Eucharist, Ministry and Authority in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas

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Ph.D. University of Edinburgh 1996
The Introduction outlines Zizioulas’ ecumenical career as it relates to his ecclesiology. It describes the purpose of this study and establishes the boundaries of the thesis, which aims at demonstrating that his model of communion provides a suitable basis for a Trinitarian ecclesiology. Chapter One discusses Zizioulas’ description of the way in which humans relate to each other. It examines his claim that we live in a situation of profound division and explores how he uses Trinitarian theology to suggest a way in which baptism marks an overcoming of this, leading to communion. Chapter Two examines Zizioulas’ perception of Christology as constituted by Pneumatology. It suggests that this synthesis can be used as a basis for an understanding of relationships and authority in the Church and is determinative for a concept of communion. Chapter Three describes how Zizioulas views the Eucharist as an eschatological event both to construct a pattern of communion in the Church and to describe how it is realized. Chapter Four discusses the role of the bishop in the structures of the Church. It demonstrates how Zizioulas’ eucharistic understanding allows a relational model of authority to develop and explores the implications this has for ecclesial structures and patterns of authority. Chapter Five relates the laity to the authority structures of the Church in such a way that all people may be seen to have a place within its decision processes. It analyses the extent to which Zizioulas depends on a model of communion to construct this understanding. Chapter Six describes how Zizioulas relates authority in the local Church to that of the universal Church. It examines both how the bishops exercise authority in conciliar fashion and how the whole Church receives or rejects their teaching. Chapter Seven explores Zizioulas’ use of the concept of primacy. It suggests that an ecclesiology of communion, such as that of Zizioulas, is incomplete without the concept of a universal primate. The Conclusion analyses the consistency of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology and the application it can have to ecumenical debate. I argue that Zizioulas’ communion-based ecclesiology is fundamentally sound, although needing some adjustments and is able to provide a stimulus to ecumenical debate.
Contents

Introduction

Chapter One
Being and Personhood

Chapter Two
Christ and the Spirit

Chapter Three
The Eucharist and the Church

Chapter Four
The Church and the Bishop

Chapter Five
The Laity and the Church

Chapter Six
Conciliarity: The Way of the Church

Chapter Seven
Primacy and Primate

Conclusion

Zizioulas Bibliography

General Bibliography
Introduction

John Zizioulas, who was born at Kozani in northern Greece in 1931, is one of the foremost theologians working within the contemporary ecumenical scene. He is author of a major work on the ecclesiology of the first three Christian centuries and of more than sixty articles, some of the more important of which have been collected into two further books. A member of the Orthodox Church, his theological endeavours received perhaps the ultimate accolade of approval from his own Church when, in June 1986, he was consecrated as a Metropolitan Bishop in the Patriarchate of Constantinople directly from the ranks of the laity.

Hailed by the late Yves Congar, himself one of the great ecumenical pioneers of the century, as 'one of the most original and most profound theologians of our age', Zizioulas has made ecclesiology his special concern throughout an academic career which has spanned more than thirty years. Educated at Thessalonica and then at Athens during the first part of the 1950s, Zizioulas was able to undertake more advanced studies in the United States of America, where he worked under, among others, Georges Florovsky and Paul Tillich. During his time in America, Zizioulas met and was influenced by two other important Orthodox thinkers, Alexander Schmemann and John Meyendorff. Significantly, these writers are often referred to by Zizioulas, although he has in many respects gone beyond them in his ecclesiological studies. On his return to Athens, he was able to present his thesis and its acceptance opened up an exciting and very varied academic career, working with the World Council of Churches in Geneva after a brief spell at Athens, and then at New College in Edinburgh, before being appointed Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Glasgow, a post he held until his consecration in 1986. Holding positions as Visiting Professor at King's College, London and at Thessalonica, Zizioulas has continued his scholarly work mainly through publications and
involvement in official ecumenical dialogues at the highest levels. As a scholar of international renown, John Zizioulas has been able to make an immense contribution to the ongoing ecumenical dialogue in a manner which is both uncompromising in its intellectual rigour and appreciative of the insights offered by non-Orthodox communions.

**Theologian of the Church**

Zizioulas received his early theological education at an important time. Until that time, the main influences on Greek theology were of a Western scholastic nature, with the major theologians having received much of their own education in the Protestant and Catholic universities of western Europe. Writing as recently as 1971, it was noted that Christos Androutsos, Professor of Theology at Athens from 1911 until 1935, was

the figure who has dominated Greek theology these past fifty years and incarnated all the possible influences of the West. . . Thirty-five years after his death he continues to reign over the theological life of Greece, and it is extremely difficult even today to deny his authority.5

In 1956, however, John Romanides submitted a thesis on original sin at Athens which marked the beginning of a return to the patristic roots of Orthodox theology, at exactly the same time as the ideas of Russian theologians working in the West itself began to have an important impact. It is interesting that Zizioulas himself came under the influence of some of these Russian theologians whilst abroad. In addition, he has readily recognized that much of the revitalization of contemporary Orthodox theology is due to specifically Western patristic and liturgical scholarship:

The first important factor responsible for new, positive and creative developments in Orthodox theology in our century is, rather curiously, the work of “Western” theologians. . . . [The] return to the ancient patristic sources, which has characterised Western theology in
our century, is largely responsible for the Orthodox theological renaissance.⁶

Rejoicing in this fact, Zizioulas has consistently sought to achieve a synthesis between Eastern and Western theological approaches. Zizioulas believes that the insights of each are required if we are to attain a balanced theology, utilizing in a constructive and fruitful, if also critical manner, material from the insights of our different traditions.⁷

From the time of writing his doctoral thesis, Zizioulas has been concerned with the question of the unity of the Church. Indeed, in seeing that unity as expressed in, and safeguarded by, the twin principles of episcopacy and Eucharist, he was already defining the main areas of his future theological activities. Initially, under the influence of his teacher, Professor Kondaris, Zizioulas had directed his research at the understanding of the role of the bishop as the principle of unity in the early Church.⁸ Between starting his researches and their completion, Zizioulas had spent time in America and it is perhaps due to the influences which he encountered there that his final title for his thesis made it plain that, in addition to the bishop, he viewed the Eucharist as being decisive for the Church’s unity in the understanding of the early patristic writers. It is perhaps characteristic of theology in Greece at the time that, 'Fin 1964 se déroule ce que l’on pourrait considérer comme une première soutenance avec le seul jury; on lui reproche d’avoir trop centré son étude sur l’eucharistie.'⁹

Zizioulas can be placed, as a theologian, firmly within the context of what has become known as ‘Eucharistic ecclesiology’ - a broad ecumenical movement which seeks to place the Eucharist at the centre of the Church and which, for the most part, sees the Eucharistic event as being determinative for the structures and organization of the Church. Yet although he has been heavily influenced by the thought of Nikolai Afanasiev, the ‘founder’ of this ecclesiological approach, nevertheless he has developed his own
particular style of ecclesiology, which has led him to adopt a stance which, whilst owing much to the insights of Afanasiev, is nevertheless sharply critical of him on a number of points.

Zizioulas sees the concept of **communion** as being determinative for theology and for ecclesiology in particular. It is this concept which he has consistently sought to place at the centre of his own theology, believing as he does that it is necessitated by a clear understanding of the implications of Trinitarian doctrine. For Zizioulas, the Church exists primarily and essentially as communion:

> Enrancinée dans la synaxe eucharistique de l’Église local, cette vision de l’Église se déploie en une ecclésiologie de communion. L’être même de l’Église est constitué dans ce mystère de communion pour le renouveau de l’humanité et du monde. Cette réalité appartient déjà aux derniers temps et entre dans l’existence concrète ou historique comme l’oeuvre de l’Esprit-Saint qui se manifeste par l’expérience ecclésiale de la nouvelle naissance, de l’incorporation au mystère de l’unique corps du Christ et de la communion entre les Églises.\(^\text{10}\)

Thus, for Zizioulas, there is an intrinsic, existential link between ecclesiology and the wider concerns of theology, not least with regard to the nature and place of humanity within the world. Ecclesiology is no mere academic study of the phenomenon of the Church but is, rather, profoundly concerned with the actual problems of existence in the world. The Church, as Zizioulas’ writings make clear, is bound up, on the one hand, with the person of Jesus Christ and, on the other, with the very being of humanity and the world. It is therefore no surprise that Zizioulas addresses himself to elaborating an understanding of ecclesiology which not only debates the areas of concern for this branch of theology but which also attempts to understand other important areas in the light of ecclesiology.\(^\text{11}\) Zizioulas reflects the awareness that the areas of concern covered, on the one hand, by the title ‘Faith and Order’ and, on the other, by the demand for ‘Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation’ are not to be seen as standing in opposition to each other but are, in fact, complementary aspects of the Christian theological enterprise.\(^\text{12}\)
Plan of Study

Zizioulas’ ecclesiology is of particular interest for Western, non-Orthodox readers. This is because most of his work, whilst strongly promoting what he believes to be the central insights of Orthodox ecclesiology, is nevertheless addressed primarily to an ecumenical audience. Most of his articles were written with the ecumenical situation in mind and, indeed, many are contributions to particular ecumenical debates, often at a very high level. It is because of this that his writings resonate with the concerns of contemporary Western ecclesiology. At the same time, he is also addressing his own communion. This is of particular interest for, somewhat unusually for an Orthodox theologian, especially for one who has for some ten years also been a bishop, Zizioulas is quite critical of some aspects of his own Church’s practices and stresses in theology. There is thus a two-way dialogue within Zizioulas’ ecumenical concerns. On the one hand, he seeks to recall Western Christianity to that patristic vision of the Church which he believes is most fully incarnated within Orthodoxy. At the same time, however, he is calling the Orthodox Churches to reassess some of their practices in the light of a balanced theology which is attained through the incorporation of some important Western insights. His theology is at once both eirenic and challenging and is therefore, at a time when ecumenical dialogue and understanding have never been so advanced, worthy of sustained attention.

There have been, to date, three books published which are devoted to a study of John Zizioulas. Of these, only one, that of Gaeten Baillargeon, is given over solely to Zizioulas. Baillargeon’s work has, however, been criticized by Paul McPartlan, not least for its lack of attention to the central theme of Zizioulas’ thought, the concept of corporate personality. McPartlan’s own book, the most detailed and tightly argued of the three, is a comparative study of the ecclesiologies of Zizioulas and the late French Roman Catholic thinker, Henri de Lubac and takes their understandings of the Eucharist as the central, connecting theme. The third work is by an
Indian Roman Catholic theologian, Joseph Areeplackal, and concentrates on a comparative study of Zizioulas and Yves Congar, with a focus on their thinking with regard to the determinative role of the Holy Spirit in their respective understandings of ordination in the Church. Whilst McPartlan is familiar with Baillargeon’s work, he does not know of that of Areeplackal, nor they of each other’s work or that of McPartlan.

The focus of this study is on the concept of authority in the Church. I am particularly interested in seeing how Zizioulas, operating as he does with a eucharistically-based ecclesiology of communion, understands the theology and practice of ecclesiastical authority. This has, I believe, important ecumenical applications, not least at a time when there are a number of potentially fruitful ecumenical dialogues and union discussions underway. Such a study is of particular interest in connection with union plans between episcopal and non-episcopal communions, such as the recently proposed discussions between the Scottish Episcopal Church and non-episcopal Churches in Scotland, including the Church of Scotland itself. Obviously, in a union in which there are two (or more) very different approaches to the question of authority, both on the local and on the universal level, it becomes of paramount importance that a common understanding, as far as possible, based on theological insights, is attained.

Beyond this, there exists the immense question of possible future union between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches. At the root of the differences between these two great communions lies the question of authority, and in particular of the authority of the Papal ministry. Unless there can be movement towards a convergence in this area there can be no real hope of any meaningful reconciliation. Clearly, there can be no question of either side demanding the submission of the other to its own, unaltered, understanding of authority. What is required is a careful investigation into the possibility of there being sufficient common ground within the tradition of the undivided Church of the first
millennium to permit the possibility of a *rapprochement* between these Churches.

Authority in the Church is, unfortunately, often understood and exercised in the manner of secular organizations. Authority is conceived of, as often as not, in terms of 'power' exercised by one part of the Church 'over' the others. Examples of misuse of this ecclesiastical power by those deemed to possess it are sufficiently easy to find and are not confined to the past. My intention is to examine how Zizioulas understands power and authority in the light of his eucharistic basis of the Church and to examine the ways in which he sees it as being applied, in the hope that it may present a model for ecumenical discussion and convergence.

This study is divided into two major sections. The first section, which comprises Chapters One to Three, seeks to provide a context for authority in the Church. Chapter One is devoted to a discussion of the Trinitarian basis of Zizioulas' ecclesiology, with particular attention being paid to the way in which he constructs a dynamic, relational understanding of the human person on the basis of Trinitarian categories. In Chapter Two, I give my attention to the manner in which Zizioulas has used Pneumatology to decisively affect his understanding of Christology. In making Pneumatology determinative of Christology in its very origins, Zizioulas has opened the way for a particular understanding of the relational nature of the baptized person and it is this which forms the basis of an understanding of the nature of existence in the Church. The culmination of the first part of this work is reached in Chapter Three. This seeks to examine Zizioulas' understanding of the Eucharist in terms of a strongly eschatological appreciation of reality. As participation in the eschatological realities, the Eucharist is determinative for any understanding of the relationship between the various *ordos* in the Church. It is the Eucharist itself, as that reality which constitutes the Church, which ought to provide us with our paradigmatic understanding of the exercise of authority.
Part Two opens with Chapter Four being devoted to the primary hierarchical ministry of the Church, that of the Bishop. In this chapter, I seek to suggest that a relational model of episcopacy, derived from the role of the bishop within the celebration of the eucharistic mysteries themselves, is the determinative pattern of episcopal authority for Zizioulas. In doing so, I examine the implications of such an approach, based on an eschatological understanding of the Eucharist, for the exercise of authority within the local Church by the diocesan bishop. Chapter Five has been devoted to an examination of the place of the laity in the authority structures of the Church. The fact that I have reversed the order of approach here (priority often being given, following the order of treatment in Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, to treating the laity before the ordained ministry), should in no way be taken as indicating a particular theological stance. Rather, the order has been determined solely by the fact that Zizioulas has devoted considerably more space to discussing the bishop than the laity and therefore this approach to his work seemed both more appropriate and in keeping with Zizioulas' own method. Chapter Six concentrates on the concept of Conciliarity, which is one which is of considerable ecumenical importance. This is discussed with reference both to the local, diocesan, level and to the wider, and indeed universal, level. Conciliarity being the generally accepted Orthodox manner of exercising authority, it is appropriate that my final Chapter should be given over to a discussion of the Primacy and its exercise within the Church. Again, in keeping with previous chapters, this is related, first of all, to the local level and beyond, to the question of regional primacies. Finally, both because of its current ecumenical importance and its undoubted historical reality, I concentrate on the matter of a universal primacy, as exercised in the person of the Bishop of Rome. My Conclusion attempts to draw together the various strands in Zizioulas' understanding of the nature and exercise of authority in the Church today and to discuss its value, both in theological and in existential terms.

Authority in the Church must never be a matter of the exercise of
dominion by one part, be it clerical or lay, over any other. All authority is that of Christ himself and, consequently, must be exercised after the manner of Christ. It is because of this that a relational ecclesiology, which fully accepts the application of Trinitarian categories to the empirical Church, is of great value to the Christian communities today as they seek to more fully express the reality of Christ in the world. John Zizioulas, as I hope to demonstrate, has made a major ecumenical contribution in this field.
Introduction

Notes


4. For a full account of Zizioulas' career, see G. Baillargeon, L'oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas: une Vision Théologique de l'Église dans l'Orthodoxie Contemporaine, which was submitted as a Doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne in 1987. It was subsequently published as Perspectives orthodoxes sur l'Église-Communion. L'oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas (Editiones Paulines, Montreal and Médiaspaul, Paris, 1989). Unfortunately, I have only seen the unpublished version and this did not come into my hands in sufficient time to take proper account of Baillargeon's findings in my own work.


7. This is, for example, the thrust of his introductory comments in his Communion and Otherness in Sobornost, Vol.16 (1994), pp.7-8, where he addresses the task, as he sees it, of Orthodoxy in the West.


11. Thus, for example, Zizioulas has published three important lectures entitled *Preserving God's Creation. Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology* in *King's Theological Review*, Vol.12 (1989), pp.1-5; 41-45; Vol.13 (1990), pp.1-5.


Chapter One

Being and Personhood

Introduction

For John Zizioulas the Church is not merely, or even primarily, an institution or society. It is a ‘mode of existence’ for her members.¹ The Church is not a society which Christians join: it is, rather, that reality which constitutes them as Christians. Christians and the Church exist simultaneously.² The Church cannot be considered as optional for Christians. This is because ‘The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world and to the very being of God.’³

In Zizioulas’ convictions regarding the unity of the Church there is a close similarity to the statement of St. Maximus the Confessor (c.580-662) that ‘The holy Church is an icon of God, for it brings about among the faithful a unity the same as that which is in God.’⁴ For Zizioulas, there is an intrinsic relationship between God, the Church and humanity. He contends that a close ontological tie between them is essential if we are not only to reach a greater degree of understanding of what the Church actually is but also if we are to have a proper conception of God and humanity at all:

There is no other model for the proper relation between communion and otherness either for the Church or for the human being than the Trinitarian God. If the Church wants to be faithful to her true self, she must try to mirror the communion and otherness that exists in the Triune God. The same is true of the human being as the “image of God.” The relation between communion and otherness in God is the model for both ecclesiology and anthropology.⁵

The theologians of the Early Church wrote, by and large, not on the Church but on the being of God. Zizioulas notes, with regard to this point:
The question that preoccupied the Fathers was not to know if God existed or not - the existence of God was a "given" for nearly all men of this period, Christians or pagans. The question which tormented entire generations was rather: how he existed. And such a question had direct consequences as much for the Church as for man, since both were considered as "images of God."6

Although the subject matter of their theological thinking was largely determined by the controversies of the times, almost all of which concerned at their root questions regarding the nature of God, Zizioulas believes that they approached the subject of the Church in the correct and, indeed, only really possible way: they started from the doctrine of God. Yet, almost paradoxically, they:

approached the being of God through the experience of the ecclesial community, of ecclesial being. This experience revealed something very important: the being of God could be known only through personal relationships and personal love. Being means life, and life means communion.7

In the course of their theologizing, the Fathers came to recognize that God's being (and hence that of humanity and the Church) should be approached in terms of personhood.8 Now, if God exists as 'person', then so too ought humans, who are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). Thus, the way in which God is perceived as existing will have existential implications. In terms of the main thrust of this chapter, I will endeavour to track the implications Zizioulas sees for the nature of existence, both for the Church and human beings.

An important methodological problem confronts us when we attempt, theologically, to understand the nature of humanity. Zizioulas points out that this problem is due to the Christian doctrine of the Fall. As Zizioulas observed in an important paper:

Whatever we may wish to mean by the Fall, the fact remains that there is something which can be called 'sin', and which gives rise to the question: is man that
which we know and experience as 'man'? If we answer the question in the affirmative, then we are bound to imply that sin is not an anthropological problem and redemption from sin does not essentially alter our view of man; in fact if we follow up the consequences of this position, we are bound to say that unfallen man or man restored by redemption is not properly speaking 'man' but something of a super-man. If, on the other hand, we do not approach man from the angle of his actual sinful situation, how can we approach him? Is there another angle from which to look at man except from that of which we actually see as man?9

Of course, as Zizioulas goes on to say at once, we are faced with a further difficulty in any attempt to define ourselves, for empirically we all tend to attempt to transcend our sinfulness and limitations, to move on beyond them.

Zizioulas believes that human beings are created by God in his **image**. This is a theme which can be found in the writings of many of the Fathers, not least in those of Maximus, to whom Zizioulas is particularly indebted. For Maximus, man received the image of God from the very first. However, he is required to acquire the **likeness** of God through a spiritual process. In this, Maximus follows the Irenaean, rather than the Augustinian line of thought, as regarding the first man as being not yet perfect. The distinction between 'image' and 'likeness' in Maximus:

helps to underline that process. Maximus also states that the inhabitation and formation of Christ in the Christian may be interpreted as a development of the likeness. This development is seen as a kind of imitation of God, a manifestation of the divine virtues, as in a mirror, and in general as a moral activity of man.10

Man is the image of God, but so too is the Church. For Zizioulas the Church is the manifestation of the divine life and of the eschatological Kingdom of God.11 If the Church - and humanity itself - mirrors, as image or **icon**, the divine life, it becomes vital to determine how Zizioulas understands God to exist. The nature of
the Church must mirror that of God. This is of particular importance for the theme of this work, which is concerned with the nature and exercise of authority in the Church. If the Church mirrors the Trinitarian mode of being, then the same must apply to her manner of exercising authority, whether at the most basic level between a minister and his people or between the various members of the hierarchy.

**The Existential Problem**

Zizioulas raises the question, 'Who am I?' on behalf of humanity. This is the most fundamental question mankind has asked. Yet it is the most difficult to provide a satisfactory answer to. For Zizioulas:

> This is a basically human question which no animal can raise. It is thus the question *par excellence* that makes us human and shows personhood to be an exclusive quality of the human being in the animal world. Even when it is not raised consciously (as it is raised in our Western culture), it conditions and colours every man's attitudes and activities whenever he, unlike the animals, is not satisfied with the given being and wishes to affirm freely identities of his own, thus creating his own world (e.g. in art, in unconditional love, in forgiveness, etc.).

We face a loss of identity which strikes at our very being at all levels. This loss of identity is no novel discovery but is part of man's basic awareness of his situation. In the Bible it is characterized as 'fallenness' - a term which has been retained in much contemporary philosophy, alongside other descriptive terms such as 'alienation' (Heidegger) and 'lostness' (Macquarrie). Man is a 'lost' being in a radically unhappy and disunited world. It is this lostness which pervades our very being and which contributes to a conflict not only between people as individuals or groups, but also between humanity and the natural world and within the very being of the individual. Macquarrie presents a penetrating analysis of how this 'lostness' manifests itself in the human situation, on all these levels.

Christos Yannaras, a contemporary Greek philosopher and lay
theologian, who has collaborated with Zizioulas, argues that:

The first choice of individual autonomy has irrevocably split nature, and condemned the will of all other human persons to be merely an individual will expressing and enforcing the necessities of the fragmented nature. The personal need for individual survival runs counter to the personal freedom and distinctiveness which can be realized only as love, threatening to shackle it. The freedom of the person is not destroyed, only distorted and changes it into an antithetical separation from nature, a ceaseless polarization of antithetical impulses. It is experienced as a tragic division within the human being: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23). 16

Many people have been attracted towards analyses of our situation comparable to those offered by existentialist philosophers such as Sartre. Those who, like Sartre, may be termed 'philosophers of despair' are perhaps much closer to the real human situation than are those quick to accept a more optimistic view of man's abilities to overcome and outgrow his present existence. 17

As Zizioulas has observed, 18 humanity continues to hope that we will be able to transcend the limitations of our nature. It is this existential nature which Zizioulas has termed the biological hypostasis. 19 We are not satisfied with the bare facticity of our existence. There is a feeling that what we see and experience as human in our empirical existence does not exhaust our possibilities. There is a striving to overcome our present disorder and limitations, to break through into a new mode of existence as human persons, witnessed most strongly in the present century in Marxism, at least in its theoretical form. For Zizioulas:

it seems to be a unique characteristic of this sort of being to be unwilling to accept his actual limits and to tend to move beyond them. Thus, even if one looks at the actual man of our experience, one is confronted by the fact that most of man's actions, consciously or unconsciously, go beyond his actual state in a movement of transcendence of the actual human limitations. 20
To be a person in the fullest sense, Zizioulas argues, man must be free. By ‘freedom’ Zizioulas does not imply a moral freedom but rather an ontological one. Only in freedom, without restraints imposed upon him, is man able to be fully personal. Yet this, it would appear, cannot be. For at the root of it all is man’s very existence: the being of each individual is given to him. Zizioulas suggests that freedom is no freedom when one is bound by the ‘necessity’ of existence. To be totally free, he says, man must commit suicide, thereby freeing himself from the necessity of existence. Yet this way leads only to nihilism. This is the most tragic side of the human quest. Humanity seeks:

the transcendence of the “necessity” of existence, the possibility of affirming his existence not as a recognition of a given fact, of a “reality,” but as the product of his free consent and self-affirmation. This and nothing less is what man seeks in being a person.

Thus, Zizioulas indicates a deep tension within humanity. There is a struggle between man’s facticity and what he feels to be his possibilities. Yet it cannot be denied that man, in spite of his striving, fails to break out of the limits of his existence. That being so, it is no surprise that this creature of seemingly unrealizable potentiality appears self-contradictory. Man, says Sartre, is ‘a useless passion,’ and that even without the inescapable fact of death to render existence ultimately absurd.

