently from any association with the church. Idealistic, impatient and perhaps more honest, youth are not willing to wait indefinitely for structures to change. They ask for celebrations that relate to life, and for symbols that address the issues of the present day. They seek a

church that provides a place for discussion and tolerates differences of opinion, listens and is open to input in its procedures.

Most youth do not like to walk alone. They are more assured and comfortable surrounded by a few friends. The liturgies of the institutional church are too routine and lonely to meet their needs. Unlike the adults, the youth do not hang in, hoping, and eagerly watching for signs of change. They become the fringe Catholics, the non-church goers. Their longing for meaningfulness in a parish, for authenticity, for recognition, for involvement, eventually wanes and disillusionment with organized religion sets in, and the gods of secular society, or the powerful influence of cults and sects, or other enticing ventures consume their enthusiam and interests.

What is necessary to rekindle the spark in both youth and adults, to assure them that God is alive and present in the parish, and seeks a relationship with them and their friends? It is my undaunted opinion that community building is the essence of the church's survival. The church is meant to be communion--a place of unity, of togetherness, of support and care for modern people.

The North American institutional Catholic Church can be reborn, it can experience springtime, and once again be an Easter people. It must once more rediscover its biblical heritage and look to the Acts of the Apostles to reflect on

the characteristics of the early house churches. to see the types of ministries that gave hope to the early Christians, even in times of persecution. "It may well be that we are approaching the age of the laity in a way unparalleled since the first centuries of the church" (Fenhagen:127).

People have not changed. Like their Christian ancestors, they also desire a faith community where there is love, support, a place to belong, to be accepted to give and receive charisms, to learn and to listen, to reach out to address injustices and to pray for pertinent intentions.

The local parish, with the blessing and encouragement of the diocese, has the potential to resurrect a semblance of early Christianity by breaking down large numbers into small groups, where people can share life, prayer, faith and mission together. It can reestablish equality whereby women and men are allowed to lead and to share their charisms. The parish is capable of being a positive influence in the lives of its members and a symbol of hope for the world.

A Christian is not meant to follow Christ in isolation. By his very example, Jesus acknowledged the worth of each person, respected differences, stressed egalitarian relations and always opted for the poor and underprivileged. In following Christ, we are to address the same issues. Together, we are to strive ultimately to become a universal human community of love but this process is initiated by a small group of faith-filled people.

The final and conclusive word has not been written on the approach necessary to attain a community of equal disciples. There are a variety of feasible methods. First the institutional church needs to listen to its prophets: to Dulles, Lohfink, Boff and others, who urge an *ecclesiogenesis* as a community based church. As well, it must affirm its practitioners: Geaney, Maney, Bausch, Baranowski, the RENEW program and other innovators who are paving the way with initial efforts toward parish and diocesan reform. The institutional church cannot afford to rely only on its ordained, to be current and constantly up-to-date in religious developments. Greater collaboration and consultation with theology and religious studies professors at univerities, colleges and faculties, and with secondary and elementary religion teachers can assist in the understanding of the aspirations and yearnings of its youth. As well, pastoral ministers and highly educated, motivated and skilled laity are eager to assist with other aspects of rebirth.

A more direct approach in pursuing the necessary changes in the institutional church can be taken from the Canadian Bishops pastoral message, *A Society to be Transformed*. The process used in this struggle for justice issue could likewise be applied to the efforts of community building (CCCB,1977:9). The methods include questions[1], the formation of local study/action groups in each diocese and

region, and regional conferences and workshops. Rather than a grass roots struggle of laity, as was the practice in the Third World, aware and wise clergy could be the catalyst to transform the Roman Catholic Church of North America into a community built from Gospel values of love, justice and equality.

If the bishops together with the regional and local structures of clergy and laity were to take the initiative they could begin through honest and open dialogue to assess and take into account the changed mentality among perceptive Christians. Burgalassi has given a good summation of this new mentality:[2]

> from a juridical mentality to one more spontaneous, based on love;
>
> from impersonal systematizing to spontaneity and personal liveliness;
>
> from submission to routine to awareness of purpose;
>
> from individual, self-regarding activity to community and social activity;
>
> from the approach which goes from the world to God to an understanding of God coming to meet the world;
>
> from a spirituality of renunciation and segregation to a revaluation of earthly reality and to the part it plays in [peoples] pilgrimage towards God;

To attempt this difference in attitude, the institutional church must simultaneously introduce a change

in language as intimated by the authors throughout the thesis. Key words that constantly reoccurred in the literature were: mutuality, collaboration, equality, co-responsibility, subsidarity, dialogue and servant leadership. These terms replace authoritarianism, patriarchicalism, paternalism, sexism, clericalism and hierarchicalism of the institutional model.

