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The Historic Episcopate in Anglican Ecclesiology
The *Esse* Perspective

Ansley Tucker

I. Introductory Remarks

Any ecumenical dialogue must consider the matter of authority in the church. And when Anglicans are involved, this will inevitably lead to a consideration of the historic succession of bishops. Traditionally, Anglicans have insisted upon the preservation of the historic episcopate as a means of ensuring the apostolicity of the church. And while some Anglicans would be willing to concede sufficient apostolicity in certain non-episcopal churches, others would not.

My mandate, therefore, has been to explicate a strict view of the historic episcopate, in order that the Canadian Lutheran-Anglican Dialogue might take due account of a widely and strongly held Anglican belief.

What follows, then, is (a) a review of the means by which Anglicans have concluded that the historic episcopate is of the *esse* of the church\(^1\); (b) an apologia for the Anglican preoccupation with order, and the ordinary rationale for their insistence on this order in particular; and (c) a survey of typical Anglo-catholic response to a relaxed view of the historic episcopate. But first, we turn to an assessment of the "ecumenical climate" of the Anglican Church of Canada as it pertains to this issue. For ecumenical dialogue, if it is to avail us anything, must make contact with the mind (and perhaps more especially, the heart) of our constituents.

II. A Reading of Anglican Attitudes About Episcopacy

In fact, a review of contemporary Anglican attitudes about episcopacy and historic succession suggests the presence of a sizeable, vocal, and powerful group which is committed to the maintenance of an historic episcopate as we have known it.
It is often the case (for various reasons) that our theologians, clergy, and elected officers will differ from the rest of the church in their assessment of such matters as this. But this is an instance where church leaders and the rest of the laos alike are agreed (although not necessarily for the same reasons).

A. Among Anglican Leaders

Within the context of official discussion, and particularly of ecumenical dialogue, the historic episcopate has had high profile in the last thirty years, at times generating heated debates. Indeed, among these, the proposed union between the Church of England and the (as yet) non-episcopal Church of South India in 1955 was pivotal. It excited both friend and foe, and as such, spawned insights and arguments which continue, even now, to dominate our theological agenda. The notion that the historic episcopate might be only of the plene esse of the church, for instance, is an insight first offered in a slim volume of essays addressed precisely to this event. The vehement (and sometimes sarcastic) response which Carey (its editor) and his colleagues provoked is ample testimony that their somewhat relaxed posture was not entirely compatible with the prevailing theological winds.

The Canadian Church has sustained its own controversies. In 1975, after a long and serious courtship, the proposed Plan of Union between the Anglican and United Churches of Canada was rejected by the Anglican Church. Among the chief theological objections to the Plan were vagaries concerning the absorption of United Church orders into the historic succession of bishops. This issue has been addressed again in a 1983 document prepared by representatives of both churches, calling for a gradual mutual recognition of ordained ministries. The main thrust of the document was sidestepped by the Anglican National Executive Council, who recommended gratitude to the task force, and further study. In other words, the decision-making bodies of the Anglican Church of Canada, up to and including the present, have consistently exercised themselves in the defence of an unqualified historic episcopate.

Anglicans are also in dialogue with churches which have maintained an historic episcopal succession, namely the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. Obviously, these discussions
would be seriously hampered by any Anglican attempt to compromise what all three accept as the "catholic truth". This, too, will be reflected in the theological sympathies of Anglican leaders.

It is true that in the past (perhaps most especially due to the Tractarian influence) Anglicans have virtually equated the historic episcopate and apostolicity. Because the faithful profession belief in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, this has resulted in some quarters in a stance which has in effect "unchurched" non-episcopal denominations. It would seem today, however, that many Anglicans are willing to adopt a broader understanding of apostolicity. That is to say, the historic episcopate (albeit important, and by this reading, essential), is only one element of many in the apostolicity of the church. The LED II documents, for instance, say:

Apostolicity or apostolic succession is a dynamic, diverse reality organically embracing a variety of elements and activities. It includes continued faithfulness to the apostles' teaching, which teaching found normative expression in Holy Scripture, and under Scripture, in the ecumenical creeds. It involves participation in baptism, in the apostles' prayers and the breaking of bread. Abiding in apostolic fellowship is given expression through sharing in the Church's common life of mutual edification and sharing, served by an ecclesiastically called and recognized pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament. Finally, apostolic succession involves a continuing involvement in the apostolic mission, in being sent into the world to share the Gospel of Christ by proclamation to all far and near and by neighbourly service to those in need.