It is the position of Zizioulas that the empirical humanity is but the raw material for the conception of the new humanity which surpasses the old creature. It is the belief of Zizioulas that humanity is only understandable when viewed in the light of its ability to relate to extra-human realities. If man fails to relate properly at this level then it is no surprise that he is disordered. Zizioulas believes that we have a false view of what it means to be a person. Only when we have a corrected view will it become possible for us to begin to understand the nature of that which we are called to aim at.
'Individual' and 'Person'

It is a widespread assumption in the Western world that when we talk of the 'person' we are automatically talking of an individual, concrete being. This is an assumption which is accepted virtually without question. It is one which Zizioulas is convinced underlies our failure to think correctly of the human person.25 In a society which places a high value upon the individual the tendency towards ecclesiastical individualism which is endemic in Churches today can be viewed as being the direct consequence of experience of life as fragmentation. In part, this has led to a general crisis for society in any form, as people learn to view societies and institutions as being restrictions upon the freedom of the individual, which interfere with rather than support the development and fulfilment of the self as person.26

For Zizioulas, this conception of 'person' as being equated with 'individual' is not the only way to envisage personhood. Indeed, it is Zizioulas' contention that this is not a valid alternative at all, but a distorted approach which has serious existential consequences. In recent times it has come under attack from, amongst other sources, the philosophy of 'existence as dialogue' espoused by Martin Buber, from the 'ethical personalism' of John Macmurray, from Biblical research and from theologies such as that of Zizioulas himself.27

Yet Christianity must never allow the community to be exalted over the individual, as if the individual were merely a means to an end or could ever be seen as being dispensable in the cause of a perceived greater need. This must not be the case, for Zizioulas holds that the notion of the person arose entirely out of the Christian concept of a personal God. It is the notion of 'person' that is responsible for the attention paid to human rights in our time. What Zizioulas is concerned about is the detachment of the concept of person from theology. To do this is to remove from personhood its deepest and most important meaning. Zizioulas argues that 'The person both as a concept and as a living reality is purely the product of patristic
thought. Without this, the deepest meaning of personhood can neither be grasped nor justified.\textsuperscript{28}

For the Western mind, this link between the concept of personhood and theology has been abandoned. The result, suggests Yannaras, is that the identification of ‘person’ with ‘individual’ has led to our forgetting an important theological principle, namely that:

The individual is the denial or neglect of the distinctiveness of the person, the attempt to define human existence using the objective properties of man’s common nature, and quantitative comparisons and analogies.\textsuperscript{29}

This means that the individual has been opposed to the community to such an extent that there is an excessive polarity between them, causing an imbalance in our existence. The individual is distinct from the community, which is merely the sum of the individuals who comprise it and who, therefore, necessarily precede it.

For Zizioulas the concept of the person, rather than the individual, is primary. It is his conviction that it alone holds the contradictory polarities of individual and community together in a productive tension. This link is essential, precisely because, as another writer remarks:

The hiatus produced by the loss of the communal sense produces a climate of selfishness and competition, often aggressive, which is allowed to dominate all forms of social, moral, legal, political and economic life.\textsuperscript{30}

Zizioulas sees the origins of the dichotomy as lying within the Greek philosophical tradition. Because permanence is crucial for Zizioulas’ understanding of the nature of personhood he is suspicious of much in the Greek philosophical tradition.\textsuperscript{31} For Zizioulas, personhood necessarily implies a sort of uniqueness, ‘a claim of being in a unique and unrepeatable way.’\textsuperscript{32} Already in his 1975 article on personhood, Zizioulas affirmed that the difference between an individual and a person lies not in the ‘substance’ of
humanity but rather in its capacity for relationship.\textsuperscript{33} This capacity has been greatly damaged because of the conditions we have imposed upon ourselves in turning from God, in making ourselves the measure of all things:

This individualized and individualizing Adam in us is our original sin, and because of it the "other," i.e. beings existing outside ourselves, in the end become our enemy and "our original sin" (Sartre). A human being left to himself cannot be a person.\textsuperscript{34}

Yet human beings, 'individualized and individualizing' though they be, remain social beings, existing in societies. Given our individualism, this creates conflicts and tensions, for society imposes limits on the freedom of the individual.\textsuperscript{35} If man wishes to survive in society he must learn to relativize his freedom, to submit himself to certain 'givens' which inevitably bring about a loss of freedom. The self-assertion of existence demands freedom, but this freedom would lead to chaos if it were to be exercised in an unfettered fashion. Yet in restricting the freedom of the individual, society paves the way for the 'other' to become a real threat.\textsuperscript{36}

There would appear to be no way in which this dilemma may be avoided. Sociality is an intrinsic part of human existence and is not something that gets added when a group of individuals assemble together. But is this dimension merely something that exists for purely utilitarian purposes, in order that human life will be better ordered and therefore more comfortable, or is it, as Zizioulas believes, a movement towards a 'catholic whole' - itself dependent on God - that only a person can and must be?

\textbf{Death and the Individual}

To Zizioulas, humanity utters 'a cry of hidden fear in the face of non-being or the threat of death.'\textsuperscript{37} Death is that event which seems to bring about the end of the existence of the individual.\textsuperscript{38} Humans
fear death as the end of their being and seek always to overcome it. This is a fundamental part of humanity’s make-up and, being unable to defeat death finally, people go to extraordinary lengths to postpone its arrival. Our existence, which is fraught with contradictions and within which we are continually torn between opposing poles, will end in death. It is therefore no surprise that death is upheld as a terror for humans, seeming to reduce their very being, their unique individuality, to the level of ‘thinghood’ and nothingness.

Zizioulas sees in death the result of the individualization of human nature that humanity has chosen for itself. Death is the consequence of man’s breach of communion with God. Death ‘came at the moment that man became introverted, and limited the ekstatic movement of his personhood to the created world.’

Zizioulas here seems to echo the thought of St. Athanasius, as described by one commentator:

The attention, instead of fixing on the Word within, allows itself to be distracted and held by objective stimuli from the outer world, and in these reactions men tend more and more to find their pleasures - and their good. . . . In their unsystematized sentiments centring round material objects the emotion of fear is dominant, and it dooms its victims to live under the apprehension that some day these objects may be withdrawn from their reach. That is why men fear to die: they fear separation from the things that have claimed them for their own.

Because of this trait in human beings, Zizioulas would see the impossibility of our escaping from the fear of death and its consequences whilst our existence is radically disordered and orientated away from God and towards created being. The creation of a true personhood in humanity, which can only come about through the out-pouring of our being in an act of communion with God, is necessary if the tragedy of death is to be combated and finally overcome. Yet this total reorientation of man towards God cannot come about through his own actions, but only through the
initiative and action of God.

Towards an Ontology of Personhood

Although the condition of humanity may look unpromising for the development of a true personhood, Zizioulas believes that such a development is possible. For Zizioulas, any realistic concept of personhood is intimately bound up with theology;

Philosophy can arrive at the confirmation of the reality of the person, but only theology can treat of the genuine, the authentic person, because this authentic person, as absolute ontological freedom, must be "uncreated," that is, unbounded by any "necessity," including its own existence. If such a person does not exist in reality, the concept of the person is a presumptuous daydream. If God does not exist, the person does not exist.41

In agreement with Zizioulas, both Macquarrie and Macmurray see the human person as being possible only within a community of "selves" who are in mutual relationship.42 For Zizioulas, humans are only fully personal insofar as they are in relation with others.43 However, it is Zizioulas' contention that this ultimately depends upon his being in relationship with God, for the two are seen to be inextricably linked.44

Zizioulas maintains that Greek philosophy had within it no possibility for an ontology of the person. Zizioulas observes that, at the time of the Cappadocian Fathers, the thought current was either of a Platonic (in its Neoplatonic form) or an Aristotelian kind:

The first spoke of human nature as an ideal humanity, a γένος ὑπερχείμενον, whose image every human being is, whereas the latter preferred to give priority to a substratum of the human species, a γένος ὑποχείμενον, from which the various human beings emerge. In both cases man in his diversity and plurality of persons was subject to the necessity of his nature.45
Greek thought was concerned with the *ousia* of things, with their nature or substance. This led to problems for Christian thinkers when they came to discuss the nature of God. Naturally, having been born into Greek culture and educated in Greek thought, they did their theologizing within that context. However, for the Greeks, all things tend to a unity of being, thus creating an absolute ontological monism which is reflected in the idea that the Creator must create out of an already existing substance, which imposes its own limits and laws on him. Zizioulas believes that this concept was a challenge to Christianity, not solely because it created grave problems with regard to the freedom of God but also because, as such, it says nothing about the *nature* of God and hence of man. Because Greek thought, in this respect, with its approach to being as being, could say nothing about *how* God exists, Zizioulas remarks that:

> The tautology “God is God” says nothing about ontology, just as the logical affirmation \( A = A \) is a dead logic and consequently a denial of being which is life. . . . The substance of God, “God,” has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.

Because of this perceived sterility, theology had to reach beyond classical thought in order to say something more meaningful about the nature of God, and hence of humanity. Such a task was fraught with difficulties, not least because Christians were sailing in largely uncharted waters.

During the third century, Sabellius taught in Rome a form of Trinitarian theology which was based upon the philosophical presuppositions of monistic Greek thought. According to Sabellius, in a theology echoed at least in part in the fourth century by Marcellus of Ancyra, God is a single being (whom Sabellius termed \( \nu \omega \rho \xi \alpha \tau \varsigma \rho \) who ‘extended’ himself in order to successively manifest himself to us, first as ‘Father’ in the Old Testament era, then as ‘Son’ in the New Testament times and latterly as Holy Spirit. Finally, according to this understanding, all three ‘roles’ adopted by
God will be collapsed once more into the pure monad which God is in his essence.

In alluding to 'the image of exodus and return which was endemic to the Greek religious schema', precisely in connection with the thought of Sabellius, we have an intimation as to the roots of the popularity of this form of Christian modalism. A Sabellian understanding of the nature of God can be understood as being, in a sense, 'natural' to the thought patterns of many people at the time. The very language in use served to powerfully reinforce this tendency. With reference to the theological terminology in use at the time, Zizioulas notes that:

Since Tertullian (late second/early third century) it had been customary to speak of God as one substance, three persons. Since "substance" (the Latin substantia) would literally mean in Greek ἕνα τῶν ἁμαρτίων, it was also possible to speak of God as one ἐν πεποιθήσει, three προσωπα (the Latin personae put into Greek). But the term "person", both in its Latin and its Greek form, was used in the theatre and had a significance that could imply a Sabellian interpretation: it could imply three roles or masks used by the one God...

*Persona* and *prosopon*, believes Zizioulas, had the great ability to point towards a truly personal dimension in man. Yet the closed ontological framework in which the Graeco-Roman world existed prevented this dimension from receiving full ontological status:

But they consciously - and this is precisely what was demanded by the cosmological framework of a self-authenticating cosmic or state harmony - constituted a reminder that this personal dimension is not and ought never to be identical with the essence of things, with the true being of man. Other powers, not the quality of personhood, laid claim to the ontological content of human existence.

It is because of this that Zizioulas can claim that 'The theological and philosophical concept of person remained unknown to ancient pagan philosophy and first appears as a technical term in the early...
Christian theology of the Trinity and Incarnation."52

The Biblical Concept of Humanity

Surprisingly, the Bible cannot be the primary source for our language and concept of personhood, for:

The Hebrew language of the Old Testament can provide no word for our English "person". It has words for soul, and mankind, and individual men and women but no equivalent of person. The roots of the word are to be found in Greek philosophy.53

The biblical understanding of humanity starts from the presupposition that we are the creation of a free God who stands over against his creation and who is independent of the created order. God, in the biblical view, is under no compulsion either external or internal, to create. He does so entirely out of love and as the result of his own free will. Not only may God have chosen not to create, he created in a unique way. In the Greek view, God had to create from a pre-existent matter which imposed upon him its own laws and restrictions. This is contrary to the Hebrew understanding in which, because God is utterly sovereign, there is nothing that exists besides God without his will. God, therefore, creates all that is, including humanity, out of nothing, ex nihilo.

As created by God, humanity is not purposeless. At the heart of the Orthodox and Greek patristic understanding of humanity is the conviction that man is called to become, insofar as a creature may, 'god.'54 This is the doctrine of theosis.55 Gregory Nazianzen, suggested that humanity will be deified by his inclination to God. 'For to this I think tends the light of truth [which we possess] here in measure, to see and experience the splendour of God.'56

Humanity is created by God for a glorious destiny (1 Cor. 15:51ff; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:21). Yet this destiny was not fully disclosed to the
Jews, believed the Fathers, and so is not explicit within the pages of the Old Testament. Only in the life, death and resurrection of Christ is this purpose really opened up to men and women and not until the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is it finally made clear. Humanity is thus a paradox. He is a creature, standing in total and radical dependence upon the God who created him. Yet at the same time he is summoned to a glorious destiny, to be made 'like unto God.'

What is this the nature and content of this 'likeness' to which humans are called by God? In combination with the belief in theosis, with which it is inseparably linked, the doctrine of the Imago Dei, the creation of humanity in the image of God, is crucial to an understanding not only of Zizioulas' anthropology but also of his ecclesiology as a whole. In this, Zizioulas faithfully reflects traditional Orthodox belief for, as Lossky put it:

We may say that for a theologian in the catholic tradition in the East and in the West, for one who is true to the main lines of patristic thought, the theme of the image (in its two-fold acceptation - the image as the principle of God’s self-manifestation and the image as the foundation of a particular relationship of man to God) must belong to the “essence of Christianity”.

However, when dealing with the work of a theologian who is specifically concerned with the ecumenical appeal of his work, it is essential to note that such ideas are opposed, chiefly by Karl Barth and his followers, not least because of a presumed lack of scriptural foundation which is taken to imply that the doctrine is entirely invented. Of course, on the basis of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, such objections may well have validity, as Lossky himself was compelled to admit: ‘there is nothing (or almost nothing) which would permit us to base either a theognosis or a religious anthropology on the notion of the image of God.’

Regarding the key passage of Genesis 1:26, the Hebrew words translated as ‘image’ and ‘likeness’, selem and demut, in their
context, do not bear the positive force of the Septuagint translation. In the Hebrew context, both linguistically and historically, they refer to the ‘image’ of man in a dominion over animals which is analogous to that of God.61 This, of course, opens up the whole issue of which are the authoritative scriptures for Christians - the Hebrew originals or the Septuagint translation which was adhered to by the early Church and by the Orthodox today, something which may well predispose both Patristic and Orthodox writers towards a more ‘traditional’ interpretation of the passage.62

It is, however, not only Orthodox and Roman Catholic writers who see the theology of the image as being of importance for anthropology. Macquarrie, himself an Anglican from a Reformed background, sees this concept as explaining the distinctive place of man in the created order, although it must be admitted that he does think that the concept is better explained in the more philosophically current language of ‘existence’:

What distinguishes man from other creatures is that he “exists”, and to exist is to have an openness, which is perhaps the best clue to the mysterious affinity of God and man. Just as God opens himself into the creation and pours out being, and therefore has “letting-be” as his essence, so man is most truly himself and realizes his essence in the openness of an existence in which he too can let be, in responsibility, in creativity and in love.63

Macquarrie echoes Lossky in his repudiation of theologians who have sought to deny the legitimacy of the doctrine of the Imago Dei, notably Karl Barth. He suggests that the doctrine of the Imago Dei presents us with a far higher view of humanity than would otherwise be the case. According to Macquarrie, mankind, although a creature, has the potentiality, by God’s grace, for being ‘adopted’ into sonship:

and so of somehow participating in God’s life. It is when we consider this openness whereby creaturely being may be taken up into holy Being that we get, so to speak, a breathtaking view of creation in all its unimaginable possibilities.64

27
This doctrine can serve to highlight the full and awful horror of human sin. Man, who has so high a vocation, can also fall so low. Theologians such as Barth, who would deny the possibility of a doctrine of the image, miss out on an ideal opportunity to highlight the tragedy and misery of sin. Only in the light of the twin doctrines of theosis and Imago Dei can the Fall be seen as the calamity it surely is.

The Patristic Solution

Zizioulas has highlighted the existential dilemma of humanity. On the one hand, created by God in his own image, humanity is summoned to attain the 'likeness' (similitudo Dei) of God through existing in the same manner as God himself does. Man, however, in choosing to refer created things to himself, rather than to God, has placed himself in a situation in which he cannot but live as a creature of necessity, bound by his own existence and consequently incapable of bearing within himself the complete ontological freedom necessary for him to become a person. Because humankind, in rejecting in Adam the possibility and offer of communion with the Other, with God, has turned its collective back on the possibility of love, which is 'being forever', we find ourselves in a situation in which it is not possible to attain personhood. The necessary conditions for an ontology of personhood exist only in God.66

It is in the work of the Fathers, particularly the Cappadocians, that the tensions of the Biblical and Greek views of man and the world are resolved. Yet in attempting to uncover a 'patristic' theological anthropology we are faced with the difficulty that there is no coherent doctrine of the human person, at least with regard to the earlier writers.67 Yet Lossky claims that there is an anthropology within the thinking of patristic writers, although it is less clearly elaborated than their thought on the nature of God, from which their anthropology is derived. It is therefore important to realize that this
resolution between the Greek and Hebrew understandings of human nature occurred precisely within the context of the great Trinitarian debates of the fourth century.\textsuperscript{68}

Even if it is conceded that the Trinity is \textit{explicitly} set forth in the New Testament, it must be accepted that it is only so in an imprecise form. It is owing to this fact that the great Trinitarian controversies, notably those concerning Sabellius and Arius, aroused such passionate affirmations from the opposing parties in each controversy that it was they who were being faithful to Scripture and the traditional theological insights of the Church. It was against this background that the creative use of the Greek philosophical heritage permitted a constructive formulation of what was to become orthodox Trinitarian theology.

As I have suggested, the Greek world-view differed substantially from that of the Hebrews. The Greek view of matter as being anterior to any creation by God - and consequently independent of him - constituted a major obstacle to the concept of a free, supreme God who alone is eternal and who alone is supreme over all. In the Greek view, God and the world are linked in an unbreakable way, so that God is not free and \textit{therefore} cannot be said to be in any proper sense a Person. Thus, before God can truly be said to be free the ontological monism of the Greek understanding of reality had to be broken. Zizioulas has accented the importance of this in his own work:

\begin{quote}
Ever since Christian theology encountered Greek thought with its concern for \textit{ousia} and with its monistic view of reality, it was forced to stress the utter difference between God and the world, which it had inherited from the Bible, by juxtaposing the \textit{ousia} or nature of God to that of creation and of man. This defence of the biblical view of God against Greek monism is to be seen behind the doctrine of \textit{creatio ex nihilo} as well as the long Christological debate which ended up with the Chalcedonian formula of the \textit{two natures} of Christ united \textit{without confusion}.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

It is Zizioulas' view that the Greek ontological pattern did not permit
the development of an ontology of the person, no matter what glimpses of such a possibility there might have been. Before such an ontology could be developed two fundamental presuppositions were required. The first of these was a shift in cosmology made possible by the Christian biblical outlook. The second was 'an ontological view of man which would unite the person with the being of man, with his permanent and enduring existence, with his genuine and absolute identity.'\textsuperscript{70}

During the fourth century trinitarian controversies, the Church found itself pressed to find a language that would give clear and unambiguous meaning to its faith in the Triune God and it was to the language and concepts of Greek thought that they had to turn. What is of the greatest significance is that in doing so the theologians initiated what Zizioulas has termed 'a philosophical landmark, a revolution in Greek philosophy.'\textsuperscript{71}

Zizioulas believes it was Athanasius, the great anti-Arian theologian, who developed an extremely important ontology which was to have a major impact on theological anthropology.\textsuperscript{72} Zizioulas claims that by linking the being of the Son to the substance of the Father Athanasius transformed the notion of substance, making it \textit{possess almost by definition a relational character}.\textsuperscript{73} Such a character was not present within the meaning of the term 'substance' prior to that time. To Zizioulas, this is a point which is of cardinal importance for theological anthropology. God, being perfect, does not change and therefore there was never a time when the Father was without the Son. This implies that relationship lies at the very heart of God's being. Therefore, Zizioulas enquires:

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
can we not then conclude almost inevitably that, given the ultimate character of God's being for all ontology, substance, inasmuch as it signifies the ultimate character of being, can be conceived only as communion?\textsuperscript{74}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

It would appear that nowhere in Greek thought is there the view that perfection and fullness of substance is either lost or even depleted in
the absence of a certain relationship. It is therefore capable of standing alone. Despite this, this idea surfaces in the thought of Athanasius, according to Zizioulas' claim. Zizioulas supports this by referring to Athanasius' writings against the Arians:

Without this relationship between the Father and the Son "the perfectness and fullness of the Father's substance is depleted"; Contra Arianos I:20. This leads Athanasius to make the extraordinary statement "If the Son was not there before He was born; there would be no truth in God," which implies that it is the Father-Son relationship that makes God be the truth eternally in Himself.75

In the Introduction to Being As Communion, Zizioulas claims that the academic theologians of the Early Church, such as Clement and Origen, could not ultimately totally avoid falling into the 'trap' of ontological monism both because they were philosophically trained in the Platonist stream of thought and because they were primarily interested in Christianity as revelation. In contrast to this approach, the pastoral bishop-theologians of the era, such as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus and Athanasius, arrived at their explanations of the being of God through their experience of the ecclesial community, through what Zizioulas terms 'ecclesial being'.76 The Fathers approached the mystery of the being of God not through a philosophical frame of reference (although this was utilized in the expression of their theology) but through the living experience of the Church, an experience which was above all eucharistic.

The importance of a reinterpreted understanding of Greek philosophical language can be seen in the use of prosopon, which originally meant 'face'. From this usage it came to be applied both to the mask and the character of an actor in a drama. Zizioulas identifies this as being a temporary thing, bearing no real relationship to the substance or being of the one who dons the mask to play the role. As such, the term bore no ontological import. Prestige observed that, 'From such senses it comes to express the
external being or individual self as presented to an onlooker, and of things, the expression or substance. This would seem to support Zizioulas' contention that it is a relational term, for a relationship is required for the expression of the substance to be seen or distinguished. In the sense of it being the external expression of the substance, the term came to mean particular individuals of a species. Thus, Clement of Rome uses it in this sense when referring to 'a sedition which some impetuous and rash prosopa has (sic) kindled.' Likewise, Hippolytus states 'it was necessary that Christ, as mediator between God and men, should receive a certain earnest from both, that He might be manifested as mediator between the two prosopa.' At a much later date John of Damascus (c.675 - c.749) was able to note that a prosopon means whatever is evidenced by its own proper activities and characteristics, and that the Fathers referred hypostasis (object), prosopon (individual) and atomon (particular) to the same thing.

This may appear to imply that, contrary to Zizioulas, the term prosopon means a distinct individual entity which can be conceived of as subsisting in isolation from any other such entities. However:

A prosopon or persona, then, means a distinct entity with which one enters into contact by looking at him or her, or by hearing him or her speak. In neither case does the primary emphasis of the word fall, in a subjective manner, upon the person's own inner sense of self-awareness. The terms have an objective reference, indicating the way in which the person appears to an outside observer; they suggest, not self-consciousness, but encounter and confrontation.

Zizioulas suggests that the term prosopon lacked ontological content at this time and was a purely relational term. This receives support from Prestige, who states that 'strictly speaking, prosopon was a non-metaphysical term for “individual.”' It is no wonder, then, that Greek Christians reacted with suspicion to Tertullian's use of persona, the Latin equivalent of prosopon, when speaking of the Trinity. Zizioulas says that:
the term “person,” which had already been used in the West from the time of Tertullian for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (*una substantia, tres personae*), did not meet with acceptance in the East *precisely because the term “person” lacked an ontological content* and led towards Sabellianism. That is how foreign the term “person” was to ontology.\(^{83}\)

Yet if *prosopon* lacked any ontological import, we are faced with the question as to how it is that we speak of the ‘persons’ of the Trinity. Why is it that Zizioulas wishes to base his ecclesiology on a concept which, having no ontological foundation, and hence no abiding permanence, he nonetheless claims is derived from the very being of God?

It was the term *hypostasis* which was ‘ultimately accepted as the technical description in Greek philosophical theology of what the Latins called the *personae* of God.’\(^{84}\) This term actually had the meaning of that which gives support, that which underlies an individual thing.\(^{85}\) It is thus no surprise that it acquired an identity of meaning with ‘substance’.

Athanasius drew a distinction between substance and will, Christ being of the same substance as God (the Father) and the world being purely a product of his will. Thus between God and the world there exists a profound otherness of being. This certainly deals with the problem the Fathers faced regarding the status of the world. However, what of the otherness within the very substance of God himself, which is inherently implied in the assertion that Christ has ‘always’ belonged to the Father’s being? This cannot be an otherness based on will, for that would be to concede the Arian position, ultimately making both Christ and the Holy Spirit creatures. As Zizioulas points out, whilst Athanasius has:

> demonstrated that ontological otherness is an inevitable result of the distinction between will and nature, . . . he does not show to what extent “interior” communion within one substance implies otherness at an ontological level.\(^{86}\)
For Athanasius and his contemporaries, *hypostasis* was equated with *ousia*. That being the case, how is it possible to speak of the interior otherness within one substance which is not based on will? The solution to this problem was to be found by the Cappadocians, notably Basil. Florovsky observed that given this problem the only possible solution lay in distinguishing and opposing the terms ‘substance’ and *hypostasis*: ‘It had to be logically demonstrated that these were not just different words, but distinct concepts.’

The term *hypostasis* had been used previously of the three in the Trinity, in particular by Origen and by Dionysius of Alexandria. Yet they considered it as being too strong, since it was considered as being a synonym for ‘substance’ or ‘essence’. It is thus no surprise that those who, at the Synod of Ancyra (358), spoke of there being three *hypostases* in the Godhead, were deemed to be guilty of tritheism. Indeed, if the two are equated, then such is bound to be the logical conclusion. It would seem that tritheism is unavoidable. Yet when a distinction is introduced between the two a whole new field of opportunity is opened up. But for this to happen, classical terms and concepts had to be reshaped.