Besides subtle alterations as expressed in modified language and attitudes, the institutional church must take into consideration reports such as the "Quebec Parish Document" which has offered a critique of the current situation in the Catholic Church in that province, and sounded the alarm for the rest of the North America. This current study acknowledges a crisis situation in the institutional church.

> The most visible indicator is the considerable decrease in membership. Other signs exist: the absence of our young people; the difficulty of initiating the children; the very intermittent participation which has replaced for many people their former diligence,etc. (QPD:28).

Ultimately the QPD challenges the church first of all to recognize the magnitude of the crisis and to "adopt a frank and clear option for a fraternal[a] and communal church" (QPD:29). It insists that we must invent a new way of living as church and recommends a balance between its three poles--the inspirational, communitarian and institutional

(QPD:29).

To summarize the findings of the QPD around these three poles, the document concludes:

> It is undoubtedly around the pole of inspiration that the most important issue for our Church is to be found: to return to its roots, to discover new inspiration, to return to a clearly communal goal and to express it in meaningful and contemporary terms, as much for its members as for all men and women today.
>
> In its building-up of community, the church accords a preferential attention to the poor (QPD:31).
>
> Around the communal pole, the challenge is to develop co-responsibility among all categories of people (QPD:33).
>
> At the institutional pole, the most important challenge is to rebuild the ecclesial fabric by increasing the number of small groups or small communities (QPD:36).

Both Avery Dulles and the QPD insist that the future trend for the church is to seek an ecclesiological balance, with the institutional at the service and protecting the longevity of the communal (Dulles,1982:24,29;QPD:5).

Calling the institutional church to a *metanoia* must be done with great sensitivity, yet it must begin without delay. In reviewing the successful examples of community described in Chapter Three, the underlying influence was a deep commitment to intercessory and reflective prayer. A prayer for unity is important if the community and the institutional models are to be co-witnesses to Christ's presence in the world. Instead of a

tug-of-war with each polarity opposing the other, the poles need to pull together to shorten the gap that divides them and to devise common goals and visions. The two models are prompted to celebrate their differences and to transcend them.

In reality, communities of disciples do exist sporadically across North America. They are very much associated with the institutional church and function in relation to it. However, as yet, there is no equality in the parishes because of the fundamental, basic laws that rule them. With the advent of a new pastor, for example, councils, various ministries, and communities may be dissolved and employed laity may be summarily dismissed. This is a serious flaw which prevents egalitarian procedures. Such a system results in insecurity for the laity and non-permanence of their ministries. Until basic structures, such as the Code of Canon Law and other laws governing parishes, are altered, and the intrinsic value, rights, and responsibilities of all members in the church are recognized, equality will not be attained.

The laity and clergy need to form committees working to transform the organization that binds them. In so doing, a paradigm shift will occur and oppressive conditions that were there all the time, even though they were not seen before, will be uncovered.

Thus there will be struggle, but struggle accompanied

by reflective prayer, committees intent on reforming the church, and community building programs will all witness to the breakdown of barriers and a joyous building of the Kingdom where it is acknowledged that each side is no less loved by God.

The resulting communities will be a true sacrament, a visible sign of the spirit of Jesus present in the members as they care for one another, and in their celebrations as they rejoice together, and in their missionary activity as they witness to the world.

Community "is an invitation to hope in a way that leaves us free not of concerns but free of being alone in dealing with them" (Haughey:229). It does not promise an utopia, a hard-and-fast security, but a challenge to be with people who are welcoming, who communicate Christ to others and live the gospel in all its freshness (Brico:168). Such freshness speaks of springtime. Springtime intimates hope. Hope for the future Roman Catholic Church is a community of equal disciples.