One might caution, however, that in view of the consensus fidelium thus far expounded, this "new appreciation" of the apostolic character of the church is more likely to point to a softening of legalistic and arrogant attitudes than to a willingness to dispense with an historic episcopate. Anglican theologians and church leaders feel that they have been faithful to a received (divinely appointed) tradition. They therefore place the onus probandi upon those who would deviate from it.

B. Among Anglican Laity

While it is fairly easy to discern the mind of those who must make pronouncements (i.e. the leaders and elected officials of the church), it is rather more difficult to interpret the mind
of the average congregation. And yet, this will be essential if any proposal for ecumenical activity is to meet with favour. The authors of the aforementioned Anglican-United Report on Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministries were probably right when they attributed the failure of an earlier Plan of Union to an underestimation of "the tenacity of traditions of theology and piety in the two church communities and the uneasiness with which many people in both denominations [sic] contemplated the major organizational changes involved." The unfortunate truth is that the general attitudes of the laity may well bear little correlation to those of theologians or informed leaders. These latter are more attuned to the theological subtleties which many would simply consider irrelevant. The tenacity exhibited by Mrs. English may on the one hand pertain to her crudely literalistic interpretation of tactual succession; equally it may pertain to her love of pomp and prelacy. In neither case is she going to budge on the subject of bishops: She likes them!

In our consideration of Anglican attitudes about episcopacy, we shall have to reckon with the power and opinions of those in the pew, as much as with the pronouncements of those in high places.

III. The Approach By Which Anglicans Arrive At Their Insistence On The Historic Episcopate

Anglican theological method may be described succinctly as the appeal to Scripture, and to the uncorrupt (usually ancient) tradition of the Church, guided by the light of reason. And indeed, this is the method by which theologians have concluded that the historic episcopate is essential to the church.

A. The Appeal to Scripture

It must be granted that some prominent Anglican advocates of the historic episcopate have approached the New Testament witness from a pre-critical perspective, and have thus suffered a significant reduction in theological credibility. The New Testament is, after all, not prescriptive in this respect: it reflects the emerging and fledgling practices of a people seeking to remain faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the apostolic witness. As such, it both permits and requires interpretation.

Some theologians have claimed a New Testament mandate for the evolution of a doctrine of historic episcopate, without
literalistic reference to the words of Jesus, or to who happened to be present when he gave his various commissions (e.g. to baptise or to forgive sins). Such arguments centre primarily on the locus and delegation of authority in the primitive church, as well as upon the belief that both of these were according to Jesus’ own intentions.

In the first place, Scripture is seen to accord a primacy of place to the apostles. We see a church defining and testing itself by the lights of the apostolic tradition, for we read of the disciples that they “continued in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). In this sense, the apostles and their teaching were the recognized locus of authority in the life of the New Testament church.

Secondly, with regard to the delegation of authority, K.D. MacKenzie suggests that authoritative ministry in the New Testament is always “from above”. The Eleven (and indeed, Paul himself) are commissioned by the Risen Lord. From that time, “ministerial authority resides in the Apostles, and they delegate it, either by their own choice or after election by the laity, to suitable men, who after ordination are called presbyters or deacons, as the case may be.” While MacKenzie recognizes that the New Testament also bears witness to other kinds of charismatic ministries, nevertheless, he affirms that even these required ratification (1 Corinthians 14:29-32, 37). The ministry, he contends, “is sent to, and set over, the Church, not evolved from the Church by any merely natural process of development”.

Furthermore, Michael Ramsey points out that there is no Christian church in the New Testament which is not in some way accountable to an authority who has responsibility for the larger believing community. In other words, even in this embryonic stage, the churches give expression to their basic unity through their several relations with one person who has oversight.