Whilst the distinction introduced between the terms is revolutionary and of crucial importance, there was potentiality for it within the Greek philosophical background. With the Cappadocians, a clear distinction is made between ‘substance’ and *hypostasis*. These terms Basil now sees as being opposites.

The term *hypostasis* is dissociated from *ousia* and becomes identified with that of *prosopon*, a relational term. Thus, ‘to be and to be in relation become identical.’

Zizioulas is thereby claiming that:

It is only in relationship that identity appears as having an ontological significance, and if any relationship did not imply such an ontologically meaningful identity, then it would be no relationship.

The breakthrough made by the Cappadocians, claims Zizioulas, places the being of God on a more biblical level. The whole shift in
terminology suggests that the ontological question is not to be answered by pointing to the 'self-existent', to a being 'as it is determined by its own boundaries, but to a being which in its ekstasis breaks through these boundaries in a movement of communion.'91

It must not be assumed that because of the emphasis that Zizioulas places on the relational character of hypostasis that he wishes to dissociate the term altogether from ousia. Rather, it is his contention that it is crucial that ousia be retained. Whilst the identification of God's being with a Person (the Father) is thoroughly biblical it also resolves certain problems inherent in the homoousion concerning the relation of the Son to the Father. Whilst making the Father the 'ground' of God's being we can avoid attributing createdness to the Son only because the Son's otherness is founded upon the same substance. Of course, we must bear in mind here both the fact that for the Cappadocians there is no such thing as 'nature in the nude' but that it always has its 'mode of being', and also the relational reference that Athanasius had given to the term 'substance'.

All of this has clear existential implications for the notion of the human person. The term 'person' (hypostasis/prosopon) as formulated by the Greek Fathers 'became a way of describing not only the nature of the Divine Being but also the nature of human beings.'92 Anthropology, properly understood, is in this understanding nothing less than an extension of theology.93 In referring to the 'great leap forward' made by the Cappadocian theologians, Horne states that:

person in the Greek theology of the patristic period is not defined as ego-centric being: a person only comes into existence as a result of a relationship, i.e. in a community. There can be no such thing as autonomous existence for a person. The Son of God is a personal title only because of the nature of the relationship the Son enjoys with the Father. Similarly the Spirit is defined by the relationship with the Father and the Son. The mutual interdependence of the three "members" of
the Trinity enables the persons to be persons; they are defined not by an intrinsic characteristic but by their relationships.94

Zizioulas observes that 'communion' is no more a self-existent concept than is 'substance', but that, rather, it has a cause - and that cause is the person. Within the Trinity, it is the Father who is the cause.95 The person does not exist without communion, but paradoxically neither can communion exist without the person. This is precisely because it is the eternal love of the Father which brings about the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the personal, and free, act of a Person. This act is eternal and knows of no beginning simply because God the Father is always Father and hence always exists in relationship to the Son and the Spirit. Drawing on this primary insight of trinitarian theology, ecclesiology must seek to reflect these same principles of communion in the concrete life of the Church. Such an understanding of the nature of personhood as being essentially relational may have considerable implications for many Church structures.

For the Greek Fathers, the unity of God, the very ontological principle of divine being, is not to be found in the one substance of God but is identified with the person of the Father. It is he who is the 'cause' of both the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit.96 Personhood, insists Zizioulas, requires freedom.97 One can only be fully a person when one advances beyond one's boundaries in an ecstatic movement of communion.98 Yet this movement, if it is to be genuine, must be a free movement. There must be no constraints placed upon the person, no compulsion brought about by 'nature', because such would deprive the being of full ontological freedom, thereby rendering true personhood impossible. If God exists as Trinity because of an underlying 'substance' then the full freedom of God is diminished. If that were to be the case, then it would have considerable implications for the personhood of humans.

Kallistos Ware observes that, for Basil, 'The unity of God lies in the
communion (*koinonia*) of the Godhead.' This is an idea which is reflected by Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa:

In the life-creating nature of Father, Son and Holy Spirit there is no division, but only a continuous and inseparable communion (*koinonia*) between them. . . . It is not possible to envisage any severance or division, such as one might think of the Son without the Father, or separate the Spirit from the Son; but there is between them an ineffable and inconceivable communion (*koinonia*) and distinction.

Thus God is 'social'; there is something in him corresponding to the notion of *sobornost*. God, in the thought of the Cappadocians, is envisaged along the lines of three men each having perfect love for each other, in mutual *koinonia*. This is, of course, an analogy and as such must not be pressed too far. The divine persons are infinitely more closely linked than any three human individuals could ever be, whilst strict adherence to the conclusions of this analogy would lead us towards tritheism.

If Zizioulas is correct in his interpretation of patristic trinitarian theology, then the notion of communion, of *koinonia*, will be fundamental not only for theology but also for the very existence and nature of the Church. Our reflections on the being of God, says Zizioulas, lead to two fundamental propositions in relation to anthropology and ecclesiology:

(a) There is no true being without communion. Nothing exists as an "individual," conceivable in itself. Communion is an ontological category.

(b) Communion which does not come from a "hypostasis," that is, a concrete and free person, and which does not lead to "hypostases," that is, concrete and free persons, is not an "image" of the being of God. The person cannot exist without communion; but every form of communion which denies or suppresses the individual is inadmissible.

The basis of communion is - and can only be - love, for 'God is love' (1 Jn. 4:8). This has long been recognized in both Eastern and
Western traditions. It is implied in Augustine’s analogy of the Trinity based on love. Here, the Father is seen as lover, the Son as the beloved and the Holy Spirit as the bond of love which unites the two, the koineonía between them. Now, although this can most certainly be understood in an interpersonal way, it yet suffers from the deficiency of apparently reducing the status of the Spirit to an impersonal ‘thing’, a ‘substance’ which links the Father and the Son. Whilst one would hardly lay the blame at the door of Augustine, it remains true to say that for many Western Christians this is precisely what the Holy Spirit is - a sort of outpouring of a divine commodity, perhaps analogous to water pouring from a tap.

Conclusion

‘God is love’ (1 Jn. 4:8). It is this biblical attestation that lies at the root of Zizioulas’ theology of the person, be it of the personhood of God or of humanity, which is itself derived solely from an understanding of that of God. The fact that God is love means that God is a community of persons (even, if we follow Richard of St. Victor, necessarily a Trinity), not a lonely monad. It is fundamental to the concept of personhood that the person is ontologically free in the fullest sense. This freedom must ultimately include the freedom from the necessity of being, a freedom from the sheer necessity of existing at all. As uncreated, God - unlike humanity - is free from the necessity of existence. Yet to be totally free (and he must be so if he is to be fully personal) he must also be free of the ‘necessity’ of being ontologically free by virtue of his divine ‘nature’. According to Zizioulas, what makes God ontologically free in the fullest sense is:

the way in which he transcends and abolishes the ontological necessity of the substance of being God as Father, that is, as he who “begets” the Son and “brings forth” the Spirit. This ecstatic character of God, the fact that his being is identical with an act of communion, ensures the transcendence of the ontological necessity which His substance would have demanded - if the substance were the primary ontological predicate of God - and replaces this necessity with the free self-
Thus the very being of God as Trinity depends, not on substance or nature, but rather on the person of God the Father. The Father does not first of all exist alone and only then, as an act of will become Trinity. That route leads inexorably to Arianism. Rather, being who he is, God is eternally Trinity. There is no time within God and therefore it is a contradiction to assert a temporal priority to the Father over the Son and the Spirit, who are from eternity God. Yet this priority is not the result of nature or substance but rather of the person of the Father. It is also important that we understand that, for Zizioulas, love is not an emanation from God, it is not a ‘property’ of God, ‘something’ which he ‘possesses’ in addition to his being, but is rather constitutive of his being: ‘it is that which makes God what he is, the one God. Thus love ceases to be a qualifying - i.e. secondary - property of being and becomes the supreme ontological predicate.’

Yet it must be remembered that love here is not to be seen as being the common nature of the three persons. Rather, it is to be identified with the Father. Zizioulas refers to 1 Jn. 4:7-17 in support of this, pointing out that the text is referring explicitly to the Father.

Zizioulas wishes to point out that God is ‘immortal’ not by virtue of his nature, for that would be to introduce necessity into God. Such would be incompatible with the totality of God’s freedom. Rather, Zizioulas is emphatic that this is the direct result of his personal existence as communion:

The life of God is eternal because it is personal. That is to say, it is realized as an expression of free communion, as love. Life and love are identified in the person: the person does not die only because it is loved and loves; outside the communion of love the person loses its uniqueness and becomes a being like other beings, a “thing” without absolute “identity” and “name,” without a face.

Zizioulas’ understanding of personhood finds support in the work of
Ware, who is able, through using sources as diverse as Augustine, Basil and Richard of St. Victor, to present an explanation of the nature of the human person founded upon a social understanding of the Trinity. This he is able to do due to the strong emphasis in Orthodox theology, both ancient and modern, on the theology of the *imago Dei* in the human person. In agreement with Zizioulas, Ware asserts that this means thinking of God (and hence man) in terms of life and love rather than in terms of substance. This is not a solely Orthodox strain of thought, finding currency as it does in a number of contemporary theologians.

Central to Ware’s account of the Trinitarian relationships is his stress on the doctrine of *perichoresis*. By this is meant the total receptivity of each of the divine persons to the other two, in a movement of utter love and openness. Each person ‘contains’ the other two and ‘moves’ within them. According to Gregory of Nyssa:

> All that is the Father’s is seen in the Son, and all that is the Son’s belongs also to the Father. For the whole Son abides in the Father, and he has in his turn the whole Father abiding in himself.

Ware, correctly in my view, refutes allegations that the social understanding of the Trinity necessarily leads to tritheism. He argues that according to the social understanding of the Trinity, correctly understood, there are not three distinct centres of self-consciousness in God. Rather, ‘Father, Son and Holy Spirit each express a special ‘face’, a distinct ‘aspect’ or ‘voice’ of divine being.’ However, if there is no distinct consciousness in the Persons, then there is the risk that, ultimately, there is little actual difference between this version of the Trinity and that offered by modalism. It is all very well to construct a theology based on this type of Trinitarian thought, but there is still the suspicion that any Trinitarian theology must be reducible to either tritheism or modalism.

How is all this related to an understanding of humanity? Ware
points out that the making of humanity is a Trinitarian act, a 'conciliar' act. From early times, Christian writers saw the use of the plural in Gen. 1:26 as being indicative of this. Humanity, created in the image of God, is a social being. This is not something which is added to the basic nature of man, so that he first exists as a solitary unit and then relates to others. Rather, from his earliest moments he can exist only in relationship with others:

Who does not know that the human animal is tame and social, not solitary and wild? For nothing is so characteristic of our nature as to communicate with one another, and to need one another, and to love our own kind?\footnote{113}

However, whilst Zizioulas certainly makes a relational personality, Jesus Christ, central to his entire theological programme, nevertheless there are certain areas to which I would wish, at this point, to call attention.

In the first place, Zizioulas elaborates a theological anthropology on the basis of what he sees as being a patristic understanding of the human person, which itself depends on the understanding, developed particularly by Athanasius and more fully by the Cappadocian theologians, of the nature of the Triune God. Certainly, I would agree that there \textbf{is} a personalist anthropology, derived from Trinitarian principles, but would wish to exercise more caution with regard to inferring from this a highly developed anthropology than does Zizioulas. Whilst agreeing with much of Zizioulas' analysis of the human situation and on the necessity of a relational approach to the human person, I would nevertheless urge a degree of caution before accepting Zizioulas' emphatic rejection of the individual.

For Zizioulas, Christ is essentially a relational figure even during his incarnate life on earth. Yet is this not, at least to some extent, questionable? During his life, if the Gospel accounts are accepted, Jesus appears to have lived a life spent largely in isolation precisely because this must be the experience of any human being within a fallen world. In becoming fully human, Christ accepted the

41
limitations which are 'natural' to us, including the loneliness which is so characteristic of our existence. This remains true even of his relationship with his disciples, who so frequently and so radically misunderstood both him and his mission. This adoption by Christ of a humanity which experiences the isolation derived from existing in a fallen world is a necessary consequence of the patristic maxim, 'Whatever is unassumed is unhealed.'

Secondly, although this is something which shall have to await further development until after an examination of Zizioulas' vision of how the realization of personhood is actually attained by human beings in this fallen world, I would wish to question his conclusion that 'Reconciliation with God is a necessary precondition for reconciliation with any "other."' This seems somewhat presumptuous, given the empirical witness of many atheistic humanists to achieving precisely the sort of existential communion with the 'other' described by Zizioulas. Moreover, given his assertion that it is in the Church that 'communion with the other reflects fully the relation between communion and otherness in the Holy Trinity, in Christ and in the Spirit,' I find myself in disagreement with him on this point. Although this is a criticism of Zizioulas' viewpoint which can only be developed in the light of what Zizioulas says regarding baptism and the role of the Holy Spirit, I would at this stage note that nowhere does Zizioulas attempt to analyse the implications of his theological position in the light of contemporary concerns to construct an explication of the Christian faith in connection with a global theology. However, this is a criticism which could, even today, be made about much Christian theology.

Overall, Zizioulas is offering us a powerful vision of the Trinitarian God which can be used as the basis of a highly consistent ecclesiology and anthropology. Let us now see where Zizioulas leads us with regard to the actual realization of this concept of personhood in community and its effect on our understanding of the nature of authority in the Church.
Chapter One

Notes


4. St. Maximus the Confessor's *Mystagogy*, Chapter 1. Quoted in Archimandrite Vasileios (Gondikakis), *Hymn of Entry: Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church* (ET Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1984), p.41. It is intriguing to observe that Maximus, whose theology has influenced Zizioulas so deeply, is now becoming better known and more widely appreciated as one of Christianity’s most vigorous and creative theologians.


12 J. Zizioulas, *On Being a Person*, p.44.


14. Citing Rom. 3:9-18, Robert Arida insists that:
   The beauty, harmony, unity, joy and peace of life are
disrupted by ugliness, division, alienation, misery and death. Through sin and ignorance creation, led by man, embarks on a course of self-destruction and ceases to be a means of communion with God. Falling from knowledge into ignorance, man becomes absorbed by the laws of biological existence. Man's communal existence with God and creation ceases and is replaced by an existence of self-preservation and self-assertion which misuses and manipulates everyone and everything, including God.'


21. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.42, where he draws his inspiration from Kirilov’s words in Dostoevsky’s, *The Possessed*:

>'Every man who desires to attain total freedom must be bold enough to put an end to his life. . . . This is the ultimate limit of freedom; this is all; there is nothing beyond this. Whoever dares to commit suicide becomes God. Everyone can do this and so bring the existence of God to an end, and then there will be absolutely nothing. . . .'


26. In religious/spiritual spheres, this is perhaps clearly reflected in the contemporary growth and allure of the so-called 'New Age Movement'. Within this highly disparate umbrella grouping can
be found an enormous range of loose associations which have, as perhaps one of their few common unifying features, a stress on individuality, in which the corporate life of a community is subservient to the needs of the individuals who make up that community. The community is important only to the extent to which it serves these individual needs and for as long as it is perceived to do so.

With reference to the sociological theory developed by R. Bellah, J. Neil Alexander has observed that much modern religion should be considered not so much in terms of 'communities' as in terms of 'life-style enclaves':

'Characteristic of a "life-style enclave" is the fragmentation of the individuals who participate in the group, that is, they invest only partially in the group, keeping entire areas of life divorced from the group's interactions. A secondary characteristic is that the group generally shares a fragmented agenda as the result of a very clear, and usually narrow, understanding of itself and its reason for existence.'


27. The first formal ontological definition of 'person' was given by the great Christian philosopher Boethius (c.487 - c.524), who defined the person as 'persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia' ('The person is an individual substance of a rational nature'). In drawing creatively on Platonic thought, Boethius produced a concept of human nature as a kind of underlying substance in which individuals necessarily participate: 'These individuals owed their being to that prior substance to which has been added the element of "rationality" as they emerge into individual and separate existences.' (B. Horne, *Person and Community*, p.33). This definition, adopted as it was by mediaeval Scholastic theologians, passed into the general philosophical framework of Western philosophy. Thomas Aquinas himself defined personhood in terms drawn directly from Boethius' definition:

'For person in general signifies the individual substance of a rational nature. The individual in itself is undivided, but is distinct from others. Therefore person in any nature signifies that which is distinct in that nature . . . .'


Zizioulas is highly critical of this approach, in which the emphasis is on rationality and individuality (cf. J. Zizioulas, *Human Capacity and Human Incapacity*, pp. 405ff.). However, in adopting such a critical approach, Zizioulas is
almost dismissive of Boethius and of the important contribution to human development this line of thinking has made. Whilst I would not wish to push it too far, it is instructive to note that the stress on the importance of the individual over against society, and the individual's inherent worth, arose in precisely those areas in which this understanding of personhood became important. This is, perhaps, in contrast to areas in which the importance of the individual was not sufficiently accented.

This, of course, is not to deny the validity in some of Zizioulas' strictures, for it is always possible to so emphasize a truth to the extent that it ceases to reflect faithfully the entire picture. Thus, for example, Jeremy Bentham went so far as to hold that, 'the community is a fictitious body composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting its members.' Quoted in A. Thatcher, Truly a Person, Truly God [London: SPCK, 1990], p.122.

28. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.27.


30. A. Thatcher, Truly a Person, Truly God, p.123. Arguably, it is just this sort of emphasis on the almost absolute priority of the individual over the community which led to the worst excesses of economic and political life in the United Kingdom during the 1980s in particular.

31. In Platonic thought, the soul is not permanently united to the body of a human but is 'liberated' from it at death and may then be united to another human body, or even to that of an animal. On this basis, asserts Zizioulas, the concept of the person is impossible. Cf. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.28, with reference to Plato's Timeaus, 41 Df; also Phaedo, 249 B; Republic, 618 A; Timaeus, 42 BC. With regard to the philosophy of Aristotle, it offers:

'with its emphasis on the concrete and the individual . . . the basis of a certain concept of the person, but the inability of this philosophy to provide permanence, some kind of continuity and "eternal life," for the total psychosomatic entity of man renders impossible the union of the person with the "substance" (οὐσία) of man, that is, with a true ontology.'

J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.28.

32. J. Zizioulas, On Being a Person, p.35.

'Man's personhood should not be understood in terms of "personality", i.e. of a complex of natural qualities which are in some sense "possessed" by or "contained" in the human individuum. On the contrary, being a person is basically different from being an individual or "personality" in that the person cannot be conceived in itself as a static entity, but only as it relates to. Thus personhood implies the "openness of being", and even more than that, the ek-stasis of being, i.e. a movement towards communion which leads to a transcendence of the boundaries of the 'self' and thus to freedom. At the same time, and in contrast to the partiality of the individual which is subject to addition and combination, the person in its ekstatic character reveals its being in a catholic, i.e. integral and undivided way, and thus in its being ekstatic it becomes hypostatic, i.e. the bearer of its nature in its totality.'

In a footnote to the above (n.2), Zizioulas notes that: 'The term ek-stasis in this sense is known mainly through the Philosophy of M. Heidegger. Yet, long before him, this term was used in the mystical writings of the Greek Fathers (Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus, etc.) in basically the same sense. C. Yannaras (The Ontological Content of the Theological Notion of Person, 1970 - in Greek) makes a remarkable attempt to utilize Heidegger's philosophy for a re-interpretation of Eastern Orthodox theology today. In spite of fundamental reservations one may have concerning the possibility of such a use of Heidegger, Yannaras' work remains extremely helpful.'


35. Zizioulas suggests that in our culture we view it as a necessity that we should be protected from 'the other'. This, he argues, can be seen in our insistence on enshrining the 'rights of the individual' in constitutions and laws. Zizioulas believes that this indicates that: 'In our culture protection from the other is a fundamental necessity. We feel more and more threatened by the presence of the other. We are forced and even encouraged to consider the other as our enemy before we can treat him or her as our friend. Communion with the other is not spontaneous; it is built upon fences which protect us from the dangers implicit in the other's presence. We accept the other only insofar as he is useful for
our individual happiness.'
J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, pp.8, 10.

36. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.43:
'Thus "the other" becomes a threat to the person, its "hell" and its "fall," to recall the words of Sartre. Once again the concept of the person leads human existence to an impasse: humanism proves unable to affirm personhood.'

37. J. Zizioulas, *On Being a Person*, p.34.

38. Zizioulas has suggested that, biologically speaking, death as an event may be necessary and even welcome, as it helps to perpetuate life in the form of the species (cf. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.47). If man as an individual is unimportant and social man all-important, then death is not meaningless, ensuring as it does the survival of the race and the survival of the parents in the faces of their children. However, Zizioulas also notes that when the human being is regarded as person, that is, as a unique, relational being, then death cannot be other than something which is tragic and unacceptable, as being the very denial of personhood, for 'what does not survive is the concrete and unique identity, the person.' (J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.47).


41. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.43.


43. Zizioulas finds himself, in this respect, in agreement with modern psychological understandings of the basically relational character of the person. As long ago as 1955 an eminent psychologist, G.W. Allport, emphasized the key importance in the development of the mature person of 'self-extension,' i.e. the ability to place our energies and interests outside ourselves, to set aside self-interest and attend to a cause or value which extends beyond our immediate sphere of operations. See M. Kincaid, *How to Improve Learning in RE* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), p.64, for a discussion on the educational applications of such insights. Kincaid refers to G.W. Allport, *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of*
Personality (Yale, 1955).

44. 'Reconciliation with God is a necessary precondition for reconciliation with any "other."' J. Zizioulas, Communion and Otherness, p.349.

John Zizioulas, at the very start of the main body of Being As Communion (p.27), makes the claim that 'The person both as a concept and as a living reality is purely the product of Patristic thought.' This has importance for if it is indeed so then the concept of personhood was formulated to express specific Christian theological beliefs. For Zizioulas, as for other Orthodox writers:

'Theological anthropology must be constructed from the top down, beginning from trinitarian and Christological dogma, in order to discover in human reality the unity of nature and the multiplicity of created hypostases, the will which is a function of the common nature, the possession of divine grace by created persons, etc. Then one will understand the extent to which the anthropological realities of our everyday experience are deformed by sin and correspond little to the pure norms of the new creation which is realized in the Church.'


Of course, it is important to remember that to refer to the Greek conception of God is in itself an over-simplification. In the course of Greek history there were many conceptions of God, or gods, as the Greeks, with the exception of a number of the most educated, were polytheistic in their religious beliefs. It would also be largely true to say that even those of a philosophical disposition were not monotheists in the strict sense, being rather inclined to a henotheistic synthesis of the various deities of their age (see R. Grant, Gods and the One God [London: SPCK, 1986], Chapter Six, for a brief but useful discussion on this matter). In spite of this, it is possible to identify certain commonly-held preconceptions among the various schools of post-Socratic Greek philosophy.

For the Greeks, there existed a basic unity between God and the universe. Greek ontology was, at root, basically monistic, God and the world forming an unbreakable unity. Being linked to the world, God was ultimately lacking in full ontological freedom. God is not free in regard to the world but is rather bound by certain 'givens', so that, as Zizioulas observes:

"The creation of the world takes place on the basis of this principle of necessary unity, and it is for this
reason that the creator does not simply choose to but must make the world spherical, since the spherical shape is that of unity and thus of perfection.'

J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.29, n.4.

Moreover, God has to take account of the 'ideas' of justice, symmetry and so forth which exist independently of him. Because of this lack of freedom, God cannot be ultimately truly personal because to be a person one must be free to transcend one's own boundaries and the God of Greek philosophy, be it of the Platonic variety or of any other, is manifestly not free in this respect. Ultimately, such a view leads to a universe in which, no matter how beautiful and ordered it might be, there is no ultimate freedom and thus no true personhood. As Zizioulas has explained, 'Freedom in antiquity always had a restricted moral sense, and did not involve the question of the being of the world, which was a "given" and an eternal reality for the Greeks.' (J. Zizioulas, The Contribution of Cappadocia to Christian Thought, pp.31-32.). Thus we can identify freedom as being an essential part of what it is to be a person, either with regard to God or, indeed, to humanity. Zizioulas believes that the Imago Dei in humanity is none other than the reaching out for this ontological freedom. See his On Being a Person, especially pp.42-44. In this he receives strong support in a fascinating and fundamentally important article by Christoph Schwobel, Imago Libertatis: Human and Divine Freedom in C.E. Gunton (ed.) God and Freedom (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995). Schwobel states:

'That freedom is the imago Dei in humanity is an idea which has had a firm place in the theological tradition since Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) defended it in his tractatus de gratia et libero arbitrio.'

C. Schwobel, in God and Freedom, p.72.

46. See the discussion in J. Zizioulas. On Being a Person, pp.37ff.

47. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.17.


Zizioulas identifies prosopon as originally having the anatomical meaning of the part of the head 'below the cranium', which is to say the face (Being As Communion, p.31). It was probably due to this meaning that the term quickly came to be identified with
the mask of the actor in Greek drama, which was termed προσωπεῖον. From this, there came not only a full identification of terms but also prosopon soon came to also mean not only the mask of the actor, but also his role, or 'character' in the play. This usage has been retained down to our own time in the expression Dramatis Personae, persona being the Latin equivalent of prosopon. Zizioulas suggests that the reason for prosopon becoming quickly identified with the mask, and hence the role, of the actor lies at a deeper level than any mere resemblance of the mask to the real character. He contends that the theatre is the setting where:

‘the conflicts between human freedom and the rational necessity of a unifies and harmonious world, as they were understood by the ancient Greeks, are worked out in dramatic form. It is precisely in the theater that man strives to become a “person,” to rise up against this harmonious unity which oppresses him a’s rational and moral necessity.’