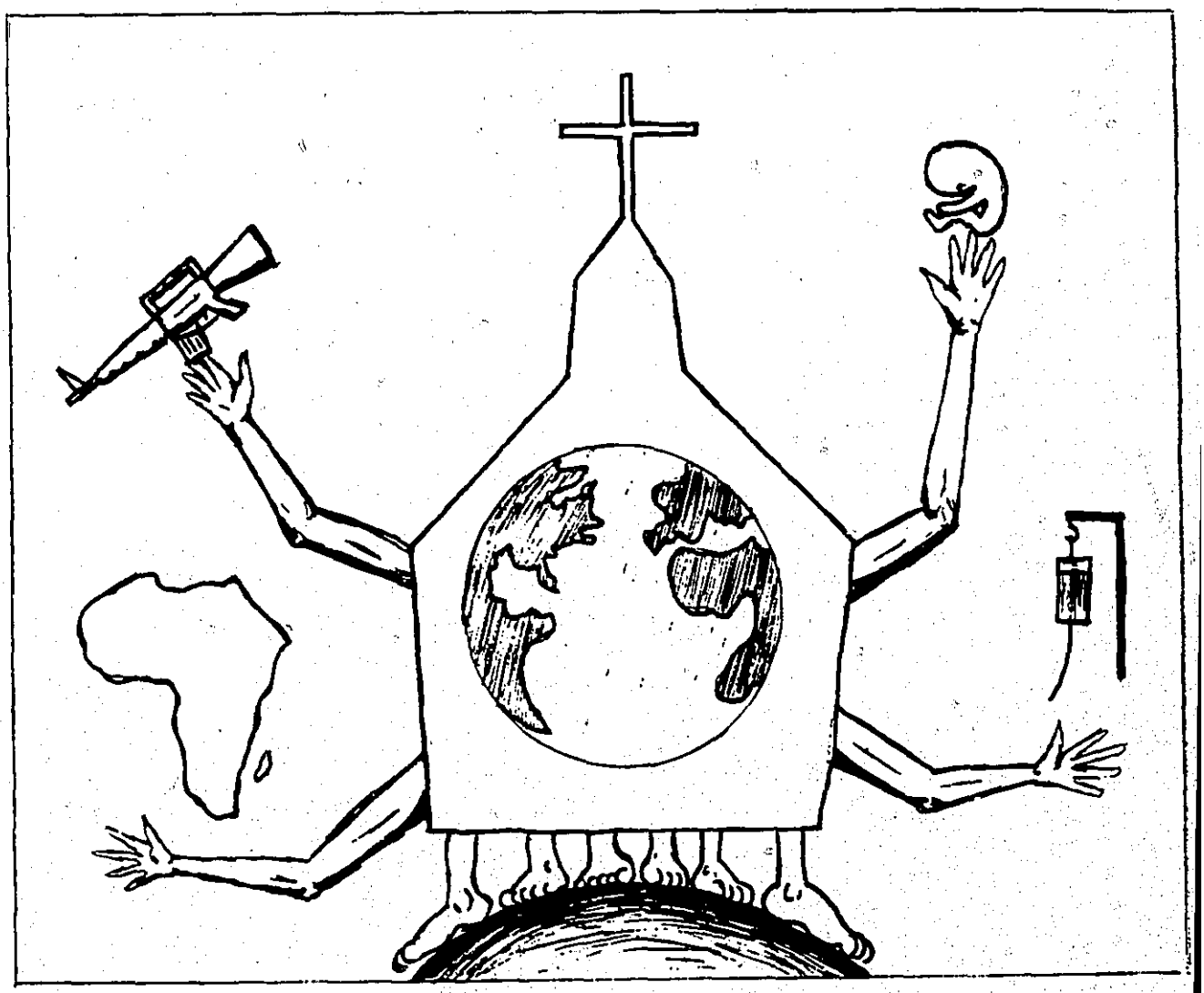
CONCLUSION NOTES

1. These questions are found in the Labour Day message *From Words to Action* (Ottawa: CCCB:1976),pp.2-5.

2. S.Burgalassi, *Le cristianita nascoste. Dove va la cristianita italiana*? Bologna, 1970,p.303, as quoted in Walter Buhlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church*. (New York: Orbis,1976),p.401.

3. Parts of QPD make commendable attempts to use inclusive language and yet terms such as fraternal are limiting in intent.

4. See pp.30-36, The *Quebec Parish Document*, for a complete development of the inspirational, community and institutional poles.



Institutional Model vs. Community of Equals Model

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VITA AUCTORIS

ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

1989	Masters Degree in Religious Studies, U.of W.
1989	Developing Lay Faith Communities Program, Guelph
1988	Community Building Institute, Iona College
1988	Community Encouragement Program,Tennessee
1988	Institute: Retreat & Pastoral Ministry, Notre Dame
1988	Principal's Course Part II
1987	Adolescent Suicide Training Institute
1987	Certificate in Family Life Leadership, Arnprior
1986	Certificate in Family life Studies, Waterloo
1980	Specialist in Religious Education U.of W.
1977	Elementary & Intermediate Vocal Music Certificate
1975	Elementary Instrumental Music Certificate
1974	Masters Work in Curriculum, University of Detroit
1971	B.A. - Theology, University of Windsor
1967	Windsor Teachers' College, Deans Honour Role

Experience:

1967 - present	Employee of E.C.R.C.S.S.B.
1988 - 1989	Sabbatical
1980 - 1988	Coordinator, Religion and Family Life
1980/1981/1982	Principal, Family Life Course - U.of W.
1980/1981	Principal - Parenting Course
1978 - 1980	Religion Consultant
1967 - 1978	Classroom teacher - Grades 2 - 8
	Two years vocal music

AWARDS:

O.E.C.T.A. Scholarship 1988
Outstanding Service Award - E.C.R.C.S.S.B. 1988