Thirdly, with respect to the divine institution of these practices, we are asked to consider the fact that Jesus chose exactly twelve apostles. The number was obviously of no little importance to the early Church, for when their numbers were reduced by the apostasy of Judas, they felt constrained to elect
Matthias to his place. One detects the church’s own consciousness of its status as the New Israel, and of a parallel between the twelve tribes and the twelve who will sit upon the twelve thrones judging those tribes (Matthew 19:28). At the very least, one must admit a certain intentionality in Jesus’ action. That is to say, the number and status of those to whom he committed his gospel was no mere matter of indifference. “As the Father sent me,” he said, “so send I you”. Herein many discern a dominical imperative in the mission and order of the church. And this, at bottom, is the chief and most pious reason for adhering to a doctrine of the apostolic succession of bishops.

B. The Appeal to Tradition

Proponents of the historic episcopate certainly identify its roots in Scripture, and in the very ministry of Jesus. However, their most forceful appeal is to an evolved and virtually universal pattern of ministry in the early church. We are asked to consider the evidence of the sub-apostolic fathers, Clement of Rome, and Ignatius of Antioch, whose very antiquity lends special weight to their testimony. Clement, for instance, outlines a succession from Christ to apostles to bishops (or presbyters) and deacons, and says:

Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on the question of the bishop’s office. Therefore, for this reason, since they had complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons and later made further provision that if they should fall asleep, other tested men should succeed to their ministry....

He goes on to insist that the Corinthians (to whom he writes) have no right to depose any bishop who has exercised his office blamelessly. That is, the bishop is as one with authority.

Ignatius of Antioch gives ample witness to the status of the bishop (“we should regard the bishop as the Lord himself”) and function. The bishop, who seems to have emerged as the chief minister in a presbytery, is the focus of unity:

Shun divisions, as the beginning of evils. All of you follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles: respect the deacons as the ordinance of God. Let no one do anything that pertains to the church apart from the bishop.
Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one whom he has delegated. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; just as wherever Christ Jesus may be, there is the catholic church. It is not permitted to baptize or hold a love-feast independently of the bishop. But whatever he approves, that is also well-pleasing to God; that all your acts may be sure and valid.\textsuperscript{13}

Here we see the full-blown threefold pattern of ministry which is implicit in a doctrine of the historic episcopate, and which was the ministerial norm until the time of the Reformation.

If Clement teaches us to honour episcopal succession for its divine institution, and if Ignatius teaches us to honour it for its power to unite, Irenaeus will have us appreciate its role in safeguarding the apostolic teaching. In his concern to refute the Gnostic heresy, he appeals to the clear succession in office of all twelve bishops of Rome, from Linus to Eleutherus, and the corollary succession of true doctrine that it implies.\textsuperscript{14}

The earliest witness of the church, although not voluminous, is interpreted as consonant with and a legitimate development of the New Testament picture. This, ultimately, is the acid test for any development in the Christian tradition. And it is the intended faithfulness of the Anglican Church to the early and faithful witness of the Christian church which has given rise to the classic formulations by which that Communion upholds an historic episcopate as normative and necessary.

C. Classic Anglican Formulations

The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion declare:

> It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.\textsuperscript{15}

While the men who have the "authority... to call and send" are not explicitly identified, yet in the thirty-sixth Article, following, we are directed to the Ordinal, which "doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering". It is there, in the rubrical preface, that the clearest statement of
position on the subject of episcopacy and apostolic succession is to be had:

It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons....And therefore, to the intent that these Orders may be continued... no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon... or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or has had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination....

No less telling is the basic Prayer Book collect appointed not only for the ordination of deacons and priests, but for use at the Ember Seasons as well: “Almighty God, the Giver of all good gifts, who of thy divine providence hast appointed divers Orders in thy Church: Give thy grace, we humbly beseech thee, to all those who are to be called to any office and administration in the same....”

Finally, we would be remiss not to make mention of the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888, which document has become something of a charter for Anglican ecumenical discussion. Reunion, according to the Quadrilateral, will have to take account of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds, the gospel sacraments of baptism and the eucharist, and “the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church”.

If Anglicans have thus enshrined the historic episcopate in the order and practice of the Church, it is only because they believe the Scriptures and the faithful witness of the tradition demand it.