J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.32.

It is thus in the theatre that man strives against fate, against an impersonal world, seeking to assert his own unique individuality. It is here, too, that he ultimately learns that there is no freedom in this world and that his “person” is, at the end of the day, merely a “mask,” something which has no permanence and hence no ultimate value and is therefore alien to man’s real being. Yet, paradoxically, this “mask” has given man a taste of freedom, a certain freedom and identity which he is denied in the world he inhabits. The mask enabled man to feel, for a time, that he is a free and unique being, although this is in fact an illusion, for he knows he cannot win his freedom in a world governed by necessity. Thus to the ancient Greeks to be a “person” is to have something added to one’s basic being; the person is not his true being. Thus, although prosopon certainly points towards the “person” it is not identical with the essence of man. Therefore it is impossible, avers Zizioulas, for it to offer the basis of an ontology.

Writing many years prior to Zizioulas, G.L. Prestige held that although prosopon can and often did mean mask, it is sometimes expressly opposed to this meaning. In support of this claim, Prestige cites Clement who, in inveighing against women painting their faces, says that they have made their prosopa into prosopeta (God in Patristic Thought, [London: SPCK, 19562], p.157). Prestige cites further evidence from this era to support his contention that the term could be opposed to the sense of a mask. Yet, firstly, the usage of the term in the first and second centuries of the Christian era need tell us but little of the import the term bore in earlier ages, as language undergoes change and development which may sometimes be of a quite radical nature. Furthermore, Prestige himself admits that the term was used of the mask and character of actors in
the drama. This would seem to imply that Zizioulas may well be correct in identifying the term as referring to something that is somehow transient and unrelated ontologically to the real identity of the individual. At least, it may be true at this stage. Whether or not it was to remain so is an entirely different matter!

Ware, in an interesting article on theological anthropology, argues that the Greek term *prosopon* is derived from two terms, *pros*, meaning ‘towards’, and *opis*, meaning ‘face’ or ‘aspect’. Therefore:

'A *prosopon* . . . then, means a distinct entity with which one enters into contact by looking at him or her, or by hearing him or her speak. In neither case does the primary emphasis of the word fall, in a subjective manner, upon the person's own inner sense of self-awareness.'


Now, whilst it may be true that the *prosopon* does not bear the full ontological meaning of *hypostasis*, is Zizioulas accurate in believing that there is no relation between the two? If Ware is correct, then the *prosopon* must surely present at least some aspect of the underlying *hypostasis* to the observer. That being so, I suggest that Zizioulas is removing *prosopon* too far from bearing any ontological content and that this may be much less clear-cut than he would suggest.

I would also suggest that, in relation to its theatrical usage, the mask of the actor served not so much as to hide the real, underlying character and present something that had no real attachment to it. Rather, the mask served to identify the character in the play. This permitted some degree of ontological reference (in however slight a way) to the *prosopon*, for it identifies it as a real, individual character. It also allows some relational reference, for it is the mask that allows the spectators to relate to the character whom the actor is portraying. This would therefore reinforce the suggestion that the Fathers of the fourth century had something on which to latch their crucial developments in this field.

Zizioulas, not surprisingly, reaches similar conclusions with regard to the Latin equivalent, *persona*. He sees its origins in an old Etruscan term *phersu*, again meaning a theatrical mask (Being As Communion, p.33). He does admit that, anthropologically speaking, the Latin term bears more of the meaning of concrete individuality than its Greek equivalent, but that:

'in its sociological and later on in its legal usage it never ceased to express the ancient Greek προσωποσ or προσωποφωσ in its theatrical nuance of role: *persona* is the role which one plays in one’s social or legal
relationships, the moral or "legal" person which either collectively or individually has nothing to do with the ontology of the person.'

**Being As Communion**, p.34.

Roman thought, argues Zizioulas, being essentially organizational and social, was not concerned with ontological questions and it should thus come as no surprise to find that *persona* has no ontological content. Such a view allows man to have more than one *prosopa*. A man may thus have various roles, such as husband, father, lawyer and author. Each of these is a *separate persona* and as such has no relationship with the underlying essential nature of the individual.

Adrian Thatcher agrees with Zizioulas on this matter, identifying the term with an original use in Roman law. The *persona* here is a party to a legal contract, having rights and duties. By the first century AD the term was commonly used to mean simply an individual human being. (A. Thatcher, *Truly A Person, Truly God*, pp.6-7).

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51. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.35.

52. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.17. Horne correctly states that:

'The word and the concept of the person did not enter Christian theology until the beginning of the third century when it was used by Tertullian (160-220), not as a means of describing human beings, but as a means of talking about the being of God: the triune God worshipped by Christians.'


54. Deeply imprinted upon the Orthodox spiritual psyche are the words of the Psalmist, 'You are gods' (Ps. 82:6), quoted by Jesus (Jn. 10:34). Ware remarks that:

'In the Orthodox understanding Christianity signifies not merely an adherence to certain dogmas, not merely an exterior imitation of Christ through moral effort, but direct union with the living God, the total transformation of the human person by divine grace and glory.'


55. *Theosis* is often held to be a peculiarly Orthodox doctrine, depending as it does upon the distinction between the 'essence' and 'energies' of God. This distinction has been traditionally rejected in the West, where emphasis has been placed upon the 'beatific vision,' the vision of God as he is, which will be enjoyed.
in full in heaven. Yet we need not see these two views as standing, necessarily, in opposition. God cannot be fully known as he is by creatures (1 Tim. 6:16) but has to be known in his action and self-disclosure. Nevertheless, these 'energies' are truly God and therefore in knowing God's energies we know the living God. Interestingly, it is precisely at a time when theology is becoming more aware of the basically corporate nature of Christianity that awareness of theosis is becoming increasingly common in the West, not as an esoteric Eastern doctrine, but as something which is a common inheritance of the whole Christian community. As one commentator has recently observed:

'The Christian is in fact incorporated into the life of the Triune God. He or she is incorporated, not as an individual, but in community, as God's sons and daughters. They are incorporated into the Body of Christ; they become Church.'


56. This approach is intimately connected to the theology of 'image' and 'likeness' which fascinated so many of the Fathers and has been held dear in Orthodoxy ever since.

57. V. Lossky, In the Image and Likeness of God, p.126.

58. See, for example, K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, III.1 (ET Edinburgh, 1958), pp.191ff.


60. V. Lossky, In the Image and Likeness of God, p.129.

61. See the interesting discussion of this passage in G. von Rad, Genesis (Revised edition, London: SCM, 1972), pp.57-60. For an interpretation which tends to wish to see something more 'traditional' in this passage, see B. Vawter, A Path Through Genesis (London: Sheed & Ward, 1957, 1966), pp.43-45.

62. It is noteworthy that, for Orthodoxy, it is the Septuagint version of the Old Testament which is authoritative, rather than the Hebrew. The reasons for this are not simple. On the one hand, the majority of references to the Old Testament in the New Testament books are from the Septuagint, rather than from the Hebrew version. This no doubt lent weight to the claims of the Septuagint to be the inspired version of Scripture. Secondly, we must remember that by the time the Church was becoming settled, the main thrust of its missionary activity, whether to Jews or Gentiles, took place outside of Palestine and
it therefore became natural to use the Greek version of the Scriptures, as being the one in common Jewish usage anyway. Beyond that, the Septuagint had the benefit, as far as the Christians were concerned, in being doctrinally advantageous to them, rather than to the Jews, in regard to certain key passages. The fact that the Early Church regarded the Septuagint, rather than the Hebrew, as authoritative, without any significant doubts being expressed until at least the time of Origen, is certainly a decisive factor in this version being the basis of all authoritative translations of the Old Testament for the Orthodox Churches today. On the Septuagint in general and its use in the Early Church, see E. Lohse, The New Testament Environment (ET London: SCM, 1976), pp.128ff.

Lossky makes a forthright attack on those theologians who would wish to proscribe the theology of the image on the grounds of it being foreign to the biblical revelation. He wished to make it clear that he believed that theology must not have its limits drawn by a strict adherence to the literal Hebrew text of the Bible. That, he considers, is a false literalism which does not take seriously the concept of theological development. Lossky, in fact, contrasts sharply:

'a dead God of a particular school of Biblical purists who are too wedded to the Hebraic letter, which they study within the historical context of its redaction, to be able to recognize the life (dynamic, and in this sense never "pure") and the living tradition which leads to the discovery in the ancient texts of a meaning ever new, adapted to each new stage of the divine economy before Christ. It is in the name of a God reduced to the categories of an abstract Judaism, the God of an inert book duly studied, that Biblical science, setting itself up as a theology, wants to proscribe the theology of the image by declaring it foreign to Revelation.'

V. Lossky, In the Image and Likeness of God, p.132.

John Zizioulas, who also wishes to affirm the importance of the theology of the image for Christian anthropology, characteristically draws our attention to a statement of Maximus the Confessor which he believes may be of some help: 'The things of the Old Testament are shadow (σκιά); those of the New Testament are image (εἰκών); and those of the future state are truth (ἀλήθεια).’ Cited in J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.99.

Someone taking this approach might reasonably argue that one cannot determine Christian doctrine on the basis of the limits of the Old Testament alone, but must rather, precisely because the Old Testament is not complete in itself but rather represents a partial revelation, be subject to the theological consciousness derived from the living reflection of the Church. However, that
is rather to evade the issue of the meaning of the text for the original author within his own historical and theological context. I would suggest that, whilst a slavish literalism should be avoided, nevertheless one cannot blithely ignore or change the meaning of a Scriptural text because, as it stands, it does not serve one's purposes.


65. Mantzarides suggests, independently of Zizioulas, whom somewhat surprisingly he does not refer to, that for Palamas, as for many other Greek Fathers, freedom or ‘free will’ is seen as the crucial component of humanity fashioned in the image of God. Not only is this in accord with the position of Bernard of Clairvaux, but also with that taken by Zizioulas. Cf. G.I. Mantzarides, *The Deification of Man*, p.20.


68. ‘The dogma of the Holy Trinity is not only the great mystery of Christian theology, but also the great proclamation of the life of man as lived with God and in accordance with God.’ G.I. Mantzarides, *The Ethical Significance of the Trinitarian Dogma in Sobornost*, Series 5, No. 10 (1970), p.720.


70. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.35.

71. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.36.


In order to make it plain that the Son's being in relation to the Father is different from that of creation, Athanasius developed a distinction between substance and will. Thus, Christ's being belongs to the substance of God whilst the world's being belongs rather to the will of God. The importance of this, Zizioulas argues, is that:

‘through this distinction between substance and will, Athanasius was in a position to break out of the closed ontology of the Greeks which linked God to the world by an ontological *syggeneia*. . . . To be is not the same as to will or, hence, as to act.’

J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.84.

73. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.84.
74. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.84.

75. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.85, n.60.

76. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.16.


85. *Hypostasis* is a term which was of central importance to the Greek Patristic writers. Both Ware (*The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*) and Prestige (*God in Patristic Thought*) identify the term as being connected with the Greek verb *hyphistemi*:

> Thus, understood transitively, *hyphistemi* means that which “stands under” qualities or attributes, giving them solidarity and genuine existence; understood intransitively, it means that which has firm subsistence, stability and durability, as contrasted with a mirage or a passing phase.

K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.14. Prestige (*God in Patristic Thought*, pp.163-164) gives some illuminating examples of the various uses this term could possess. Thus, for example, it could be used of the dregs of wine in the cask. However, it also occurs in the wider sense to denote the underneath or hidden part of any object, as for instance in regard to counterfeit coins which, when dipped in gold, present a bright surface, but whose *hypostasis* is base metal. Zizioulas remarks that:

> “The notion of *hypostasis* was for a long time identical with that of “substance”. As such it basically served the same purpose which the term “substance” served since Aristotle, namely to answer the ultimate ontological question: what is it that makes a particular being be itself and thus be at all?”
Thus Zizioulas makes it clear that for most of the history of Greek thought the terms *ousia* and *hypostasis* were considered as being synonymous. This remained the case even long into the Christian era. Zizioulas justifies this claim by referring to a letter of St. Athanasius, which unambiguously identifies the two terms:

*hypostasis* is *ousia* and has no other meaning apart from being (ιδίαν) itself. . . . For *hypostasis* and *ousia* are existence (ἐστι καὶ

*υπάρχει*).


Thus, for Zizioulas, the term *hypostasis* had no connection whatsoever with *prosopon* until the Cappadocians made a radical shift in terminology and concepts. That jump was to have crucial implications for the whole of theology and consequently for the ontology of the person.

86. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.87.


Lossky is emphatic that:

'It was a great terminological discovery to introduce a distinction between two synonyms in order to express the irreducibility of the *υπόστασις* to the *οὐσία* and of the person to the essence, without, however, opposing them as two different realities.'


88. We should note, however, that Lossky observes that the terms cannot, in Trinitarian theology, be opposed, precisely because they remain synonyms (V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p.113). He goes on to further clarify this point, arguing as follows:

'why choose this identical meaning except to maintain in what is common the sense of the concrete *οὐσία* and to eliminate from the particular all limitations proper to the individual, so that the *υπόστασις* established by the Fathers is not to be sought in the letter of its conceptual expression but rather between that expression and the identity of the two concepts which would have been proper to "secular philosophy."


Basil himself held that *hypostasis* is really closer in meaning to 'essence' or 'first essence'. The term 'essence' or 'substance'
becomes identical to the Aristotelian ‘second essence,’ which signifies common or generic being. However:

‘For Basil . . . “essence” does not designate only common features which are secondary or derived, or which are differentiated and distinguished by quality. “Essence” primarily refers to the invisible numeric unity of Divine Being and Life. “Essence is Being.”


89. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.88.
90. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.88.
91. J. Zizioulas, Human Capacity and Human Incapacity, p.409. This position would seem to gain support from Florovsky, who appears to be suggesting that Basil insisted on the confession of three hypostases, and was not satisfied by the acknowledgement of three persons precisely because it lacked the ontological reference of hypostases and could thus be interpreted in a Sabellian manner. Cf. G. Florovsky, The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century, p.96.
92. B. Horne, Person and Community, p.35.
93. This is because:

‘the empirical human individual can be the object of our rational knowledge, but the human person remains a mystery. . . . It is the Trinitarian dogma as it was expressed in the first Ecumenical Councils that will give us an inkling of what we mean by person, not only in God but on the human level too, because man is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).’

S. Braunschweiler, The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Unity in Sobornost, Series 4 (1964), p.638. This insight is fully in accord with Zizioulas’ own starting-point, namely, the doctrine of the Trinity.
94. B. Horne, Person and Community, p.35.
95. Cf. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.17.
96. This point makes it easier to understand the Eastern opposition to the Filioque, for this interpolation in the Creed would appear to make the ultimate position of the Father as ‘ground’ or ‘source’ of the Trinity less secure and instead replace it with, once more, the idea of an anterior, underlying substance in God, so that God first is and only then does he relate. This is of importance for our view of personhood, for if the ontological
principle of the Trinity is, instead of this, identified with a person, the Father, we do not bind the personal freedom of God: ‘the being of God is not an ontological ‘necessity’ or a simple “reality” for God - but we ascribe the being of God to His personal freedom. In a more analytical way this means that God, as Father and not as substance, perpetually confirms through “being” His free will to exist.’

J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.41.

97. J. Zizioulas, Human Capacity and Human Incapacity, p.408.

98. For Zizioulas, ‘ekstatic’ (more recently, ‘ecstatic’) means ‘able to stand outside’ oneself, a language and concern which finds resonance in the thought of Yannaras, among others. In this we can see the person as having the ability to stand outside itself and know its relation to all things beyond itself. The person alone can both give and receive love (eros) in the true sense. It is precisely in loving, rather than through intellectual engagement, that the person can know other persons and, at one and the same time, be known by them. Knowledge of the person, as distinct from the individual (atomon), is the key to all real knowledge of the reality around us. Knowledge of the person comes before knowledge of the essential being (austà) or the nature (physis) of any species or thing which exists. Carefully applied, the implications of this approach for humanity’s relations with the natural world are both considerable and important.


100. Sobornost’, a term which has its origins in the theological thought of the great Russian Slavophile philosopher and theologian, A.S. Khomiakov (1804-1860), has become one of the most important ecclesiological concepts of our times, not only in the Orthodox Churches but also within the Western ecumenical arena.

In his pioneering, if somewhat idiosyncratic, ecclesiology, Khomiakov sought an ecclesiology which would avoid what he perceived to be the pitfalls of the ‘official’ Russian theology of his era, which had become embroiled in an essentially alien Western domestic debate. Yet at the same time he wished to remain truly faithful to the Scriptures and Patristic sources. According to one commentator:

‘Looking back to the Kiev theologians, with their indebtedness to Latin scholasticism, Khomiakov could find only a community based on external authority, without that deep inner appropriation
which the concept of freedom entails. The school of Prokopovich, on the other hand, typified Protestant ecclesiology in that, striving for inner liberty, its members lost sight of the importance of visible unity in an anomic of spiritual anarchy from which only the State could save them. Yet the ecclesial consciousness of the Russian Church combined freedom with unity.'


This uniting of the two seemingly contradictory principles of unity and freedom Khomiakov achieves through his fundamental concept of *Sobornost*'. By being at once the basis of the unity of the Church and the paradigm for all authority in the Church, *sobornost* thus unites both 'unity' and 'freedom' in a single principle.

The actual meaning of *sobornost* is difficult to render succinctly in English. The term itself is based on the text of a late mediaeval Slavonic revision of the Creed of Nicaeae-Constantinople, though Khomiakov and his circle evidently believed it originated with Saints Cyril and Methodias, the Apostles to the Slavs. Originally, it would seem, the relevant section of the Creed, concerning the Church, read *tvo edinou svtatou kafolitcheskoou i apostolikoou tserkou.* However, Nichols (*The Ecclesiology of N.N. Afanasev*, p.13) observes that the term *kafolitcheskoou* was replaced by *sobornoou* when the Russian Church hardened its attitude towards the Papacy during the reunion movement during the last years of the Byzantine Empire. Although a polemical move, nonetheless the term *sobornoou* was considered to make more explicit the meaning of the original *kafolitcheskoou* which was now felt to be open to misinterpretation. The term 'sobornayja Tserkou' or 'Catholic Church' is to be understood in a way that, whilst still uncommon in the West, is now gaining growing appreciation.

As N. Zernov pointed out, *sobornost* and its related terms are derived from the root *sobirat*, meaning 'to bring together' (N. Zernov, *Three Russian Prophets* [London, 1944], p.61). The Orthodox argue that this term is more appropriate than the word *kafolitcheskoou* for translating the Greek καθολική, due to a misuse of the latter by the West to mean a geographically-conceived world-wide Church. This, Orthodox theologians have insisted, is a fatally-flawed view:

'The conception of Catholicity cannot be measured by its world-wide expansion; universality does not express it exactly . . . [it] means, first of all, the inner wholeness and integrity of the Church's life. We are speaking here of wholeness, not only of
communion, and in any case not of a simple empirical communion . . . it belongs not to the phenomenal and empirical, but to the noumenal and ontological plane; it describes the very essence, not the external manifestations.'


For Khomiakov, as for Orthodoxy in general, the Church is fullness, that is, fulfilment, completion (cf. Eph. 1:23). This unity is not a mere external unity, but an organic, essential one. It is the unity of a living body, of an organism. It is this unity which is the *sobornost* or catholicity of the Church. As Khomiakov himself put it: 'Unity! The substantial character of the Church, the visible sign of the Lord's constant dwelling on earth, the sweetest joy of the human heart.' A.S. Khomiakov, in a letter to W. Palmer, dated 18th September 1847. Quoted in W. Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church During the Last Fifty Years*, Vol. 1 (London, 1895), p.77.


103. Most interestingly, such an analogy is not confined to the West. Nearly a thousand years later, the great Greek spiritual theologian, Gregory Palamas, used a similar analogical model. In this, Palamas presents the Holy Spirit as the boundless and timeless love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father. At the same time, however, Palamas, who was writing at a period when the *Filioque* had assumed great importance, specifically desires to exclude this doctrine:

>'The eternal joy of the Father and Son is the Holy Spirit, since He is common to both with respect to His use (hence He is sent by both to the saints); but His existence derives solely from the Father, and hence, where His existence is concerned, He proceeds from the Father.'


104. Ware, helpful though he finds this analogy of Augustine's, is greatly attracted by the explanation (if that can be considered the correct term) offered in the twelfth century by Richard of St. Victor (actually a Scot, who died in 1173). Richard starts from the basic premise that God is love. Yet because self-love is not true love, the perfection of one person requires fellowship with another. This is also the case with God, whose love is characterized by communion and sharing. Thus God must be at least two persons, Father and Son, loving each other. Richard argues that for love to exist in its plenitude it must be shred
and not merely mutual:

'Where love is perfect, then, the lover not only loves the beloved as a second self, but wishes the beloved to have the further joy of loving a third, jointly with the lover, as of being jointly loved by that third.'

K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.10.

Now, it is true that Aquinas rejected Richard's arguments on the grounds that God is necessarily perfect and therefore has no need of any other Person to have within himself the fullness of love. However, this is hardly a very Christian conception of God. As Ware puts it: 'does this not suggest the One of Neoplatonism, static, transcendent, contemplating itself alone, rather than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?' Richard, contrary to Aquinas, sees love as an attitude of self-giving:

'The true essence of love lies not in taking but in giving; to love is not primarily to make up a deficiency in oneself, but to offer oneself as a gift to the other. Richard has seen further than Thomas. The doctrine of the Trinity is a way of saying that God's eternal being is self-giving.'

K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.11.

105. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.44.


107. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.46, n.41. This is not always appreciated by biblical commentators. See, for example, the brief commentary by G. Johnston in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* ed. M. Black (Revised edition, London: Nelson, 1977), p.1038. Here, love is seen as a secondary 'activity' of God - and thus one may question the degree to which Johnston perceives it as being inherently part of the 'nature' or way of being of God.


109. K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.11.

110. For example, K. Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (ET London: SCM, 1949), p.42. However, it should be noted that Ware is critical of other aspects of Barth's Trinitarian theology.

111. *On the Difference between Essence and Hypostasis*, para. 8, quoted in K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.11.


Person as an Icon of the Trinity, p.16.
Gen. 1:27 precludes any idea that the *imago Dei* can be found in the male alone. This has important implications for a relational theology of the human person and for the equality of the sexes:

'The divine, trinitarian image is not given to the man alone or to the woman alone, but to the two of them together; it comes to fulfillment in the "between" that unites them. The image of the "social" God has an irreducibly social expression within humanity. It is a "relational" image, reflected in the relationship between man and woman, in the primordial social bond that is the foundation of all other forms of social life. Only within an interpersonal community can the triune likeness be properly realized.'

K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.16.


Chapter Two

Christ and the Spirit

Introduction

For Zizioulas, theology is not something which is constructed in isolation, having no bearing on actual life. On the contrary, it is something which is intensely practical and which must speak to our situation. That is why, underlying Zizioulas' entire theology, it is possible to identify a concern with the nature of personhood. I demonstrated, in the first chapter, how Zizioulas uses a dynamic Trinitarian theology to establish how personhood is conceivable for humanity. In this chapter, my concern will be to examine how Zizioulas comprehends our relationship to Christ, as an event of communion in the Holy Spirit. Pneumatology will therefore provide the key to an understanding of Zizioulas' thought.

The first task will be to consider Zizioulas' understanding of the new humanity in Christ, particularly focusing on how he envisages it being brought about as a reality in this world. Baptism will have an important part to play in this. Closely associated with this is the idea of freedom, which naturally leads to a consideration of the communion made available through Christ, and it is here that Zizioulas' particular understanding of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit becomes especially important. It will then be necessary to explicitly link the pneumatology derived from this understanding to the idea of communion. Finally, I will endeavour to raise some critical questions concerning the theology examined and indicate pointers for the next chapter. I would, however, note that, because Zizioulas' work forms a whole, the critical comments here will be merely pointers to lines of criticism I wish to develop more fully in Chapters Three to Seven.
For Zizioulas, the praxis of the Church in insisting on baptism as a *sine qua non* for full membership of the Church and participation in its life, reflects a fundamental theological position. Following Pauline baptismal theology, Zizioulas sees a crucial link between baptism and our human situation. For Paul, baptism is the means whereby we are buried with Christ, 'so that as Christ was raised from the dead . . . we too might walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6:4). Rising with Christ, we are enabled to live a new life, in which we can be considered as being dead to sin and alive to Christ (Rom. 6:11).