IV. A Question of Order

“‘The discussion of the validity of a ministry makes me yawn,’ said Mr. Stanley Jones.” And with Mr. Jones’ manifest boredom, we come to a question which threatens the whole theological labyrinth constructed in favour of an historic episcopate: Is the order by which a church structures and governs its life really so crucial as an Anglican would have us believe? Does
faith not take priority over order? Is not order a mere matter of indifference?

Strict episcopalian find the order of the church no yawning matter. They are accustomed by their liturgical formation to consider life “sacramentally”. That is to say, even as God has revealed himself to his people through concrete signs and events, and supremely, in his Incarnate Son, Anglicans have come to expect that grace will be given to them in the most ordinary, concrete ways. They have learned that, invariably, the signs by which God chooses to disclose himself are *a propos* of the thing he wishes to convey. (For instance, water is a fitting token of the grace of baptism, bread and wine of the eucharist, and Incarnation of the personal, loving Godhead.) In effect, Anglicans have learned to revere order as a vehicle and a sign of grace.

Now because the church itself is the visible society which bears the good news of God in Christ, it will function as just such a sacramental sign. And the way in which it does so, according to the principle here adumbrated, should bear some obvious relationship to its inner reality. That is to say, for an Anglican, order matters.

V. A Question of This Order

Of course, to contend that order is of some consequence is hardly to prove that the historic episcopate is the order of choice.

Besides their direct appeal to Scripture and Tradition, those who have insisted on the historic episcopate have also pressed speculative theology into service. For the most part—and Anglican-Lutheran dialogues are no exception—the issue has been cast in terms of *apostolicity*. We have seen already that the church’s understanding of apostolicity has been unduly narrow. Thus, while it would be possible to see apostolicity comprehending the historic episcopate, it would be vain to suggest that the historic episcopate could alone comprehend apostolicity. Such an argument purports to weaken the strict episcopalian’s claims. One might contend, however that the historic episcopate serves to safeguard not only the apostolicity of the church, but its unity, sanctity and catholicity, as well: “We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.”
A. Sanctity

Once Anglicans take as given the divine institution of an apostolic order, and once they have concluded (as Ignatius of Antioch did) that only those who belong to that order may lawfully preside at the sacraments of the church, they arrive at a position which judges the validity (and/or efficacy) of those sacraments as dependent upon such presidency. Now granted, there is considerable discussion about the correct use of such words as "valid", "regular", "defective", and "efficacious". And while only the most unyielding, hardhearted (and dare we suggest, blind) Anglicans would deny that God has graced the non-episcopal churches, nonetheless, the root concern for some is precisely the growth in grace and sanctity effected by participation in the duly ordered sacramental life of the church. Under the rubric of sanctity, of course, this concern belongs chiefly to the sacraments of eucharist and absolution. Ultimately, the point is that the very sanctification of the church is thought wedded to an order which stands in the succession of bishops from the apostles.

B. Historicity and Apostolicity

It is important to note that the proponent of episcopal succession does not speak of episcopacy alone, but of the historic episcopate. The ecumenically-minded strict episcopalian will not be appeased by the mere designation of chief pastors. He or she is looking for nothing less than admission into an historic succession of bishops continuous with the church founded by Jesus Christ.

What is this preoccupation with historical continuity? Again, we must bear in mind that Anglicans try to give witness in their order to what they believe about the gospel they bear. And they believe that gospel to be incontrovertibly historical. The scandal of particularity is pre-eminently that God acted in history—at a particular time, in a particular place, through the agency of particular people. Moreover, the one sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction offered by Jesus Christ in history is available and made present through the ministrations of his church in all times, in all places, and for all people. This is the fundamental meaning of the sacramental principle of anamnesis.
Because we are a people who must live in the present, by the reconciling power of an Event in the past, we seek to maintain not only spiritual but visible communion with that Event. The succession of bishops both in office (doctrine) and grace is seen as the sacramental sign and guarantee of the church's continuity in time and space with the great saving work of the Christ.22

Figure 1

Apostolic Succession

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Succession of Office</th>
<th>Secures continuity of teaching</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secured by:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1) Election in due form</td>
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<td>Giving jurisdiction</td>
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<td>Resulting in regularity</td>
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<th>B</th>
<th>Succession of Grace</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Secured by:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Episcopal consecration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2) Acceptance by the episcopate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Giving the episcopal order</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resulting in validity</td>
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</tbody>
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C. Unity and Catholicity

Michael Ramsey23 proceeds from the conviction that the external structure of the church needs to bear a clear relation to its inner reality. He suggests that the fundamental truth about Christians is that they are all members by baptism in the one Christ. Because its every member is related to his one redeeming work, the church is one. This is an article of faith, and its credibility is seriously undermined by the divisions of the visible church. In that the historic episcopate is able to give visible and real expression to the unity of the church, it proclaims the gospel. This unity exists and is exhibited not only in space, but in time.