Reflecting upon this understanding of baptism, Zizioulas surmises it to involve a double action. It involved:

- on the one hand a death of the "old person," that is, of the way in which personal identity was acquired through biological birth; on the other it involved a birth, that is, the emergence of an identity through a new set of relationships, those provided by the Church as the communion of the Spirit.¹

In baptism, because it involves us in the liberating death of Christ, Zizioulas sees the death of the 'biological hypostasis'. In positing an ontological content for baptism, Zizioulas places himself firmly within the horizons of patristic understandings of baptism and its effects on the individual. For Zizioulas:

- baptism is such a decisive point in our existence that it automatically creates a limit between the pre-baptismal and post-baptismal situation: if you are baptised, you immediately cease to be what you were. You die, as St. Paul says, with regard to the past and there is therefore a new situation.²

In this, he reflects the teaching of St. Macarius of Egypt, one of the great early monastic theologians, who vividly contrasts the state of a person before baptism with his state after baptism.³ There is thus a profound existential change in the person baptized.
We may therefore indicate a fundamental link between the sacrament of baptism and the idea of the 'new man' in Christ: 'if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5:17). Zizioulas is emphatic in his insistence that baptism marks a radical turning-point in the life of the individual:

Here the turning of the individual's entire attitude (metanoia) towards God with a subsequent forgiveness of his sins (loutron) is what he as a person receives in Baptism. By dying to himself with Christ in his death and rising in his resurrection he receives a "generation again" (palingenesia) or a "regeneration" (anagennesis) which equals his being acknowledged by the Father as his son, in the person of his only-begotten Son in whom he is well pleased.

Zizioulas' stress on the notion of incorporation into Christ implies an important Christological basis to the whole concept and practice of baptism. Baptism, argues Zizioulas, makes us 'sons of God' in and through our incorporation into the 'only begotten Son.' In this rite, the old, individualized and individualizing person dies with Christ in the waters of baptism (Rom. 6:3). What comes out of the baptismal waters is a new creation (Rom. 6:4). This is possible only because of the link between baptism and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ himself. Schmemann has remarked that the grace of Baptism is:

a man dying and rising again "in the likeness" and "after the pattern" of Christ's Death and Resurrection; it was the gift to him not of "something" resulting from these events, but of that unique and totally new possibility: truly to die with Christ, truly to rise again with Him so that he may "walk in the newness of life."

Zizioulas sees baptism as being 'nothing less than the death of the old natural existence and the birth of a new existence; an anagennesis.' He considers this natural life to be nothing less than what he terms the biological hypostasis. In baptism, it is precisely this way of existing which is done to death and buried with Christ. What rises from the font, the 'life-giving waters' of the Orthodox
baptismal liturgy, is a new creation, a new *hypostasis*, a new way of relating to God, the world and others. Thus the baptismal waters themselves become, ‘that which all matter is meant to be: a means to an end, which is man’s deification - knowledge of God and communion with God.’² The liturgical tradition itself makes explicit this idea of baptismal regeneration into the likeness of Christ:

Wherefore, O Lord, manifest Thyself in this water, and grant that he who is baptized therein *may be transformed*: that he may put away from him the old man, which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh, and that he may be clothed with the new man, and renewed after the image of Him who created him: that being buried after the pattern of Thy death, in Baptism, he may, in like manner, be a partaker of Thy Resurrection...⁹

In baptism, we are ‘bodily conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ, to Christ’s mode of existence.’¹⁰ By this, Yannaras means nothing less than that the baptized person enters into a mode of existence which Zizioulas terms that of the *ecclesial hypostasis*. This is radically linked to that concept of freedom which, is so fundamentally important to Zizioulas:

The hypostasis of ecclesial existence is constituted by the new birth of man, by baptism. Baptism as new birth is precisely an act constitutive of hypostasis. As the conception and birth of man constitute his biological hypostasis, so baptism leads to a new mode of existence, to a regeneration (1 Pet. 1:3, 23), and consequently to a new “hypostasis”. . . . Not only with regard to God, but now also with regard to man the basis of ontology is the person: just as God “is” what He is in His nature, “perfect God,” only as person, so too man in Christ is “perfect man” only as hypostasis, as person, that is, as freedom and love. The perfect man is consequently only he who is authentically a person, that is, he who subsists, who possesses a “mode of existence” which is constituted as being, *in precisely the same manner in which God also subsists as being*. . . . Thanks to Christ, man can henceforth himself “subsist,” can affirm his existence as personal not on the basis of immutable laws of his nature, but on the basis of a relationship with God which is identified with what Christ in freedom and love possesses as Son of God the Father. This
adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism.\textsuperscript{11}

Zizioulas thus sees in baptism the means whereby humans are freed from the limitations of life as biological hypostases and liberated for new life in Christ. There is here a profound relationship to the words attributed to Christ: 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (Jn. 3:5). Precisely because in baptism we acquire a new birth, we are freed from the necessity of existence which ultimately denies freedom to the old, biological hypostasis. This is because this new birth is not the result of physical necessity but of an act of freedom. No more do we exist in a situation in which it is possible to ask, 'Who consulted me about my birth?' for that new birth is one to which we have freely assented.

What are the existential effects of baptism? In the first place, baptism is the means whereby we pass 'out of ordinary existence, through a radical conversion from individualism to personhood in baptism.'\textsuperscript{12} There is thus an intimate connection between baptism and forgiveness.\textsuperscript{13} In turn, this has an intimate connection with the on-going moral life of those who have been baptized (cf. Col. 3:1-10). Commenting on this very passage, Zizioulas early on said:

*Notons que les termes “se dépouiller” et “revêtir” sont ici des termes liturgiques et se lient particulièrement, ainsi que toute la terminologie de ce passage, à l’expérience sacramentelle du Baptême.*\textsuperscript{14}

In baptism, the individual passes from one existence to another:

As death and resurrection in Christ, Baptism signifies the decisive passing of our existence from the “truth” of individualised being into the truth of personal being. The resurrectional aspect of Baptism is therefore nothing other than incorporation into the community.\textsuperscript{15}

For Zizioulas, the decisive aspect of baptism, its very essence, is precisely the adoption of humanity by God: 'This adoption of man by
God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism.'16

The *ecclesial hypostasis*, which is effected by baptism, is nothing less than incorporation into the person of Jesus Christ. In baptism, we are bodily conformed to Christ’s existence.17 It is because of this incorporation into the Church, which effects our adoption into Christ, that we can hold that the first effect of baptism is a social one: 'it is by this incorporation that each one receives the adoption of sons and is given life by the Holy Spirit. The first act is a social one.'18

In this, we are brought into a new relationship with Christ. In baptism, the ‘image’ of God in humanity is purified and we are enabled, through the gift of the Spirit in Chrismation, to begin to life in the imitation of Christ. No longer is there separation between the believer and Christ. Rather, because we are baptized into Christ, there exists the closest possible relationship between the Head and the members. For Zizioulas, this means ‘the application to humanity of the very filial relationship which exists between the Father and the Son.’ This links directly into Zizioulas’ understanding of the person of Christ as relational being. For Zizioulas, Christ is:

the “catholic” man . . . the “one” who is at the same time “many”. . . . Christ is “one” in his own hypostasis, i.e. as he relates eternally to the Father, but he is also at the same time ‘many’ in that the same “schesis” becomes now the constitutive element - the *hypostases* - of all those whose particularity and uniqueness and therefore ultimate being are constituted through the same filial relationship which constitutes Christ’s being.19

This is a profound insight indeed! To Zizioulas, the essence of our adoption by God in Christ lies in the fact that we are adopted not as individuals who are separate from Christ, but rather as members of his body. This body is conceived of as being no simple metaphorical entity, but rather as a real body existing in ontological union with

70
Christ, its head. This permits Zizioulas to say:

In Christ, therefore, every man acquires his particularity, his hypostasis, his personhood, precisely because by being constituted as a being in and through the same relationship which constitutes Christ's being, he is as unique and unrepeatable and worthy of eternal survival as Christ is by virtue of his filial relationship with the Father which makes him so unique and so eternally loved as to be an eternally living being. In Christ, therefore, understood in the way in which I am trying to describe hypostatic union, man not only maintains his personhood but so fulfils it as to make it constitutive of his being in the ultimate ontological sense which . . . is implied in the notion of personhood and which is to be found only in God.20

It is clear that baptism is of great importance in Zizioulas' ecclesiology. It is not a purely private affair concerning only the individual. Rather, precisely because it is directed at overcoming individualism, it is to be seen in a communitarian perspective. In this, he echoes Schmemann's own criticism of the celebration of baptism as being largely absent from the life of the Church. Elizabeth Newman explained Schmemann's stance in words which could be applied to Zizioulas' own position:

as baptism has withdrawn from a communal celebration, it has increasingly been understood only as a necessary condition for Church membership. While baptism may be recorded on a certificate, Schmemann claims that it is nonetheless absent from the Christian memory. In other words, when baptism is celebrated it is not referred to the entire Church, as that community of disciples who have died with Christ and been given new life. Thus the privatization of baptism amongst the Orthodox has led to its devaluation as a corporate activity which is lived out in the Christian community.21

For Orthodoxy, baptism is incomplete without Chrismation (Confirmation), which is nothing less than that same anointing with the Holy Spirit which Christ himself received at his own baptism (cf. Mk. 1:10). The Holy Spirit is precisely the one who brings about relationship or communion. As baptism always involved the
Spirit, it inevitably acts to bring about the event of communion, on both the vertical plane, between God and humanity, and on the horizontal plane, between the various baptized human persons, effected through the community of the baptized, which is the Church.

Zizioulas is not the only writer who has pointed out the essentially communitarian dynamic in baptism. On the contrary, it is becoming increasingly common in ecumenical theology to highlight this relational dimension of the sacrament of initiation. Through baptism, each baptized person is no longer isolated, but is centred in Christ and hence in relationship with each other. In baptism, the individual dies to alienation and sin in Christ and is raised in Christ to a new form of humanity in the Church. Baptism is that rebirth which makes deification (theosis) possible and an essential part of this is to live that life which is God’s, a life in relationship.

For Zizioulas, it is essential that in order to overcome the limitations of the biological hypostasis, which ultimately must lead to death and the disintegration of the individual (which is the essence of the very denial of personhood), there must be a complete victory over the things which deny personhood. One of these is the very necessity of one’s existence: ‘The ultimate challenge to the freedom of the person is the “necessity” of existence.’ The authentic person, for Zizioulas, must be uncreated, must be unbounded by any necessity, including that of its own existence, which is indeed the ultimate necessity. The only means of escape from this dilemma, other than suicide, which is the very destruction of existence itself, is incorporation into the very life of the Trinity. This is attained, and not only for Zizioulas, in baptism. It is through a rebirth, one which is freely entered into and not as a result of necessity or constraint, that one is liberated from the necessity which impedes the existence of personhood in the human being. And it is not just any rebirth, but rebirth into Christ himself. In baptism, so to speak, one becomes Christ, and hence enters into that eternal relationship with the Father which is Christ’s.
However, there is a problem with such a schema that Zizioulas has not adequately answered. This is to do with the existence of infant baptism in the Church. For the Orthodox, as for the majority of Christians, the baptism of infants is something which is accepted as a custom of the early Church for which various theological arguments are advanced with a greater or lesser degree of conviction. However, I would wish to question how the baptism of an infant who is unable to decide for itself whether it wishes to be baptized can possibly be construed as meeting the criteria for a rebirth free of any compulsion or necessity.

If it is essential that in order for humanity to attain its true destiny as created in the image of God the individual must die as such and rise as a person, this is only attainable in Christ through the exercise of our freedom in active synergy with the grace of God. As such, this must take place in an act of human freedom. Zizioulas contends that:

Personhood . . . is the mode in which nature exists in its ekstatic movement of communion in which it is hypostasised in its catholicity. This . . . is what has been realized in Christ as the man par excellence through the hypostatic union. This, I must now add, is what should happen to every man in order that he may himself become Christ (according to the Fathers) or “put on Christ” (according to Paul). And this is what makes Christ the head of a new humanity (or creation) in that he is the first one both chronologically and ontologically to open this possibility of personhood in which the distance of individuals is turned into the communion of persons.

However, it would appear that the practice of infant baptism confronts such an approach with a radical denial, for it is clearly impossible for a child, still less a baby, to reach out to communion with others through an act of free will. Yet if no free will is involved, neither can there be, in Zizioulas’ understanding, any real possibility of attaining a true personhood in the image of Christ.

Traditionally, the Orthodox approach, as with that of the Roman
Catholic Church, bases the efficacy of the sacraments not on the faith of the individual recipient but rather on the belief that 'the sacraments act in every case ex opere operato.' As such, they have taken the line that infant baptism cannot be said to violate the free will of the child, for:

*Just as parents provide the necessary physical cleansings of the child, supply it with food, guide it and educate it without regard to the will of the child, so, having in view interests far higher, they provide for its spiritual regeneration, and oversees its spiritual needs.*

Alexander Schmemann, who has himself been a considerable influence on Zizioulas, has advocated seeing the children of Christian parents as in some sense belonging to the Church already and that therefore it is appropriate to baptize them. This is because 'Baptism depends - totally and exclusively - on Christ’s faith; it is the very gift of His faith, its true grace.' That being the case, it is argued, baptism cannot ‘depend’ on the faith of any recipient, adult or child, for its reality. Yet even if that is granted, it fails to answer the objection, for free assent to what is being done is still required in the case of an adult, something which ought not to be denied to children.

It remains difficult to see how, if the free exercise of my will is required for me to be baptized into Christ and thereby to attain this relational personhood, something which demands absolutely the exercise of my freedom in an act of ecstasis, one can baptize infants. Logically, Zizioulas should argue that the Church refrain from baptism until an individual attains at least some ability to act independently and to exercise a degree of freedom in this matter. However, that may well be asking Zizioulas to be more ‘Protestant’ than any Orthodox is capable of! Nevertheless, it is my contention that the refusal to follow the logical consequences of his understanding baptism in the light of freedom and personhood and refuse to baptize children constitutes a flaw in his position.
Freedom and the Church

'Freedom is Zizioulas' recurrent existential theme. Indeed, he acknowledges it as his deepest theological preoccupation.'35 Zizioulas here explicitly follows Gregory of Nyssa, the most original and constructive of the Cappadocian theologians, seeing it as being an essential part of the *imago Dei* in humanity.36 Of course, this does not negate the fact that humans are also free to deny their personhood through an exercise of their God-given freedom. Zizioulas holds that 'personhood is inconceivable without freedom,'37 but that this freedom is truly realized not in an untrammelled exercise of one's private desires which can lead to the negation of the basic value of others, but rather:

because... one person is no person, this freedom is not freedom from the other but freedom for the other. Freedom in this case becomes identical with love. God is love because he is Trinity. We can love only if we are persons, that is if we allow the other to be truly other, and yet be in communion with us. If we love the other not only in spite of his or her being different form [sic] us but because they are different from us - or rather other than ourselves - we live in freedom as love and in love as freedom.38

Communion with others, which is the product of personhood, leads to true freedom,39 which in turn we may understand as leading to a greater realization, or manifestation, of personhood. Zizioulas is emphatic that this freedom is of decisive importance:

Ontological identity therefore is to be found ultimately not in every "substance" as such, but only in a being which is free from the boundaries of the "self". Because these boundaries render it subject to individualisation, comprehension, combination, definition, description and use, such a being free from these boundaries is free, not in a moral but in an ontological sense, i.e., in the way it is constituted and realised as a being.40

How can this demand for freedom be met in humanity, given that we are, as created mortal beings limited by the horizons of our very
existence, and ultimately by the stark facticity of death? Henri de Lubac, whose work had a profound influence on the young Zizioulas, recognized in man 'a drive to freedom in a truly personal existence,' something which is echoed by Zizioulas himself. Yet because we are incapable of realizing such an existence we have to accept it as coming from outwith ourselves, from God. However, there is a problem here. Humanity, whilst seeking to go beyond the boundaries of the self, fails precisely because the individual seeks ultimately to preserve and protect itself. A common perception in both de Lubac and Zizioulas on this subject is an understanding that in rejecting God, who is the other par excellence, we are in fact rejecting ourselves, paradoxical though this may seem, for:

freedom presents man with two options, 'either to annihilate the “given” or to accept it as idion thelema'. However, since creation is God's thelema and not man's, man can perform this acceptance 'only by identifying his own will with that of God.'

For Zizioulas, 'mere obedience' is insufficient, for it reduces humanity to the level of slaves and thus provokes rebellion and atheism:

Christianity throughout the centuries has tried to conceive this [identification of wills] in terms of obedience of man to God. It has failed because it has been unable to maintain freedom in and through this obedience. Man has felt like a slave and rejected the yoke of God. Atheism sprang out of the very heart of the Church.

The survival of the human being as a free, unique being is 'the quintessence of salvation, the bringing of the Gospel to man.' Yet this survival can only be attained, not through rejection and rebellion but only through 'rejecting the disorder by assenting to our existence.' Zizioulas views the attainment of this 'freedom' as a Christological reality. It is in Christ that the human being attains his freedom because it is Christ, as Son of God, who is free from the constraints imposed upon humanity by the fact of his biological hypostasis. It is therefore imperative that we are somehow linked
with Christ in such a way that we can acquire the freedom which Christ possesses. This is made possible in the mysteries of the Church, in particular in the baptismal waters. Zizioulas asserts that the Early Church saw a particular link between baptism and the new identity of freedom conferred in Christ:

Whereas biological identity is always bound by necessity, spiritual birth involves freedom: the spiritual person does not simply act differently from the natural person, the psychikos (1 Cor. 2:14); the spiritual person is different in that personal identity is constituted in freedom from the necessity of nature. The new identity given “in the Spirit” was constituted through incorporation into the body of Christ, the church, through a new set of relationships. These relationships were identical to the relationship of Christ to the Father, and for this reason baptism amounted to sonship (Rom.8:15), to acquiring the privilege of calling God “Father” as Christ himself in a unique and eternal way does.48

It is crucial to note that, for Zizioulas, we can attain this relationship only through baptism. This means that we are incorporated into Christ, so that we can truly share in his freedom, in his relationship to the Father. In more detailed form, such a pronouncement echoes Berdyaev’s belief that freedom in Orthodox understanding is not an individualistic right, standing over in contradistinction to the community, but is rather to be understood as a ‘peculiar collectivism.’49 More closely linked with Zizioulas’ own thought is the statement by Yannaras that:

In the mysteries man’s personal freedom encounters the love of God. His personal asceticism, or his personal failure and sin, are made good by the grace of God - the gift of true life. Man brings to the Church his free will: that is to say, his daily effort, unsuccessful though it may be, to free himself from slavery to autonomous individuality and to exist “according to nature,” “according to truth” - in communion and relationship with god and his fellow men. And in the mysteries of the Church he finds that his own fruitless efforts are made good by grace, and his personal will achieves total fulfilment.50
Thus, in freedom humanity meets Freedom, thereby enabling life to be lived in free communion with God and with others. Although it is the grace of God which brings this about, nevertheless God requires humanity's free cooperation in this process, for all must be done in love and hence in freedom. Regeneration thus depends on our 'freedom' - our free choice to unite to Christ.51

However, attractive though this may be, it seems to lead us once again to our earlier conclusion that this approach, if correct, poses a radical challenge to the practice of infant baptism, precisely on the grounds that such a custom violates the very freedom deemed so necessary in coming to God. If it is insisted that the person presenting herself for baptism must do so freely, then it is hard to see how this should not apply also to infants, with the logical conclusion that such baptisms ought to be avoided.

However, a second objection also presents itself with regard to Zizioulas' assertion that the baptized, 'spiritual' person 'does not simply *act* differently from the natural person, the *psychikos* (1 Cor. 2:14); the spiritual person *is* different in that personal identity is constituted in freedom from the necessity of nature.'52 The objection is simply this: what empirical evidence does Zizioulas have to support this quite remarkable assertion? Zizioulas here seems to be saying that, following rebirth into the Church the newly-baptized acquires, presumably *ex opere operato*, a whole new way of relating to God and to others. However, is it really true to say that the baptized manifest such relationships in a way in which those who are not baptized clearly do not? Obviously, this is not the case! History, along with our knowledge of human beings, shows that Christians are every bit as capable of manifesting behaviour characteristic of the 'biological *hypostasis*' as those who are unbaptized and, likewise, it is clear that non-Christians can display just as much of the behaviour which Zizioulas would see as indicative of the 'ecclesial *hypostasis*.'

Whilst it might perhaps be argued that such objections do not take proper account of our continuing free will, which allows us to deny,
at any given moment, our new state as 'ecclesial hypostasis', nevertheless it is hard to see how one can seriously hold that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the baptized have a way of relating to God and to others which is not the prerogative of those unbaptized when appearances would deny this. Unless there is empirical evidence in the lives, respectively, of the unbaptized and the baptized, this claim of Zizioulas' cannot be allowed to have more than the status of mere assertion. However attractive such an assertion may seem, nevertheless it appears to be without the empirical backing we would require before it can be accepted. I therefore, somewhat reluctantly, have to conclude that in this respect Zizioulas' claims require backing which he has been unable to provide.

**Christology and Communion**

What is the content of the 'ecclesial hypostasis' which Zizioulas is so keen to advocate as being the bearer of true personhood in humanity? Whence does this hypostasis originate and where, if at all, can it be found in history? These are crucial questions for any theology which attempts to construct an understanding of authority based on the concept of personhood.

As early as Paul, there is evidence that it is Christology which provides the basis of the Church (cf. e.g. Rom. 6:3-11). Membership of the Church involves nothing less than incorporation into Christ himself. Yet it is also much more than this, for Christology points to the realization of personhood, as Zizioulas understands it - that is, as a unique, free, relational existence enduring forever, in history. It is in the historical person of Jesus Christ that we find the realization of what it is to be a person and, in so doing, we discover the key to the solution of the problem outlined above, that of an empirical exemplar of personhood as Zizioulas understands it, namely of the 'ecclesial hypostasis'.
Christology points to personhood as an historical reality. This is the existential significance of the theological debates on the nature of Christ:

Christology, in the definitive form which the fathers gave it, looks towards a single goal of purely existential significance, the goal of giving man the assurance that the quest for the person, not as a "mask" or as a "tragic figure," but as the authentic person, is not mythical or nostalgic but is a *historical reality*. Jesus Christ does not justify the title of Savior (*sic*) because he brings the world a beautiful revelation, a sublime teaching about the person, but because He realizes in history the very reality of the person and makes it the basis and "hypostasis" of the person for every man.55

However, unless this historical exemplar of personhood can be actually appropriated by humans in history then it can avail us but little. Because Christ realizes in history the reality of personhood, the desire to be a person is nothing less than the desire to be Christ. In his article on the importance of iconography for our theology of the person, Robert Arida points to the conviction that the person portrayed in an icon is nothing less than a reflection of the New Man, Jesus Christ. The foundation for this is a profound Christological awareness, for:

By taking on human nature, the Son of God reveals the true identity of every human being as created in the image and likeness of God. The icon therefore depicts a person as a new being who has been restored to God's image and likeness.56

This provides a clue to an interesting dimension of Zizioulas' thought, one which he holds in common with many Eastern writers. For Zizioulas, it is the Incarnation and the Resurrection, rather than the Cross, which are determinative of Christology. For Zizioulas, the Cross is in itself a failure. Its purpose is to provide the necessary backdrop to the Resurrection, without which the Cross would mark the dissolution of Christ, his failure to escape from 'the tragic aspect of the human person.'57
However, in stressing the Incarnational and Resurrectional dimensions of Christology, one must exercise the greatest care in determining priority. For Zizioulas it is crucial that 'All things in Christology are judged in the light of the resurrection.' Zizioulas notes that, historically speaking, Christology was developed from the resurrection, working back to the incarnation, and not the other way around, which is directly contrary to the approach adopted by most modern scholars in the field. This implies a similar approach in theological methodology, thereby giving the eschatological priority.

It is here that we encounter the definitive importance of Chalcedonian Christology for the whole of Zizioulas' theological enterprise. So important is it that Paul McPartlan has rightly termed it 'the kernel of Zizioulas' theological system.' Christ has to be identified fully with the hypostasis of the second Person of the Trinity, for it is only be so doing that Christ as a person can 'subsist' in freedom, rather than in necessity of nature. If he does not, then he is likewise bound to the givenness of existence, thus:

The meaning of the virgin birth of Jesus is the negative expression of this existential concern of patristic theology. The positive expression of the same concern consists in the Chalcedonian doctrine that the person of Christ is one and is to be identified with the hypostasis of the Son of the Trinity.

Because only the Trinity can offer the basis for true personhood it is imperative that Christ be God in order to be our saviour. In this demand, we can see the influence of Zizioulas' teacher, Florovsky, who foreshadowed Zizioulas' own insistence on the importance of the Chalcedonian dogma. In this insistence on the necessity of the Chalcedonian Christology, Zizioulas stands within the tradition of the Orthodox Church's greatest thinkers, not least Gregory Palamas, who laid particular stress on the hypostatic union in Christ's person.

Zizioulas is at pains to stress that, 'Unlike the notion of communicatio idiomatum, that of hypostatic union aims at giving
ontological priority to the person rather than to the nature of Christ. This is of importance, for, as one contemporary writer commentating on the thought of Palamas has put it:

In the person of Christ existed, in its entirety, human nature individually particularised, which, being hypostatically unified with the Logos of God was deified and received the fullness of the divine energy. For Palamas and the Orthodox tradition, the flesh of Christ, being the body of the Logos of God incarnate, is the point of man's contact with God, and furnishes the way to the kingdom of heaven.