Furthermore, this same two dimensional manifestation of unity bears witness to the catholicity of the church. In the first place, by bringing the Paschal Mystery forward (as it were), and by cutting across the impediments of space, the church is able to proclaim that the Event by which she is actually constituted is "for the sins of the whole world", right here, right now. The good news of God in Christ is to all people
everywhere. It is her continuity with the apostolic gospel by
the historic succession of bishops which allows her—really—to
offer salvation to a "catholic" audience. And secondly, her very
existence as one family through the ages and around the world
gives visible expression to her own catholicity.

In sum, it is hardly possible to confine the implications of
the historic episcopate to the apostolicity of the church. While
historic continuity with apostolic teaching and experience is the
thing which most nearly defines what we mean by the apostolic
succession of bishops, yet the effects of so ordering the church
will inevitably also be seen in her other principal attributes. In
so far as the church’s unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolic-
ity are de fide, the order by which they are given, safeguarded,
and preserved is a necessary one.

VI. Relaxation and Response: Esse, Bene Esse, and
Plene Esse

In recent years, a number of Anglican theologians have ad-
vocated a rather more relaxed view of the importance of the
historic episcopate. This has been largely in response to ec-
umenical considerations, with the most concentrated flurry of
publication occurring (as mentioned) around the time of the
proposal for union with the Church of South India. The En-
glish clergy who produced The Historic Episcopate would all
have considered themselves very good friends of the episcopacy.
Nevertheless, they (and others) are at pains to ensure that the
strict doctrine of episcopal succession (and its implied doctrine
of ministerial validity) does not serve to un-church other Chris-
tian denominations. Much the same concern had informed
the well-known plea from necessity advanced by Elizabethan and
Caroline divines in (qualified) favour of the churches of the
Reformation.

Some theologians, for instance, Stephen Neill, will insist
that the historic episcopate and its bishops are of the bene
esse of the church only. Neill sees the episcopacy as standing
especially for the pastoral care of the clergy and the unity of the
church. He suggests that the historic episcopate may commend
itself to other churches on these grounds alone.25 There is no
sense, however, in which it might be constitutive of the church.
and therefore, required.
Other scholars find the *bene esse* formulation insufficient. In their effort to tread a *via media* between it, then, and the *esse* position whose implications they find distasteful, they settle on the view that the historic episcopate is of the *plene esse* of the church. Aware that this will appear to some a compromise of catholic truth and discipline, they defend the corollary that the historic episcopate is not essential to the church. This they do by making copious references to respected and eminently "Anglican" divines (Hooker, Bramhall, etc.), who can, at times, be found making excuse for non-episcopal government in extenuating circumstances. Of course, they also provide fresh readings of all the old evidence. Furthermore, they assert, it is only too plain that God has blessed the non-episcopal churches with his presence and power. The historic episcopate, they claim, is for the fullness of the church, not its being.

Proponents of the *esse* position were vocal and vehement in their response. The general pattern of response is noteworthy. Even though some advocates of the historic episcopate actually explicate and defend the *esse* theory, it is customarily in the rebuttal of the *plene esse* view that they consider their argument won. All that is necessary, it seems, is to prove poor scholarship, misinterpretation of sources, or an illogical sequence of thought. The burden of proof has been squarely placed on the shoulders of those who would challenge the received order.

For example, A.L. Peck takes aim at the crucial issue of language and metaphysics in a way which is designed to abort the debate before it even starts. Specifically, he suggests that something is either of the *esse* of a thing, or it is not. He says:

> It should be noticed at once that to attempt... to draw a distinction simultaneously between *bene esse* and *plene esse*, and between *plene esse* and *esse*, is to attempt the impossible. Once the position that episcopacy is "of the *esse* of the Church" is rejected, it is impossible to escape the position that episcopacy is not of the *esse* of the Church. There cannot be degrees of *esse*... the introduction of the term *plene* is illegitimate and misleading, because it suggests that somehow the *esse* is incomplete. If we have stated the *esse* of a thing, how can we have failed to state its *plene esse*?27

On the same issue of metaphysical language, E.R. Fairweather suggests that much progress will be made. Without sacrificing the *esse* principle, if we recognize that to say that
episcopacy is of the esse of the church is not at all to say that it is the esse of the church. He complains that A.B. Webster "confuses the repudiation of the [latter] with the rejection of the [former], and fails to notice that it is possible to treat apostolic succession as an insufficient but necessary condition of Catholicity." 28

Issue is also taken with the appeal to inculpable necessity. This is not new. It has been said of Jeremy Taylor for instance that "the theory of inculpable necessity had always been a bruised reed. In his hand it broke". 29 Honesty compels the admission that some of the Continental churches frankly rejected episcopal succession, and even insisted upon re-ordination for those who had already received episcopal orders. Furthermore, it is some four hundred years since the churches have been thus constrained by the necessity imposed by corruptions. The plea from necessity is not a particularly relevant argument in our own day.

Finally, the plene esse theologians are criticized for their removal of the Caroline permissiveness (as exhibited, for example, in the argument from necessity) from its context. The overwhelming evidence is that Anglican divines of the Reformation and beyond considered episcopacy de iure divino. This principle must not be overlooked in favour of myopic attention to (albeit) serious notes of qualification. 30 Moreover, the willingness of seventeenth century divines to countenance other forms of ecclesiastical government must have been due at least in part to the need for solidarity in standing together with the Continental churches against the papal Counter-reformation. 31 The historic episcopate is not to be thought any the less necessary on this—or any other—account.

From the Anglican perspective, the debate of the 1950s provided the first serious threat to the doctrine of the historic episcopate since the seventeenth century encounter with Puritan polity. It is significant that its twentieth century proponents do not consider it to have sustained any grave injury.

VII. Concluding Comments

I suppose that one may conclude from even such a selective and brief survey as this, that the historic episcopate is an issue which has engendered serious theological debate within the
Anglican Communion. This at least indicates that it is identified by the Anglican Church as part of its own theological agenda, and hence, that there is an openness to the guidance of the Spirit who will “lead us into all truth”. At the same time, it is equally clear that the apostolic succession of bishops has its ardent advocates, and that they are not only “sitting in the catbird seat”, but that they probably give voice to both the mind and heart of Anglicans in high and low places alike.

Notes

1. Plainly, it is impossible here to adduce all the arguments given. All we can hope to do is identify theological method, and in broad strokes, to paint its conclusions.


4. In both instances, the United Church had continued to be supportive (at least in principle) of proposed measures for unity.

5. John Robinson sets the tone for *The Historic Episcopate*, by decrying just such an attitude (“Kingdom, Church, and Ministry”). It is important to note that some of those so accused would deny it. K.D. MacKenzie, for instance, says “This is not for a moment to deny either Christian holiness, or learning, or pastoral and homiletic ability to their ministries... All it denies is the apostolic authority and the right to exercise the Christian priesthood” (*The Case for Episcopacy* [London: S.P.C.K., 1929], 124).

6. *The Report of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue Second Series, 1976-80* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1981). 32. To cite the agreements of another Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue in this context may seem to beg the question. However, since the Episcopal Church has affirmed the LED documents, we may justly introduce them as evidence for a changing Anglican perspective.


8. Charles Gore is one who has been so accused.


11. Clement of Rome. Epistle to the Corinthians. 42-44.

13. Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, 8.
15. The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, 23.

Needless to say, similar concerns about "validity" attend the practice of such episcopal rites as ordination and confirmation, but for different reasons. To the best of my knowledge, the Anglican Church is the only Western church which is still absolute in its reservation of confirmation to a bishop. Furthermore, recent changes in the practice and theology of initiation are beginning to render unfounded typical fears about "incomplete membership in the Body of Christ" apart from the "apostolic rite of the laying-on-of-hands".

24. B.C.P., 82.
27. Peck, *This Church of Christ*, 7-8.

For Further Reading