One can see in this line of thinking why it is important for Zizioulas to insist that, in becoming human, Christ takes on not a particular human hypostasis but rather a non-specific human nature. Mantzarides notes that Palamas himself explicitly taught that regeneration in Christ is not of individual human hypostases, but of human nature, which he assumed, united to it in his own hypostasis. It is this move which allows Zizioulas and other thinkers standing within the same tradition to take what might be termed a 'physical' approach to the question of theosis. For Zizioulas, then, 'Christology . . . is the proclamation to man that his nature can be "assumed" and hypostasized in a manner free from the ontological necessity of his biological hypostasis . . .' In order for this to happen, however, a way must be found that can provide the necessary connection between the individual human hypostases and the person of Christ. It is not enough to suggest that this link can be made by the Holy Spirit acting as a sort of bridge between the individual human and Christ, for the gap still remains and the human remains an individual. What is needed is a way in which Christ and the human being are intimately united. It is baptism which provides this, as the individual is baptized into the Body of Christ and thereby becomes united to Christ himself. However, it is incumbent upon Zizioulas to satisfactorily explain how this can be.
Pneumatology

Although Zizioulas makes Christology the starting-point for ecclesiology, this has to be conditioned in an important manner. For Zizioulas, Christology has to be conditioned by Pneumatology.67 As Zizioulas forcefully expressed the matter in an article published in 1984:

The Orthodox Church attaches particular importance to the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. All Christian traditions, of course, have a pneumatology but in the case of the Orthodox Church pneumatology conditions everything. The Spirit is not understood as a satellite of Christ or as an assistant to Christ and his work. Christology does not precede Pneumatology but is conditioned by it, is constituted by it.68

It is true to say that, for Zizioulas, Christ cannot exist as Christ, without the Spirit.69 This has a profoundly existential basis, for if we are to conceive of Christ as being a specific human individual, bound as we are by temporal and spatial location, then we are immediately faced with the question as to how we can be related in any meaningful way to an individual who lived in 1st Century Palestine.70

For Zizioulas the answer to this problem can only be found in pneumatology. This is not, however, to say that the Spirit acts as a psychological bridge to an individual who lived twenty centuries ago. On the contrary, it is only possible because the Holy Spirit is that which is beyond all history, that which causes the eschatological to break in.71 On this matter, Zizioulas is at his most emphatic:

The breakthrough of the full eschatological reality into historical existence is precisely the characteristic of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). The reconciliation of the world unto God in Christ can be seen and realized in history only through the Spirit. None can say that Christ is the Lord except in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). But the Spirit reveals the whole truth (John 16:13) and makes existentially relevant this truth here and now in a community of reconciled men.72
Unlike Cullmann and those scholars who have followed him, Zizioulas declines to accept the notion of Heilsgeschichte, seeing in it a simple, ongoing linear flow which considers 'Creation, Old Testament interventions, the Incarnation, ... the Ministry and Cross of Christ, ... the Resurrection, ... the Church, ... the second coming' all as successive 'stages'. In contradistinction to this, Zizioulas would view the Church as manifesting 'a time which does not move from the earlier to the later, from the old to the new, through the intermediary of nothing, but through that of the future Kingdom.'

This is possible only because of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is of importance that, at Pentecost, the Spirit is specifically understood as inaugurating the Last Days, of bringing the eschatological realities into history (Acts 2:16-21). This is because it is the function of the Spirit to transcend history, to liberate from historical necessity that the one thus liberated may be free to exist in communion. Likewise, it is the Holy Spirit who brings about the Resurrection of Christ himself. This is of prime importance, for in raising Christ to new life the Spirit is seen to be bursting through into history, bringing with him the conditions of the Kingdom itself. In a recent article, Zizioulas has gone so far as to explicitly link the Spirit and the Kingdom:

It is not fortuitous that according to one of the hymns for Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is He who "holds together the whole institution of the Church". The thing that often escapes us is that, in the New Testament, the Spirit is given to men after Christ's Resurrection (Jn. 7:39), precisely because His coming into the world signifies the coming of the "last days" in history (Acts 2:17). It is no exaggeration to identify the Kingdom with the Holy Spirit: "Thy Kingdom come: that is, the Holy Spirit" (Maximus, PG 90:885).

Zizioulas believes it to be a central theological point that:

The Holy Spirit is associated ... with koinonia (II Cor. 13:13), and the entrance of the last days into history (Acts 2:17-18), that is eschatology. When the Holy Spirit blows he [creates] ... an event of communion, which
transforms everything he touches into a relational being. The other becomes in this case an ontological part of one’s identity. The Spirit de-individualises and personalises beings wherever he blows.77

Although for much of the history of the Western Church there has been a strong tendency to emphasize the Christological at the expense of the Pneumatological dimension of the Church, it is fair to say that this has slowly been redressed, at least since the time of Johann Adam Möhler, whose important work, Die Einheit in der Kirche, was published in 1825. Fundamentally, Möhler attempted to give pneumatology precedence in his ecclesiology, arguing that ‘the body is a creation of the spirit which expresses itself in it.’78 It is interesting to recall that Möhler was working at about the same time as Khomiakov was drawing similar conclusions regarding the priority of pneumatology for ecclesiology and it may be that Khomiakov, who was fully cognizant of philosophical and theological developments in Western Europe, was himself indebted to Möhler.

In spite of a more pneumatological thrust having been given to Western theology during the preceding decades,79 it is nevertheless true to say that the Orthodox observers present at Vatican II remained dissatisfied at what they perceived to be a deficient pneumatology at work within the conciliar documents.80 Raymond Pelly had cause to remark that:

To return to the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Church as an institution, the latter is seen as a ready-made structure or constitution which was filled or given life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the Resurrection. There is plenty of evidence for such a way of thinking in De Ecclesia and not only from Chapter III where one would expect to find it.81

This is typical of the position of which Zizioulas is critical, in that it splits Christology from Pneumatology and makes the Spirit the ‘tool’ of Christ, thus implicitly subordinating the Spirit. Zizioulas is at pains to point out that this is in direct conflict with the witness of the New Testament record. Such a manner of expression, moreover,
indicates the adoption of a particular approach to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and consequently, Christology. In this style, which Zizioulas denotes as the **historical** approach to Pneumatology, we begin with the person of Christ who gives the Spirit to the Church, as a sort of 'power' to enable it to fulfil its historical mission in the world.82 This is, as Zizioulas himself readily admits, a strain of thought which can be justified from the New Testament, particularly with regard to Acts. In Zizioulas' eyes, however biblical it may be, it nevertheless involves a considerable number of difficulties. In such an approach, the Holy Spirit is not only given by Christ, he also seems to act as 'agent' for Christ:

Son travail est d'accomplir la mission du Christ et de le glorifier. Il est l' "Esprit du Christ", et par conséquent dépend du Christ. La Christologie, dans ce cas, devient la source de la Pneumatologie. Nous pouvons appeler ce type de Pneumatologie, une Pneumatologie **conditionnée par la Christologie**.83

Zizioulas identifies this approach to Pneumatology with a corresponding ecclesiological stress on the historical mission of the Church, the idea of the Church as the **People of God**, dispersed throughout the world to perpetuate Christ's mission to it, engaged in a **pilgrimage** towards the Kingdom. Such an image has been particularly attractive in certain quarters since Vatican II, using the language of the **pilgrim People of God**. For John Zizioulas, the ecclesiological pattern which follows from such an understanding is that of **obedience to Christ**:

L'accent est donné ici à l'idée que l'Eglise doit se trouver dans une situation d'obéissance vis-à-vis de son chef: ce type de Pneumatologie implique une certaine distance entre la tête et le corps au niveau de l'ecclésiologie.84

For Zizioulas such a 'distance' between Christ and Church, Head and members of the Body, is unacceptable. As another writer has expressed matters with regard to Pauline thought:

Sometimes Paul says that Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His Body, and other times he identifies
the Church and Christ so closely that Christ is in the Church and the Church is in Christ, or as Augustine writes: "Totus Christus caput et corpus est." 85

In this approach, Christ is seen as an individual, with the distance between him and us being:

bridged by the aid of certain means, which serve as vehicles for truth to communicate itself to us: for example, His spoken words incorporated within the Scriptures and perhaps tradition - transmitted, interpreted, or even expounded through magisterium - all being realized with the assistance or under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.86

In this way of understanding matters, the Spirit acts upon individuals to lead them into the way of obedience to Christ. The Spirit acts as the agent of Christ in the world today, bridging the gap of twenty centuries between Christ and us, to make Christ's salvation present to us in this age. The problem associated with this approach is that, historically, it can be associated with a particular interpretation, in which:

*l'Esprit est alors compris comme le pouvoir qui inspire et qui renforce l'homme dans son pélerinage vers la construction du royaume dans l'histoire. L'Esprit pourra être possédé par les individus, transmis par l'ordination (vue comme un pouvoir spécial: grâce efficace, produisant des résultats).*87

All this makes the Spirit dependent upon Christ, in a way which would appear to do little justice to the rich biblical understanding of the person and work of the Spirit.

**A Pneumatic Christology**

Traditionally, the basis of ecclesiology is Christology - something which Zizioulas believes to be both correct and important. That having been said, Zizioulas does not believe that it is possible to construct a viable ecclesiology on the basis of a Christology which takes no real account of Pneumatology and even subordinates the
Spirit to Christ. For Zizioulas, there is an absolute need for us to take seriously the biblical understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, Zizioulas emphasizes the terms 'life-giver' and 'communion' as being most important for ecclesiology. However, in seeing these two terms, which he effectively regards as synonyms, can it not be argued that Zizioulas is doing nothing other than giving preference to terminology which merely appears to favour his own position? Why, it can be asked, should these terms, and not others which may equally be found within the New Testament, such as 'power' or 'sanctification', be given preference?

Zizioulas answers this by asserting that this must be so:

since the life of God which the Spirit gives is a life of communion of persons, and it is as such that he creates power and dynamic existence as well as sanctification, miracles, prophecies and leads to Truth: he provides the preposition in, in which all this takes place.

However, it is also a biblical understanding that posits the Spirit as 'director of mission' in the Church, experienced as a numinous power pervading the community and giving its leadership an aura of authority which could not be withstood (Acts 4:31; 5:1-10; 6:10; 8:9-13; 13:9-11). Following the earliest expansion of the Church from Jerusalem, we see the Spirit being directly understood as the power which impels and controls the mission (Acts 8:29, 39; 10:19; 11:12; 15:28, etc.). Now, whilst Zizioulas is correct in stressing the Pauline insistence on koinonia as the hallmark of the Spirit, nevertheless Paul himself also displays an understanding of the Spirit which can be seen in terms of a divine power who has an impact upon the life of an individual, which is discernible by its effects (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 1:4-7; 6:9-11; Gal.3:5). With passages such as these in mind, one should be wary of any attempt to subordinate in too strong a fashion one biblical approach to the Holy Spirit to another on grounds that it better fits a specific approach. Such smacks too much of argument by assertion and selectivity of evidence to fit a preconceived theology.
Although, to be fair to Zizioulas, he argues that within the New Testament itself, these two types of Pneumatology could happily co-exist, even within the same work, and that this synthesis should become a present reality in our ecumenical approach to the theology of Christ, the Spirit and the Church, nevertheless one should consider whether Zizioulas merely replaces one dominant pneumatology with another, thereby failing to attain the synthesis which he expressly seeks.

What, then, are the primary characteristics of a pneumatologically-conditioned Christology as proposed by Zizioulas? At its roots lies his contention that, in the Church's life and theology, Christology and Pneumatology must exist simultaneously. Zizioulas rejects equally the twin extremes of making either Christology or Pneumatology of itself the primary ingredient:

Christology is usually understood as pointing to a complete and self-defined event, a particular "economy," that of the Incarnate Son. In this case the role of the Spirit tends to be that of a satellite of this event, ministering to it and in a sense depending on it. This appears to many modern Orthodox theologians as "Christomonistic" or even another form of "Filioquism." As an alternative to this and in order to stress the independence of the Spirit with regard to Christ, the idea of a special "economy of the Spirit" has been put forth, and ecclesiology has been more or less pushed towards the side of pneumatology.

Zizioulas views each of these as being fundamentally flawed, preferring to work towards a mediating synthesis of the two positions. Yet, without denying the validity of Zizioulas' observations recorded here, I am compelled to wonder if this another example of Zizioulas tilting at theological windmills, so to speak. By this I mean that Zizioulas has set up two opposing positions with the aim of appropriating from each the truths they undeniably contain, whilst rejecting what he understands to be erroneous. However, he has done this in a way which would appear to take insufficient regard of developments within the field over the last thirty years or so. By setting up extremes as the theological norm,
Zizioulas is able to ignore moves which have been made in this direction, thereby making his own theology appear perhaps more distinctive than it otherwise might!

As early as the mid 1950s Zizioulas’ own teacher, Georges Florovsky, in calling for a renewed stress on the Christological dimension of ecclesiology was advocating a form of synthesis, although it is true to say that Florovsky did not attempt adequately to develop such an approach. Even before then, the 1952 World Conference on Faith and Order, meeting at Lund, recommended that in future ecclesiology should be studied in relation to both Christology and to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

An essential aspect of Zizioulas’ consideration of the role of Pneumatology with regard to Christology is that Christ himself exists only through an act of the Spirit:

In the Bible Christ becomes a historical person only in the Spirit (Matt.1:18-20; Lk.1:35) which means that Christology’s very foundations are laid pneumatologically. The Holy Spirit does not intervene a posteriori within the framework of Christology, as a help in overcoming the distance between an objectively existing Christ and ourselves; he is the one who gives birth to Christ and to the whole activity of salvation by anointing Him and making Him Χριστος (Lk.4:13).

In the economy, then (although, we must remember that, for the Orthodox in general, it is not appropriate to draw conclusions about the intra-Trinitarian relationships from the economic manifestation), Zizioulas would wish to see a constitutive role for the Holy Spirit in Christology. In taking such an approach, Zizioulas believes himself to be fundamentally in line with the thinking of Basil the Great:

The main point when referring to the Economy seems to be that the Spirit is a forerunner of Christ; there is no phase or act of the Economy which is not announced and preceded by the Spirit. So even in the Economy, for Basil at least, the Spirit does not seem to depend on the Son.
Because Christ is constituted *qua* Christ by the Holy Spirit (although not, of course, as the Second Person of the Trinity), he is from the beginning a *relational being* 'to an absolute degree.' This reflects the teaching of the Synoptics that it is the Spirit who constitutes Christ's ontological identity. It is one of the hallmarks of Zizioulas' theology that Christology must be constituted pneumatologically. This leads to what Areeplackal has identified as 'Zizioulas' unique contribution to contemporary ecumenical dialogue between the East and the West', which be be understood as the 'Christic-pneumatic synthesis.' It is fundamental to this approach that Church structures have to be constituted pneumatologically and not merely Christologically - and this constitution must take place at its very root, and not be added after the primary input of Christology.

Although Zizioulas is not the first Orthodox theologian to understand the necessity for a synthesis between Christology and pneumatology, it remains true to say that, at this time, he is the theologian who has come closest to attaining one. Zizioulas himself remarks that Lossky, and more particularly Bobrinskoy and Nissiotis, have actively sought just such a synthesis, 'although the priority given to Pneumatology is still preserved in both Nissiotis and Bobrinskoy.' Thus, whilst Zizioulas would certainly agree with other Orthodox on the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit, nevertheless he has a subtly different approach from that of, for example, Nissiotis, who holds that "no ecclesiology is possible unless we begin with the pneumatological aspect." Zizioulas, in agreeing on the importance of pneumatology, would nevertheless part company with Nissiotis here by insisting, with Florovsky, that it is *Christology* which is the basis of ecclesiology, but a Christology which is *constituted by* pneumatology. It is this emphasis which allows him to make significant moves with regard to the concepts of structure and authority in the Church.
The Christic-Pneumatic Synthesis

Now, although it is true that 'Pneumatology is the heart of Christian theology,'\textsuperscript{107} nevertheless for Zizioulas this must be understood within the context of a theology of communion, which necessitates a Christic-pneumatic synthesis.\textsuperscript{108} One of the major questions concerns the matter of priority. Zizioulas suggests that:

not only the entire history of theology in what concerns the East-West relationship, but even the most primitive theology and liturgical practice we know of are conditioned by this problem.\textsuperscript{109}

Zizioulas sees the source of many ecumenical problems as residing in a profound divergence at the level of Pneumatology.\textsuperscript{110} Unlike many other Orthodox writers, however, he does not view this divergence primarily (and some Orthodox see it exclusively in this manner) in terms of the *Filioque* clause. Rather, the origins of such a divergence is to be sought, and found, in the difference between the 'missionary-apostolic' and the 'eucharistic-eschatological' views of Pneumatology.\textsuperscript{111} Zizioulas does not involve himself in tortuous debate on this matter, but is content to make a few sensible suggestions:

It seems . . . that the question of priority between Christology and Pneumatology does not necessarily constitute a problem, and the Church could see no problem in this diversity of approach either liturgically or theologically for a long time. Thus there is no reason why things should be different today, as some Orthodox seem to suggest. The problem arose only when these two aspects were in fact separated from each other both liturgically and theologically. . . . What we must and can see clearly now, however, is that so long as the unity between Christology and Pneumatology remains unbreakable, the question of priority can remain a "theologoumenon."\textsuperscript{112}

Such an insight would permit the West to retain its traditional emphasis on the priority of Christology, and hence allow it to safeguard its historical concern for a dynamic, historically-based,
approach to the practicalities of Christian action, whereas, at the same time, it permits the Orthodox to retain an approach which emphasizes the meta-historical, liturgical, dimension. Properly handled, such a synthesis would allow each tradition to develop its own strengths through an appreciation, and assimilation, of the insights of the other. This would be of immense ecumenical value.

Yet one cannot but wonder if Zizioulas is indulging in some wishful thinking divorced from the realities of actual Church life and theology. Historically, if Zizioulas is correct in his reading of the situation, such a synthesis did once exist but broke down through the pressures brought to bear upon it by the differing emphases of the traditions. There is no apparent reason why, if such a synthesis could be restored, similar theological and cultural pressures would not, again, lead to a breakdown. Indeed, although contemporary communications may certainly facilitate an exchange of ideas which would aid a greater understanding of each others' approach, the Orthodox experience of the WCC might lead us to suspect that Western dominance of the theological debate (even if it be merely through force of numbers) would inevitably lead to the reaffirming of the Christological over the pneumatological and, hence, an increased concern for concrete social and ethical action over traditional Orthodox concerns for the eschatological, the liturgical and the patient waiting for God’s action in the social world. Although I am here perhaps guilty of presenting an over-simplification of the stresses held by both West and East, nevertheless such exaggeration serves to express the traditional accent adopted by each theological tradition in general. One of the difficulties involved in Zizioulas' highly attractive and sophisticated theological position is that of a certain detachment from the realities of ecclesial life. Indeed, my opinion is that, although Zizioulas' position makes a great deal of sense on paper, it nevertheless lacks a certain vision of the practical difficulties involved in translating his theological stance into ecclesiastical reality.

In requiring that we understand the Spirit as having a constitutive
role with regard to the *person* of Christ, Zizioulas demands that the same be said of the Church. This is precisely because there can be, no separation, no gap, between Christ and his body, the Church. Commenting on this stress in Zizioulas' thought, Paul McPartlan helpfully notes that Zizioulas believes that *Christ himself* is incomplete if the Church is not included as part of his very definition. At the same time, Zizioulas wishes to precisely distinguish between the parts played by Christ and the Spirit in the founding of the Church:

The Spirit is not there simply to animate, to be the "soul" of a Church which is conceived in the first instance Christologically. The Spirit is the co-founder (i.e. the co-instituting "Principle") of the Church, together with Christ, to use Congar's expression . . . or rather the one who con-stitutes the Church while Christ in-stitutes it. The Church thus will cease to be regarded as an historically given reality - an institution - which is a provocation to freedom. She will be regarded at the same time as something constantly con-stituted, i.e. emerging out of the co-incidence and con-vergence of relationships freely established by the Spirit.

Such an approach is designed to ensure that, one the one hand, we give due weight to the historical, *institutional* character of the Church, which will have its role to play in defining the structural nature of the Church, and at the same time, permit us to approach these structures from the standpoint of a theology of communion derived from Trinitarian categories.

Zizioulas' concern for the attainment of a Christic-pneumatic synthesis can be seen in his (1966) article, *La Vision eucharistique du monde et l'homme contemporain*. Here, Zizioulas expressed his conviction that God's activity in history is summed up and manifested as Christ. Yet, as McPartlan correctly states:

he did not thereby exclude the Spirit, for it is the Spirit who empowers *all* of this activity, never from within history but always cutting across history afresh, *penetrating* it with the eschatological mystery of the 'new creation' in Christ, that is with the *totus Christus*.116
Thus there is an absolute necessity for a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology for the one cannot be understood without the other. Thus, the Body of Christ is necessarily a *soma pneumatikon*, a spiritual body which is saturated with the energies of the Holy Spirit:

At the heart of unity in Christ the spirit diversifies . . . the two are inseparable: Christ is manifested by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit is communicated by Christ: "watered by the Spirit, we drink Christ."  

Zizioulas is in good ecumenical company in insisting upon the necessity of holding Christology and Pneumatology in synthesis. There has been an increasing awareness that much of our theology has been handicapped by the lack of just such a synthesis. Zizioulas himself has observed that failure to attain a synthesis has led, in the West, to a 'one-sided emphasis on the redemptive work of Christ [as] the characteristic feature of the Latin Church whose thought is bound to the historical Christ-event.' On the other hand, the Orthodox East, through an over-emphasis on pneumatology at the expense of a properly-balanced Christology has meant, in practice, that:

it contemplates the being of God and the being of the Church with the eyes of worship, principally of eucharistic worship, the image of the "eschata" *par excellence*. It is for that reason that Orthodoxy is often thought of, or presented by its spokesmen, as a sort of Christian Platonism, as a vision of the future or the heavenly things without an interest in history and its problems.

Yves Congar, who has exercised considerable influence on Roman Catholic theology, once stressed that, if he had to draw only one conclusion from his pneumatological studies, it would be 'no Christology without pneumatology and no pneumatology without Christology.' In his insistence on the complimentarity of these two dimensions, Congar here echoes Zizioulas. Moreover, Congar is by no means the only theologian in recent years to accentuate this insight. On the contrary, it is becoming a widely-accepted position.
in ecumenical theology.\textsuperscript{122} The Church is at once the Body of Christ\textbf{ and }the locus of a perpetual Pentecost.\textsuperscript{123}

Over the last four decades, in particular, Western theology has made considerable strides in working towards a better balance between Christology and Pneumatology. This is perhaps especially true of the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II. This is not to say that such a synthesis \textit{has} been fully realized, for there is much work yet to be done. In particular, \textit{Lumen Gentium} made the of Church a much more pneumatological reality than had been the case in earlier ecclesiology. The institution is primary only \textit{vis-à-vis} the charisms. However, this is by no means necessarily to make the institution primary in such a way as to relegate the pneumatological dimension to a minor rôle.

However, Vatican II’s pneumatology, with regard to its effects on ecclesiology, has been criticized, and not only by Orthodox writers, because of a perception that in this approach:

\begin{quote}
The institution easily comes to be thought of as primary. As the work of Christ, it is given. The work of the Holy Spirit must be fitted into the given structure. The second consequence or presupposition is that the work of Christ bulks larger and is more important than that of the Holy Spirit in the precise matter of the understanding of the constitution and life of the Church as it is today.\textsuperscript{124}
\end{quote}

In line with this, Staniloae saw in the Vatican II addresses of Pope Paul VI a lack of understanding of the true place of the Spirit in the Church.\textsuperscript{125} Indeed, commenting on Nissiotis’ critique of Roman Catholic theology at the Council, Staniloae observes that one of the Council’s most important weaknesses was a neglect of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{126} Yet this is somewhat too severe. Vatican II, whilst moving pneumatological thinking forward, cannot really be expected to provide a complete synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology.

Moreover, we should recall that Roman Catholic thinkers were
emerging at this time from a long period of theological domination by Christology and, because of this, it would be unfair to expect to find a satisfactory synthesis elaborated within Vatican II itself. In the years since the Council, however, there has been substantial progress made. Already, at the beginning of the 1970s, Raymond Pelly could ask if:

the gradual rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church may not be the prelude to a corresponding rediscovery of a more "Eastern" theology of the function of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity and with it a new theological evaluation of the local Church.¹²⁷

It is noteworthy that the ecumenically significant 'Munich Statement' has indeed adopted a much more explicit synthesis between the Christological and the Pneumatological in its approach to the mystery of the Church. Commenting on the theology of initiation into the Christian community, the document insists that:

Believers are baptized in the Spirit in the name of the Holy Trinity to form one body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). When the Church celebrates the Eucharist it realizes "what it is", the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17). By baptism and chrismation (confirmation) the members of Christ are "anointed" by the Spirit, grafted into Christ. But by the Eucharist, the paschal event opens itself out into Church. The Church becomes that which it is called to be by baptism and chrismation. By the communion in the body and blood of Christ, the faithful grow in that mystical divinisation which makes them dwell in the Son and the Father through the Spirit.¹²⁸

It is notable that, within a comparatively short time after Vatican II, we here find the official Roman Catholic position to be much closer to the Orthodox concern for a balanced synthesis between Christology and pneumatology.

For Zizioulas, the point of Trinitarian theology in relation to ecclesiology is that it has a direct effect on the life and structures of the Church itself.¹²⁹ If that is so, then we would anticipate seeing a coherent working out of these theological insights in the actual
structures of the Church. This should be seen in a balance between the institutional (Christological) and the charismatic (Pneumatological) dimensions, between the clerical and the lay. Should this be absent, or should such an attempt at working out the practical implications of these theological insights fail to adequately meet the practical difficulties which must inevitably face any theology of ministry and authority, then we may be justified in questioning the usefulness of Zizioulas’ approach.

The Spirit of Communion

Pneumatology is decisive for our understanding of the nature of Christ. Zizioulas expresses his conviction of the biblical requirement for a pneumatological view of Christology in a very clear manner:

This is so fundamental assertion in the New Testament that the very Incarnation of Christ is inconceivable there without the work of the Spirit (cf. Lk. 1:35; Matt. 1:18-20). In the same way Christ’s ministry in the world required the presence of the Spirit in order to start functioning (cf. Lk. 4:18).

Because the Holy Spirit is associated with communion,131 precisely because God’s nature is one of communion, at least according to Zizioulas’ understanding of Basil and the Cappadocian tradition,132 it becomes possible for Zizioulas to affirm a strong belief in the corporate nature of Christ:

The Spirit is the Spirit of “communion” and his primary work consists in opening up reality to become relational. The Spirit is incompatible with individualism. By being born of the Spirit Christ is inconceivable as an individual: he becomes automatically a relational being.133

Because, in baptism, we are reborn into Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit, we too become relational beings. This is so because in baptism the distance between us and Christ is finally overcome so
that Christ’s existence is existentially applied to ours in a constitutive manner. This has profound implications:

Christ’s existence is applied to our historical existence not in *abstracto* or individualistically, but in and through a *community*. This community is formed from out of ordinary existence, through a radical conversion from individualism to personhood in baptism. As death and resurrection in Christ, baptism signifies the decisive passing of our existence from the “truth” of individualized being into the truth of personal being. The resurrectional aspect of baptism is therefore nothing other than *incorporation into the community*.134

Thus the application of Christ’s existence to ours is the realization of the community of the Church. For Zizioulas, the Spirit acts to bring the *eschaton* into history, thereby creating an event of communion.135 Here there is an important difference between the thought of Zizioulas and that of Lossky, whose influence on contemporary Orthodox thinking has been profound. For Lossky, an important distinction between Christ and the Spirit is that, whilst the work of Christ is to unify, that of the Spirit is to bring about diversity.136 For Zizioulas, however, the Spirit both unites and brings about diversity: “We usually overlook the fact that the Holy Spirit is not only a power that unites; he is also a power that ‘divides’.”137 In a fascinating insight, McPartlan argues:

However, the fact that Zizioulas speaks of *aspects*, as of two sides of the same coin, marks a difference, for here the Christological and the Pneumatology exactly *coincide*, though in a differentiated manner: the Holy Spirit forms and Christ is what is formed. Hence he can say, not just with Lossky that Christ unites and the Holy Spirit diversifies or divides, but that the Holy Spirit *both* unites and divides.138

For Zizioulas, it is axiomatic that God’s most important way of dealing with humanity is that he creates communion and *therefore* communities, through the working of the Spirit.139 This is fully in accord with other recent Orthodox writers in the field. Importantly,
Staniloae makes a similar move to Zizioulas, in viewing the role of the Spirit as being one which both unites and diversifies:

The one who makes a single Body of all the faithful, each endowed with his own different gift, is the Holy Spirit. He binds men to one another and creates in each an awareness of belonging to all the rest. He impresses on the faithful the conviction that the gift of each exists for the sake of the others; the Spirit is the spiritual bond between men, the integrating force which unites the whole, the power of cohesion in the community. . . . But the Spirit is wholly present in every member by a different gift, or by way of mutually interdependent gifts which neither make all members the same nor allow them to work in isolation from one another, for no single member remains unconditioned by the others.140

Staniloae further suggests that the kind of unity brought about by the Holy Spirit is not 'unity' pure and simple, but rather **sobornicity**, a unity of communion between differentiated members.141 However, although this is an insight which is in profound agreement with the work of Zizioulas, nevertheless Staniloae makes certain comments in this respect with regard to the Roman Catholic Church which I would wish to reject, and which, I would argue, is at some distance from Zizioulas' own view of the matter:

The Roman Catholic Church has lost this sense of catholicity as communion, for the doctrine of papal primacy and the ecclesiastical magisterium make impossible the communion of all the members of the Church in all things. The Roman Catholic Church remains content with the unity which characterizes a body under command, and it has replaced the unity of communion (catholicity or sobornicity properly so-called) with universality in the sense of geographical extension.142

Zizioulas shows himself to be somewhat more appreciative of the complexities of the Roman Catholic theology of catholicity as it has developed in modern times. Because, for Zizioulas, 'a person cannot be imagined in himself but only within his relationships,'143 it is important that this is applied to the realm of ecclesiology per se.
This leads Zizioulas to a warm appreciation of the recovery of the notion of communion in contemporary Roman ecclesiology. However, this is not to suggest that he believes progress here to have been completed. Rather, whilst Vatican II has reintroduced the notion of communion into Latin ecclesiology, the post-conciliar Church has to develop the ontological conclusions by a better understanding of the *constitutive* role of the Spirit:

We need an ontology of communion. We need to make communion condition the very being of the Church, not the well-being but the being of it. On the theological level this would mean assigning a constitutive role to pneumatology, not one dependent on christology. This Vatican II has not done, but its notion of communion can do. Perhaps this will transform the ecclesial institutions automatically.\(^{144}\)

However, it is Zizioulas' suspicion that the Roman Catholic Church still retains a pyramidal structure which, unless it can be suitably modified, will continue to form an obstacle in the path of Roman Catholic-Orthodox unity. There is thus a need to make deeper study of the ecclesiological requirements of a theology of communion a matter of priority. It should, however, be noted that many Roman Catholic scholars consider that their Church has indeed already gone a considerable way in developing an ecclesiology of communion. Congar, for instance, comments:

It is quite true that two principles were retained by Vatican II, which saw the Church as a society and as a communion. I would also add that, according to the Council, the social structure of the Church is not primarily juridical, but sacramental. This is, in my opinion, essential. I would connect this with the relative duality on the one hand of the institution of the Church by the incarnate Word during his presence in the flesh and, on the other, of the permanent activity here and now of the glorified Lord, who is Spirit.\(^{145}\)

It is not difficult to see here a similar concern for a Christic-pneumatic synthesis to that found in Zizioulas' own writings. One difference, however, is that Congar emphasizes the *permanent*
presence of the Spirit in the Church, whereas for Zizioulas this presence of the Spirit is rather to be understood in terms of an eschatological in-breaking of the Spirit who comes as visitation, rather than as a permanently indwelling presence. It is in this eschatological inbreaking of the Spirit that Zizioulas sees the transformation of the individualization of our existence and its transforming into an existence in communion, which he characterizes as the ecclesial hypostasis. It is for this very reason that Zizioulas ties it so firmly to the sacramental act of baptism into Christ's death and resurrection.

However, although it is an eschatological function of the Spirit to bring about this communion in the Church, nevertheless it must, by virtue of the synthesis which Zizioulas has stressed as being so necessary, imply that there is a profound relationship with the person of Christ involved here.

Relationship, or community, has proved to be a fundamental theological and philosophical category of our age. It represents a major shift in ideas:

Philosophically, it is the shift in Wittgenstein, Heidegger and John Macmurray, from the notion of the person as an individual learning how to communicate with the others around him (the monad in the faceless crowd), to the notion of the person as constituted in the first place by his relationships with the other persons involved with him.

Theologically, this involves the work of the Holy Spirit, whose very task it is to create communion, which is itself communion in the Spirit. Pelly notes, with regard to Vatican II:

the overall role of the Holy Spirit in the Church is beginning to take on greater importance than that of the Hierarchy and is indeed to be seen as the basis upon which the latter rests. Communion is no longer "hierarchical communion" but communion in the Holy Spirit. The growth of Christ's people only takes place when the bishops exercise their preaching, sacramental and pastoral functions Spiritu Sancto operante.
Of course, there are conflicting strains within the conciliar documents themselves and it would not be difficult to produce evidence of a different, more 'hierarchical', approach - for example, in Chapter III of *Lumen Gentium*. Nevertheless, such comments are indicative of a deeper awareness of the importance of the nature of the Church as having its roots in Trinitarian theology.149

Alongside this convergence on the importance of the communitarian nature of the Church effected through a Christic-pneumatic synthesis there exists a degree of ecumenical appreciation with regard to what we have already identified as the primary theological concern of Zizioulas, that of 'the One and the Many.' Because, as Nissiotis explains:

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|our faith in God has to pass through this ecclesiacommunion of the Spirit in order to arrive at the moment of communion with God. The Holy Spirit represents the creation of the new communion before the image of the divine, triune communion. The Holy Spirit does not act except through a corporate body of distinct persons, because this is the necessary preliminary to receiving the grace of the Triune God, who is a communion.150

Nissiotis, however, differs from Zizioulas in that he uses this affirmation to insist that ecclesiology must therefore begin with the pneumatological aspect.151 Zizioulas, on the other hand, insists that we start from a Christological perspective, but Christology is itself pneumatomatically conditioned at its very roots.

**The Corporate Christ in the Spirit**

The terminology of the 'One and the Many', which is a hallmark of Zizioulas' theology, is already prominent in his article *La communauté eucharistique et la catholicité de l'Eglise*, published in 1969, and later appearing in English as Chapter IV of his *Being As Communion*. Yet however distinctive a mark this is of Zizioulas' theological programme, the insight is by no means original
to him. On the contrary, and Zizioulas himself would be the first to recognize this, it is an insight which, since its resurrection in the West, principally through the Biblical scholarship of S. Pedersen (1926), H. Wheeler Robinson (1936), A.R. Johnson (1936) and J. de Fraine (1959), has had a place, even if a disputed one, within theological debates on both Bible and humanity, as well as ecclesiology.\(^\text{152}\) In 1966, A.M. Allchin, himself highly appreciative of Orthodox thought, noted that:

The idea of a union which does not destroy the unique qualities of things united but brings them to perfection in uniting them derives from a reflection on the union of human and divine in Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ not only reveals to us the true nature of God, but also the true nature of man who finds his fulfilment in the unity of many persons in a common principle of life. And this is essential for our view of the relation of each member of the Church to the Church as a whole. The dilemma of individual and institution already begins to be seen in a new light. The Church is not an agglomeration of individuals... but a unity of persons. the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In the Church, as in the divine nature itself, the opposition of the one and the many is overcome, for the Church is to be within creation the image of the Trinity, mankind restored in his true nature in God's image and likeness.\(^\text{153}\)

Zizioulas, likewise, views Christ as incorporating the 'many' in his person, for "The Kingdom is not simply an interior experience of "hearts," but a unity of all in the person of Christ who is "the image of the invisible God".\(^\text{154}\) Yet this Christological unity of all in Christ is inconceivable without the action of the Spirit:

in being conceivable only in the Spirit Christ appears to be a relational being to an absolute degree... he is not an individual but a person in the true sense of the word; his existence implies a body by definition. ... But although this is a commonplace in theology readily admitted by all, it is hardly stressed that all this is inconceivable without pneumatology: it is the Spirit that opens up reality to become relational, and this applies to Christ as well, if not par excellence.\(^\text{155}\)

This reveals that, for Zizioulas, Pneumatology conditions Christology.
in an essential manner. The theme of the ‘corporate personality’ is not possible without this relational pneumatology. Christ is constituted by the Spirit as a corporate personality.156 The Church is nothing less, therefore, than part of the very definition of Christ:

The body of Christ is not first the body of an individual Christ and then a community of “many”, but simultaneously both together. Thus you cannot have the body of the individual Christ (the One) without having simultaneously the community of the Church (the Many).157

Thus, the ‘Christic-pneumatic synthesis’ does not permit us to think of Christ without, at the same time, thinking of his Body, the Church.158 Zizioulas himself relates this to baptism.159 Again in 1969, Zizioulas had cause to insist, in a significant article on the organic unity and relationship between Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, that since it is in Christ that we find united the historical and the eschatological, through the working of the Spirit, then Baptism is nothing less than an incorporation into Christ’s relational Body, which is the Church.160 Ultimately, for Zizioulas, this identification of the ‘One and the Many’ in a pneumatically-conceived Christology made manifest in and through the Church, is the only way in which we can be truly related to Christ.161

This understanding of Zizioulas is perhaps one of the most contentious areas of his theology, not least because it provides the springboard for his thought on the structures of the Church and the nature of its authority. On the one hand, this assessment of the biblical evidence has gained a good deal of acceptance over the last few decades. Thus, for example, a considerable number of Orthodox scholars accept it as being a correct reading of the evidence and one which is fully in line with the insights of Patristic thought - an important consideration for any Orthodox scholar. In recent years, for example, George Dragas162 has forcefully argued that, Christ’s person being of its nature communal,163 it is the vehicle for God to bring humanity into relationship and unity with himself.164 Dragas notes with regard to the diverse people entering the Church that:
They all came to coinhere with each other and be cojoined to one another in the one simple and undivided grace or power of the faith. This is exactly what Acts 4:32 expresses when it says of the early Christians, that "the heart and soul of all was one". They were many and different members . . . but they constituted one visible body, worthy indeed to be the body of the very Christ, their true Head.\footnote{165}

This is consistent with the views of Staniloae, who suggested that because of our union with Christ, that is, with the incarnate hypostasis of the Son of God, 'we form, in a certain sense, one person with Christ.'\footnote{166} Likewise, Philippou sees Christ as 'the mysterious Pleroma, the one who by the power of His Holy Spirit fuses into one body the created many.'\footnote{167} Finally, although Florovsky did not himself properly elucidate a theological understanding of the concept of the 'One and the Many,' nevertheless within his thought there exists an embryonic articulation of the concept:

Christ is never alone. He is always the Head of His Body. . . . The Redeemer and the redeemed belong together inseparably. In the daring phrase of St. John Chrysostom, inspired by Ephes. 1:23, Christ will be complete only when His Body has been completed.\footnote{168}

Ecumenically, this understanding is having an effect. Yet it is precisely here, where we can see an important convergence, that we must exercise a degree of caution and identify two crucial differences between Zizioulas and many of his non-Orthodox colleagues.

McPartlan highlights the fact that Teilhard de Chardin articulated a belief that we must be transformed into Christ, because 'in a real sense, only one man will be saved: Christ, the head and living summary of humanity' (\textit{Le milieu divin}, p.136), and cites Brown's comment that, 'one laments his failure to pursue further his own claim that personal identity can be preserved in such a union.'\footnote{169} However, it is by no means clear that Teilhard would have thought of such an identity in terms similar to Zizioulas. Henri de Lubac, Vladimir Lossky and Nikolai Afanasiev all believed that Christ is to
be understood as an individual who becomes corporate (or, in Lossky's case, a Christ who is not conceived of as being corporate in any meaningful sense), rather than in a Christ who is constituted as a corporate being.  

Secondly, there is the matter of how Christ can be conceived of as a corporate personality at all and it is here that we notice an important difference between the type of Christology which underpins the thought of John Zizioulas and that which is perhaps more common in the modern West. For Zizioulas, a correct understanding of a relational Christology requires that Christ be in possession of an impersonal humanity.  

Yet although Christ's human nature does not have its own hypostasis it finds its hypostasis in the hypostasis of the Logos. It is thus a physis enhypostatos and is not completely anhypostatos. 

If Christ has a perfectly human personality, or nature, then we face the immediate difficulty of having to recognize that it must necessarily be an imperfect nature, for human nature as we know it is never be complete, never perfect, for it is a fallen nature. As fallen, it is of itself incapable of transcending the biological hypostasis. If we are to see a perfect humanity then we must go beyond the purely human. It is in Christ that we find what it is to be truly human. Yet this is only so because of his complete unity with the Trinity, in whom alone is true personhood. In order for us to attain this personhood, it is necessary for us to become united to Christ. For Zizioulas, this is ultimately only possible if we enter, through the action of the Spirit, into the being of Christ himself, if we bring our humanity into his being. 

However, over the last century the study of Christology has led scholars to emphasize the humanity of Christ, his absolute consubstantiality with us and to reject the classical approach of a Christology which began 'from above', from the divine nature of Christ. Zizioulas thus appears to be conducting his Christology
from a standpoint which the overwhelming number of scholars within the field would reject. Of course, it is perfectly possible for scholars to be wrong, but it does appear to indicate that Zizioulas’ approach will be subject to the criticism of a substantial body of thinkers in a crucial area. As such, not only does it offer ammunition to those in the West who would argue that Orthodoxy does not take Biblical scholarship seriously enough, it also suggests a methodological weakness in Zizioulas’ approach.

**Conclusion**

Zizioulas has presented us with a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology of compelling power and even considerable beauty. He has, despite the ecumenically-motivated criticisms of the French-Canadian writer Gaetan Baillargeon that he makes too much of the *identity* between Christ and the Church, taken on board the necessity of noting a distinction between the Church as it appears on earth and the eschatological company of the saints in heaven. Central to Baillargeon’s criticism of Zizioulas is a conviction that;

Our Western sensibility hesitates in the face of the almost absolute identity between Christ and the Church which John Zizioulas proposes; for him there is no distance between Christ and the Church. The historical reality of the Church *in via* finds hardly any place; the view of the Church which gathers a sinful people, a Church called to conversion, is almost absent or dimmed by a strong eschatological emphasis. 

Yet this is not really the case. True, Zizioulas *does* indeed see a correlation, an identity, between Christ and the Church, but this is an eschatological identity. Christ is *identified*, through the action of the Spirit, with the company of the Saints which surrounds God in Heaven and not with the historical Church *on earth* *per se*. Thus, whilst it is certainly apposite to bear in mind an unease which may be felt, particularly by Protestants, in the face of an assertion that Christ and the Church are to be absolutely identified, it would be
somewhat premature to accede to this criticism, for it is only in the light of Zizioulas' understanding of the Eucharist that we will be able to fully appreciate the nuances of his stance.

With regard to Zizioulas' treatment of baptism, however, I have questioned whether he is being altogether consistent in his approach. As we have seen, Zizioulas makes baptism the hub of his theology of the nature of the ecclesial hypostasis. It is baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ which allows humans to experience the new relationships in Christ which the transcendence of the old biological hypostasis permits, the experience of a relational existence, of an ontological freedom unconditioned by any 'givens'. Despite the almost overpowering appeal of such a vision and its apparent faithfulness to the New Testament understanding, Zizioulas does not seem to properly face the problem of infant baptism, taking refuge instead in the tradition of the Orthodox Church, which performs such baptisms.

Logically, Zizioulas ought to reject the possibility of infant baptism. If freedom is his underlying concern, then it becomes difficult to see how he can promote a practice which is a radical denial of that very ontological freedom with which he is so concerned. Zizioulas does show some awareness of the difficulties he faces and argues that:

[Baptism] is a reality which does not depend on the belief or unbelief of the individuals since it is the reality of Christ himself (we are baptised always into Christ) - a reality which makes it possible even for such a paradoxical thing as "infant baptism" to exist.\textsuperscript{174}

Given Zizioulas' avowed concern to avoid any 'necessity' in the construction of personhood, be it birth, death or anything else\textsuperscript{175} it becomes difficult to see how, with regard to infant baptism, he can abstain from doing the very thing that he seeks to avoid, that is, to radically deny freedom by removing the element of compulsion associated with such baptisms. As an Orthodox, Zizioulas accepts that infant baptism is essentially an act of God and as such acts ex opere operato.\textsuperscript{176} Therefore compulsion is indeed introduced and,
because of this, constitutes an attack upon Zizioulas' whole concern with freedom from any ontological necessity in the construction of the ecclesial hypostasis.

I am therefore forced to conclude that, whilst Zizioulas' baptismal theology is indeed compelling, nevertheless in the case of infant baptism it fails to convince, for there seems to be no way in which Zizioulas can escape the logic of his own position and that, therefore, he should consequently reject infant baptism as being a denial of the very freedom which he holds to be absolutely essential.

By introducing pneumatology into Christology in a constitutive manner, Zizioulas enables us to envisage a way in which people living at an historical distance from Christ can be linked to him in such a way that their salvation is possible. Because we become, through baptism, members of Christ's Body, we can be said to become Christ himself. This is the sacramental function of Chrismation, which, as the positive dimension of the baptismal rite (which is to be considered as a complex and not merely immersion in water), is nothing less than the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the baptized. It is this which makes of us a relational being, conceived in the Spirit, and therefore open to participation in the divine life, through Christ:

Only a corporate understanding of Christ, such as that of Zizioulas, gives the possibility of truly overcoming our givenness by actually entering into God's giving of our existence, for that giving is an intrinsic part of His giving of Christ, whom we are free to accept or not.177

Yet all of this depends upon an understanding of the relationship of Christ to the Spirit such as that portrayed by Zizioulas. It is an eschatological vision, which alone permits us to make such a close identification between Christ and his Body. It is only through the koinonia of the Spirit that this is possible, for it is his function to break through the bonds of historical existence, thereby opening up creation to the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God.
For Zizioulas, the corporate personality of Christ is something which lies at the heart of his theology, something which is fundamental to the notion of personhood and the explanation as to how, in the face of the person-denying 'givenness' of our facticity, we can attain this permanent personhood which characterizes the life of God alone. In doing so, Zizioulas stresses the image of Christ 'never existing without or outside of his Church', for such a being would be 'an individual of the worst type'. However, is Zizioulas entirely correct in this interpretation? If we examine the biblical data, then we may be drawn to a more nuanced picture.

Because Christ is born into a fallen world, he must necessarily experience life in the same way in which we do and that is nothing less than in a fragmented manner, in which isolation and alienation form part of our normal human experience. Jesus is despised by his enemies (cf. e.g. Lk. 19:47), finally rejected by the crowd (Mk. 15:8-14), misunderstood by his family (Mk. 3:31-35) and his disciples (e.g. Mk. 10:35-45) and finally left to die alone. Yet, Jesus can hardly be said to be 'an individual of the worst type', for not only does he depend in humility upon a constant, prayerful, relationship with the Father, but he also sought out opportunities to call others into relationship, both with himself and with others. After the resurrection we find Christ finally establishing a close relationship between himself and the Church in the Spirit at Pentecost. Yet, despite this, there is always a distance between Christ and the Christian, between Christ and the Church. The fullness of the relationship with God in Christ is something reserved for the end of history (cf. Eph. 5:27). That being the case, it is only at this point that full personhood will emerge and, consequently, there must yet remain something of the distance and alienation which inhibits personhood. Zizioulas' fault here is that he makes too little allowance for the necessity of a gradual growth towards personhood, something which experience teaches us is a more realistic, if less glorious, understanding of the process of sanctification. However, although this will remain a suspicion in our minds, it is necessary for us to now consider how Zizioulas links what for him is the
definitive event of the Church's life, the Eucharist, into his theological scheme.
Chapter Two

Notes


9. From the 'Prayer for the Blessing of the Waters' in the Orthodox Baptismal Liturgy.


16. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.56. Zizioulas here remarks that:

'The structure of the sacrament of baptism was identified at the outset with the structure of the evangelical narrative of the baptism of Jesus. The words, "this is my beloved [or: only-begotten] Son in whom I am well pleased," uttered by the Father with reference to the Son of the Trinity in the presence of the Spirit, are pronounced at baptism with reference to the person being baptized. In this way the structure of the Trinity is made the structure of the hypostasis of the person being baptized, a fact which makes Paul summarize the sense of baptism with the phrase, "Spirit of adoption, in which we cry Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).' (p.56, n.50).

17. C. Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, p.140. Yannaras phrases this belief very strongly indeed:

'The person who is coming into the Church is plunged into the water of baptism: he is bodily conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ, to Christ's mode of existence. He is buried as the "old man," and rises through triple immersion into the life of his trinitarian prototype. He buries "in the quickening waters the death of disobedience and the sting of error" and comes out of the font "radiant with the light of the knowledge of God." Baptism is the supreme mystery of "knowledge," of the enlightenment of man.' (pp.140-141).


22. J. Zizioulas, *Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist*, p.645: ' . . . the Baptism of the Church was always a Baptism which included the descent of the Holy
23. For example, the 1982 ‘Lima Text’ states that:

‘Administered in obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world.’

(BEM, Baptism, II, 6).


26. This is the understanding of, amongst others, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and of the early Syriac Church as a whole. See A. Louth, Denys the Areopagite (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), p.58.

27. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.42.

28. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.43.

29. D.L. Berry, Mascall’s View of the Church in The Anglican Theological Review Vol. 48 (1966), p.34: ‘that which is shared and received by the individual Christian who is incorporated into the body of Christ, the Church, is the life of the Holy Trinity.’


33. F. Gavin, Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought, pp.313-314.

34. A. Schmemann, Of Water and the Spirit, p.68.

35. P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.146, with reference both to personal conversations with Zizioulas and to
Human Capacity and Human Incapacity, p.433.


37. J. Zizioulas, Communion and Otherness, p.17.


43. According to Zizioulas, this would appear to be the case even when a person consciously tries to reach beyond himself - something which Zizioulas sees at its deepest in erotic love, which is 'a communion between two people.' Yet even here there is, in Zizioulas' view, an inbuilt tendency to 'destroy precisely that towards which the human hypostasis is thrusting, namely the person.' Cf. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, pp.50-51.

44. P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.242, quoting J. Zizioulas, Human Capacity and Human Incapacity, p.433. McPartlan observes that here, as so often elsewhere in his theology, Zizioulas depends upon the thought of Maximus the Confessor. Zizioulas here, by using the term idion thelema, is making reference to Maximus' idea that God does not recognize beings in accordance with their nature, but rather as the concrete results of his will (idia thelemata). See McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.147.


46. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.49.

47. P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.240.


54. Cf. J. Zizioulas, Communion and Otherness, p.14, where Zizioulas insists that 'we cannot be the "image of God," either at the ecclesiological or anthropological level, unless we are incorporated in the original and only authentic image of the Father, which is the Son of God incarnate.'

55. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.54.

56. R. Arida, Spirituality and the Person, p.2.

57. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.55.

58. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.55, n.49.


60. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.55.

61. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.108.


64. G.I. Mantzarides, The Deification of Man, p.30.


66. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.56.

68. J. Zizioulas, The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition, p.52.


70. J. Zizioulas, Human Capacity and Human Incapacity, p.442. Zizioulas notes: 'No wonder, therefore, that the usual, though so obviously unsatisfactory, ways of handling this problem, are mainly either of an ethical kind (relating to Christ through an imitation of his life, obedience to his teaching, etc.) or a sacramental kind (relating to him through the media of grace). None of these, however, can make sense for the ontological significance of Baptism as participation in the very being of Christ, in his “body”.' (p.442, n.1).


75. J. Zizioulas, The Early Christian Community, p.27.


79. This has been particularly true, in the Roman Catholic Church, since the 1940s, when, in the Encyclical Mystici Corporis, the Holy Spirit is presented as the soul of the
Church, the agent of Christ and the source of the Church's life. According to Kevin McNamara, writing at around the close of Vatican II, this contributed to a more spiritual understanding of the Church. Yet this was not a completely new approach, for the same doctrine had been expounded in Leo XIII's *Satis Cognitum*, but had little direct influence on ecclesiology. However:

'The influence of *Mystici Corporis*, on the other hand, was enormous: it stamped with approval the concept of the Church as a spiritual, christocentric, living reality . . . and gave it an assured place in the treatise *De Ecclesia*. In this new theology of the Church, the role of the Spirit as soul of the Mystical Body played an important part for it summed up the interior, mystical aspect of the Church and gave it a satisfactory basis.'


Despite this, McNamara claims that its effect on the spiritual life of the faithful was not very great, which serves to illustrate the often glaring gap between the work of academic theology and the actual spirituality of the people, which theology is supposed to serve. Of course, this is a two-way process, with the actualities of liturgical and spiritual life within the corporate expression of the life of the Church having its own effect on the work of theology.

Of course, even where the Holy Spirit is more closely tied to the Church, it need not imply that a truly satisfactory Pneumatology has been attained. Indeed, whilst we may rightly see in the teaching of *Mystici Corporis* an advance in linking the Holy Spirit more directly to the Church, nevertheless it remains true to say that this approach lays little emphasis on the Spirit as the means of providing the theologically essential link between Christ and the Church, between Christ and the individual Christian.

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'The unifies life and existence of body and head together is self-evident. Thus Christ is not simply a head, but the Head of the Church, and the Church is not simply a body, but the Body of Christ. Christ is so inseparably united with His Church, that He cannot be understood without the Church, and, of course, the Church too is meaningless without Christ.'

86. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.110.


89. J. Zizioulas, The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church, p.145: "Life-giver" and "communion" are in fact identical in meaning, since the life of God which the Spirit gives is a life of communion of persons . . .

90. J. Zizioulas, Implications ecclésiologiques, p.145.

91. J. Zizioulas, Implications ecclésiologiques, p.150.


94. See G. Florovsky, Christ and His Church: Suggestions and Comments, especially pp.163-165.

97. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.111. However, Zizioulas here incorrectly cites Lk. 4:13, whereas the reference would more logically be to Lk. 4:18.


99. J. Zizioulas, The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective, p.38, with reference to Basil, On the Holy Spirit, 16, 39. There, Basil explicitly states: 'But when we speak of the plan of salvation for men, accomplished in God’s goodness by our great God and saviour Jesus Christ, who would deny that it was all made possible through the grace of the Spirit? . . . everything that happened since the Lord’s coming in the flesh, it all comes to pass through the Spirit. In the first place, the Lord was anointed with the Holy Spirit, who would henceforth be inseparably united to His very flesh, as it is written, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who . . . is my beloved Son” (Jn. 1:33; Matt. 3:17), and “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 10:30). After His baptism, the Holy Spirit was present in every action He performed.'

100. J. Zizioulas, The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church, p.146.


102. J. Zizioulas, Suggestions for a Plan of Study on Ecclesiology, p.214, where Zizioulas states that 'Here the right balance between these two branches of theology becomes decisive. An ecclesiology of communion must be Christologically based, yet this Christology must be conditioned pneumatologically in a constitutive way. Both the incarnation and the resurrection of Christ take place “in the Spirit.”'

103. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.78.


108. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, pp.126ff, where Zizioulas explains the necessity for such a synthesis with an ecclesiology of communion.


117. Cf. D. Staniloae, *Theology and the Church*, p.24. Staniloae, himself one of the most original Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, here notes that:

"The “rest” or “abiding” of the Spirit upon the Son or in the Son signifies not only the union of the one with the other in the order of eternity, but also their union in the temporal order. The presence of Christ is always marked by the Spirit resting upon him, and the presence of the Spirit means the presence of Christ upon whom he rests. The Spirit is the one who shines forth, that is, the one who stands out over Christ like a light, and Christ is he who has led us into the light of the Spirit. If it was only at Pentecost that the Apostles fully recognized Christ as God, that was
because it was only in the Ascension of Christ that the Spirit which rests upon him and shines forth from him as God was poured out upon him completely as man. This is why Scripture never speaks of seeing the Spirit for his own sake, nor even of the vision of the Spirit in general - apart from the times when he showed himself symbolically as a dove, as tongues of fire, or as a cloud - but instead speak only of seeing Christ "in the Spirit". For the Spirit is only the spiritual light in which Christ is seen, as objects are seen in material light. And just as we cannot say that we see the material light, but only other objects in it, in the same way we do not say that we "see" the Spirit, but Christ in or through the Spirit. The Spirit is the milieu in which Christ is "seen", the "means" by which we come to know him and to lay hold of and experience the presence of Christ. Therefore, although there is no knowledge or experience of Christ as God apart from the Spirit, neither is there any experience of the Spirit by himself in isolation for he is only the means of supernatural perception. If the Spirit is the means and the intensity of all knowledge of the transcendent Godhead, Christ, as the Logos is the structured content of this knowledge. Where this content is wanting the soul becomes lost in its own structures, in an inconsistent and disordered enthusiasm, and this has indeed happened with so many anarchical "experiences" and so many enthusiastic but destructive currents within Christianity which cannot be said ever to have possessed the Holy Spirit truly if it is true that the Spirit is not present apart from Christ. Moreover where the Spirit is absent as the means by which we come to the living knowledge of Christ, Christ becomes the object of a frigid theoretical science, of definitions put together from memorized citations and formulae.'


There are too many authors who would accept this view, even with their own particular nuances, to mention all of them. However, O'Leary notes that, with regard to modern Orthodox theology, the demand for some sort of synthesis is today axiomatic (P. O'Leary, *The Holy Spirit in the Church in Orthodox Theology*, p.178). Nissiotis, whom Zizioulas believes was overly biased towards pneumatology, could nevertheless warn of the dangers of the lack of a proper synthesis. As O'Leary says, 'On the one hand an extreme form of christomonism will fail to “see the charismatic energies of the Holy Spirit as fundamental to the Christian faith.” On the other hand, he characterizes another extreme as “enthusiastic movements emancipated from any Church Order.”' (O'Leary, *The Holy Spirit in the Church in Orthodox Theology*, p.179). In discussing the Rumanian contribution within the field, Alf Johansen correctly states, as an ecumenical principle, that 'An institutional Church of Christ does not exist separated from a charismatic Church of the Holy Spirit.' (A. Johansen, *Rumanian Contributions to Ecumenical Theology in Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Vol.8 (1971), p.74. Likewise, the Roman Catholic scholar, Harald Wagner, in an illuminating if complex article, *Conciliarity and Continuity in One in Christ* Vol.25, no.3 (1989), pp.256-272, also insists upon the necessity of such a synthesis in our ecclesiological approach.

S. Braunschweiler, *The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Unity in Sobornost*, New Series 4 (1964), p.642: 'If the Church is the Body of Christ, it is also the place of a perpetual Pentecost: Christ perpetually sends his Spirit and he, in turn, “christifies” men, makes them co-heirs with Christ. This double economy is found in every aspect of the life of the Church.'


D. Staniloae, *Theology and the Church*, p.48.


J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.15.


141. D. Staniloae, *Theology and the Church*, p.56.


146. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.112.


151. N. Nissiotis, Spirit, Church and Ministry, p.487.

152. Cf. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.146, n.7.

153. A.M. Allchin, The Holy Spirit in Christian Life in Sobornost, Series 5, no.3 (1966), p.173. Allchin deliberately draws on the thought of the 11th century Latin theologian, St. Peter Damian. This is of interest, as Allchin, like Zizioulas, is interested in promoting a synthesis of Eastern and Western theology, on the basis of a perceived common understanding, albeit with differences of emphasis. The fact that he can find, within the thought of an influential Latin writer of the early medieval period, a considerable degree of accord with Eastern theology, is particularly noteworthy. Ideas such as those of Damian's would help us to accept the belief that there existed, for the greater part of the history of the Church, a large measure of common ground between the Orthodox East and the Latin West, which was only gradually lost.

154. J. Zizioulas, The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God (Part III), p.34.


156. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.173.


158. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.188.

159. See, for example, Zizioulas’ comments in Human Capacity and Human Incapacity, p.438.


162. Until 1995, Lecturer in Patristics at Durham University and now Dean of Holy Cross Orthodox Seminary in the USA.


166. D. Staniloae, *Theology and the Church*, p.27.


171. J. Zizioulas. Unpublished lecture given at King’s College, London on 22nd February 1993. Zizioulas stated there that ‘Christ embodies in himself many persons. He is one person by the very fact of the person being at the centre. So as with the Trinity, we must introduce the “many”, for the person needs relationship to exist. A pneumatologically-conditioned Christology inevitably involves more than one person. Christ is the centre of unity of many persons. So, although Christ has no human personality, he includes in himself many human persons, thus bringing human personhood into himself. He does not bring himself into union simply with our nature, but brings about our personhood in him.’ (From my personal notes of the lecture).

172. For an account of this dramatic move in Christology, see J. Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London: SCM, 1990), especially chapter 17.


Chapter Three

The Eucharist and the Church

Introduction

Zizioulas' concept of the Church, like that of de Lubac, Afanasiev and a great host of writers since, focuses on the Eucharist. It is this which lies at the heart of his ecclesiology and upon which all else depends. The anthropology which Zizioulas promotes, the ecclesiastical structures, the meaning of the sacraments, even the possibility of theosis itself, all depend on the Eucharist. Yet central to Zizioulas' conception of the Eucharist is the notion of eschatology. This pervades his thought and without it his whole theological endeavour would appear as being pious, Utopian sentimentality, with no real hope of correspondence to anything in the empirical situation of the Church. Because of the centrality of this notion of eschatology, this theme pervades his thought on the Eucharist. Time and time again Zizioulas refers to the absolute importance of this concept.

Because of this centrality of the Eucharist, I intend to consider how he uses it as a basis for his understanding of the nature and structure of the Church, of the association between the various local Churches and the relationship between the various Orders, particularly between clergy and laity, within the ecclesial structures. In order to prepare the ground for this, I shall, in this chapter, first consider what it is that Zizioulas means by the term 'Eucharist' and how this is related to contemporary Orthodox and ecumenical thought. I will then consider his use of the eschatological perspective in reaching an understanding of the true nature and importance of the Eucharist. By that stage, I hope to be in a position to offer some critical comments on Zizioulas' approach and, at the same time, offer suggestions as to the line of approach which the reader might expect him to take in his more detailed
consideration of the authority structures of the Church, which will form the basis of the second part of this study.

**Church and Eucharist**

One of the most confusing aspects of ecclesiology concerns the questions: what is the Church? Where is the Church to be found? At first, these may seem to be unrelated. Yet it is increasingly being recognized that they are profoundly connected, for the answer we give to the one will determine the answer that we are led to give to the other.

Until very recent times, the primary emphasis in ‘Catholic’ ecclesiological thought has been on the Church as institution, as an international organization, the *societas perfecta*. Catholicity has been conceived in geographical terms; the Catholic Church being that Church which exists throughout the world. Obviously Protestants and Catholics have differed as to which Christian bodies can be termed ‘Church’ but there has been substantial unanimity on the geographical nature of catholicity itself. The various local Christian bodies, in such a view, are but parts of the whole and all these parts together make up the body of the Church. Such an inclination has, perhaps, been most marked in the Roman Catholic Church, especially prior to Vatican II. However, other Churches have by no means been immune to such tendencies.

The pioneering work of N.N. Afanasiev (1893-1966), the Paris-based Russian Orthodox theologian, has been largely responsible for bringing about a change in emphasis. For Afanasiev, the Church exists in and because of the Eucharist. Where the Eucharist is, there is the Church. From this primary datum, Afanasiev developed his ‘Eucharistic Ecclesiology’, which is now seen as being almost the only Orthodox ecclesiology by many Westerners. Of course, it is only right to observe that, whilst the influence of Afanasiev is crucial, he was not the only theologian to work in this field at the time and
neither were the Orthodox the only ones to give attention to this form of ecclesiology. Roman Catholic and Anglican theologians, especially those more strongly influenced by the theological presuppositions underlying the Liturgical Movement, were also moving in directions suggested by Afanasiev.

Central to this conception of the Church is the place of the Eucharist. To those who, like Zizioulas, are influenced by eucharistic ecclesiology, it is the Eucharist which is foundational of the Church's life and being. As Zizioulas points out, it is basically true that Orthodox ecclesiology is decisively determined by the Eucharist. Indeed:

Orthodox ecclesiology insists that the true nature of the Church is revealed above all when the community gathers together to celebrate the Eucharist. It is deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Orthodox that the Church is the place where the Liturgy is celebrated.

Zizioulas is here in accord with other important Orthodox thinkers in asserting that such ideas are thoroughly Pauline, for 1 Corinthians 11 uses the terms ecclesia and 'gathering together for the celebration of the Eucharist' synonymously. This is the result of a theology which is both eschatological and Christological.

For those who have adopted the basic presuppositions of eucharistic ecclesiology, from no matter which denominational perspective they have arrived at their views:

the source from which the life and unity of the Church flows and from which it is ever replenished and promoted is the Eucharist, or, more specifically, is Christ in the Eucharist. They find that their own "faith seeking understanding" most adequately and most faithfully to Scripture and Tradition centres the theological understanding of the Church on the Eucharist as its organizing principle and guiding light.

The perspective of eucharistic ecclesiology is thus essentially Christocentric. It is not that it is the Eucharist in and for itself
which is central, but rather it is Christ who makes himself directly present in this way who is at the heart. Naturally, this is something which Zizioulas himself finds resonance with, although his own highly developed sense of the need for a Christic-Pneumatological synthesis allows him to make an original and very important contribution to this approach.

For Afanasiev, the Church is only the Church when it gathers for the Eucharist. Unlike some Orthodox theologians since, Zizioulas does not fully accept this view. He warns that such a view fails to fully realize that the Church 'also involves the people of God dispersed all over the world every day, and not simply when they meet for the celebration of the Eucharist.' This is not to deny that in the Eucharist the Church is most fully itself, but rather to warn against a tendency which carries the risk of minimalizing the other aspects of the life of the Church.

Yet the awareness of this dependence of the Church on the Eucharist has only recently returned to the forefront of ecclesiology. For much of the history of the Catholic Church (both Western and Eastern) the Eucharist has been thought of chiefly as an objective means of grace, a possession of a preexisting Church. This is, arguably, the result of a scholastic theology in which the purpose of the Eucharist is to transubstantiate the elements into the body and blood of Christ. The reception of these consecrated elements imparts grace to the individuals who partake of them.

However, although there is sometimes the temptation to see the origins of this understanding in mediaeval scholastic theology, a temptation from which Zizioulas is by no means immune, this would not be entirely just. As Gary Macy has convincingly demonstrated, whilst by the twelfth century many Western theologians, such as Lanfranc, Guitmund of Aversa and Alger of Liège, did understand the Eucharist in these terms, following lines taken by Paschastius Radbertus, a more 'ecclesiastical' approach was also widely adopted. In particular, Gilbert of La Porrée, Gerhoh of Reichersberg and the
students of Peter Abelard all strongly emphasized 'the sacrament as a sign of ecclesiastical union'. For the school of Abelard especially:

The basic metaphor upon which the ecclesiastical approach to the Eucharist rests is formed from the traditional Judaeo-Christian notion of the community as the chosed people of God. The community as such is saved; the individual appropriates salvation through membership in the community as saved.7

Given this strongly communitarian understanding of the Eucharist prevalent in the West during the twelfth century, one ought to exercise caution in making a blanket condemnation of mediaeval scholastic theology for placing undue stress on the individual dimension of the Eucharist.

The Eucharistic Act

For Zizioulas, the Eucharist is not something which can be considered as an isolated event in the life of the Christian, divorced from other dimensions of his activity in the Church.8 Without doubt, this is demonstrated at its most fundamental level in his linking the Eucharist with the initiation process of Baptism-Chrismation. According to Zizioulas, 'it was in the Eucharist that the three rites, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, remained united in the liturgical life' of the Church in the first few centuries of its existence.9 We have already seen how, for Zizioulas, baptism is the event which brings about a new being.10 Baptism is incorporation into the Body of Christ and hence, as Paul says, into his death and resurrection. The fact that Chrismation or confirmation is carried out at the same time as Baptism in the Orthodox rite is no accident. In baptism-chrismation, the Pentecostal event is again experienced, with the baptized receiving the spirit of adoption as sons of God. In this sacramental action of baptism, the old person, the 'biological hypostasis' is put off and the new 'ecclesial hypostasis' begins to be experienced through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Yet of itself, this rite is incomplete. It
must be consummated by the reception of Holy Communion. This is not merely spiritual nourishment for the newly baptized Christian (though it is that too). Rather, the very fact that the Church has had a long tradition of holding these together points to the significance of this fact.

Zizioulas points to the connection of the term 'baptism' with the death of Christ (Matt. 20:22; cf. Lk. 12:50). In the view of Zizioulas:

The "cup" of his death and the "Baptism" of his death to which he refers . . . can hardly be understood apart from the cup of the New Covenant of the Last Supper. And in the entire Pentecostal scene described in Acts 2 the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Baptism of the three thousand people and the participation of all in the "breaking of the bread" form one indivisible unity.\(^{11}\)

This placing of the Eucharist, along with Baptism, at what must be the centre of the Church, is echoed by Harakas,\(^{12}\) who sees the blood and water which issued from the side of the crucified Christ (Jn. 19:34) as mystically symbolizing the sacramental realization of the Church. Harakas cites John Chrysostom in his support in this interpretation:

It was not by chance that these fountains came forth, for because it was from these two that the Church was constituted. Those who are initiated are equally reborn by water, and fed by blood and flesh.\(^{13}\)

The Eucharist, then, is to be closely associated with baptism. It is something which is for baptized Christians alone.\(^{14}\) Zizioulas makes use of his eschatological understanding of the work of the Spirit to make sense of the exclusion of the non-baptized from the Eucharistic celebration proper. For Zizioulas, the Eucharist is nothing less than the iconic representation of the Kingdom of God in the here and now. In the Christian experience of worship, an altogether different conception of time is present, even when this is not always realized. In the liturgy of the Church we enter eschatological time. This is very much in line with Evdokimov's view of the matter, which is one shared by Zizioulas. Evdokimov,
interpreting the Deacon's liturgical cry of 'The doors! The doors!' states that this is a closing of the historical doors and an opening of the doors of the Kingdom, thus making liturgical sense of the exclusion of the unbaptized from all that follows in the Eucharistic liturgy. Commenting on this, Clément remarks that:

The whole celebration is directed towards the glorious second coming of Christ when the translucent veil of the Sacrament, that is, history and the cosmos embodied in and symbolized by the bread and the wine, will be enkindled. . . . Eucharistic time is thus "Chalcedonian" time, which on the one hand plunges down into the depths of the cosmos, into the sufferings and joys of humanity and on the other hand soars up into the heavenly liturgy where the cosmos, "pneumatized" in Christ, comes to be transfigured by the mediation of the world's true history, the history of the saints.

This being the case, Zizioulas cannot accept the increasingly frequent practice among many Western Churches of allowing open access to Holy Communion. It makes no sense, in his eschatologically conditioned understanding of the nature of the Eucharist, for people who are perhaps not even members of the Church in any sense, who may not even have received Baptism, to be casually offered communion as a means of manifesting a unity which, in such circumstances, does not and cannot exist.

Zizioulas also views the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Explicit statements to this effect are somewhat rare in his earlier writings, although the concept of a sacrificial offering is implicit throughout his eucharistic theology. More recently, Zizioulas has been more forthright:

The Divine Eucharist is a sacrifice. The patristic tradition in both East and West lays great stress on this aspect of the Eucharist. So, for instance: Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechesis 23:8.9), Gregory the Theologian (Orations 2:95 and 4:52), Cyril of Alexandria (On the Mystical Supper 5) and John Chrysostom (On the Epistle to the Hebrews 17:3), as well as the Divine Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Basil the Great which are celebrated in the Orthodox Church, call the Eucharist a sacrifice which is "unbloody", "reasonable", etc. This sacrifice is none other than the death on the
Cross of Christ, whose Body and Blood are offered “for many” (Mark 14:24, Matthew 26:28); in other words, they have the effect of deliverance from sins, which are “forgiven” thanks to this sacrifice and the “communion” of the “many” in it, which is the fount of “eternal life”.16

However, whilst Zizioulas freely admits the connection between Eucharist and Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, he does so in a way which goes beyond, for example, the sacrificial teaching in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which explicitly highlights the Cross and its being made present here and now, almost to the exclusion of any other dimension.17 For Zizioulas, the concept of sacrifice in the Eucharist, as with so much else in this great mystery, is inconceivable without an eschatological perspective.

The Eschatological Perspective

Zizioulas achieves an essential role for eschatology in ecclesiology by seeing Pneumatology as being constitutive of Christology. This stress on the importance of the eschatological is becoming much more common in modern theology, having been severely neglected in recent centuries. The Roman Catholic theologian Joseph Ratzinger has attributed this increase in the awareness of the fundamental role of eschatology in theology to an invaluable insight of modern scholarship, by which:

people re-established an insight which, in the age of the rationalist Enlightenment, had been virtually dismissed as the brain-child of eccentrics. This insight consisted in the awareness that Jesus’ preaching was soaked through with eschatology. The inner impetus of that preaching came from the fact that Jesus, in an authoritative fashion, proclaimed the imminent end of the world, the breaking-in of the Kingdom of God.18

Because, for Zizioulas, the Eucharist is intimately connected to Christology, this implies that it must be understood, as is Christology, in terms of an eschatological dimension. This is only possible, of course, because of the working of the Holy Spirit within
the Eucharistic liturgy itself.

In Zizioulas' eucharistic schema, Christ is the paschal lamb provided by God to take away the sins of the world. For Zizioulas, the identification between Christ and the eschatological lamb is of definitive importance. He observes that Christ clearly linked the meal he ate with his disciples, the Last Supper, with the eschatological Kingdom of God (cf. Lk. 22:15-16, 18, 29-30). Zizioulas, in this context, is emphatic that:

The sacrifice of Christ as the Paschal Lamb is the fulfillment of the eschatological purpose of the sacrifice both of the original paschal lamb in Exodus, and of all the subsequent sacrifices performed by the Jews in imitation of the sacrifice of that lamb. So when Christ says at the Last Supper, and the Church repeats in the course of the Eucharist, that "this is My Blood, the Blood of the New Covenant", our thoughts are directed towards the coming and establishment of the Kingdom of God, and not simply as an event which took place in the past. The sacrifice of the Lord upon the Cross cannot be isolated from its eschatological significance. Remission of sins is itself linked in the New Testament with the coming of the Kingdom (Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4; John 30:23, etc.), and this surely applies especially to the remission of sins which stems from the sacrifice of Christ as Paschal Lamb.

The eschatological dimension, within the eucharistic service as within the Church more generally, is brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit. Of course, it must be noted that eschatology is not merely about the bringing of the end times into the present, essential though this is. Rather, as one Russian theologian who also works in a Western context, has observed, eschatology involves the idea of the Holy Spirit bringing the past into the present and the present into the future. In referring to the thought of Paul Evdokimov, the French theologian Olivier Clément notes that:

Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the focal point of the recapitulation of history; through him who is its origin and eschatological fulfilment, time is united with
eternity. In the divine-human reality of the Church where nothing separates the “heavenly” . . . and the earthly . . . the Lord’s sacramental parousia is effected by the Spirit, who thereby discloses the events of salvation and enables us to experience them as eye-witnesses, as “apostolic men”. That is why the anamnesis “remembers” not only the Cross, the Resurrection, the Ascension, but also the “second and glorious coming”.

A careful reading of liturgical texts will quickly reveal the crucial importance of this concept and at the same time confirm that Zizioulas, along with others who emphasise the same ideas, is in line with main-stream thought in this respect. So, the Eucharist is to be seen as being the locus of the manifestation of the Trinitarian life of God in this world. This is precisely because the Holy Spirit is at work, transcending the limitations of history and bringing about the conditions of the last days. As we have earlier observed, the Holy Spirit, in constituting the body of Christ, brings about a transformation of time in which the ‘biological hypostasis’ is overcome and transformed in the ‘ecclesial hypostasis’. The Holy Spirit, by incorporating us into Christ, allows us, in a certain measure, to participate in the future now. The Russian writer, Zabolotsky, is in profound agreement with this emphasis when he states that: ‘The life of the faithful in the church is life in salvation (2 Pet. 3:2, 18: Phil. 3:2, etc). The eschatological hope of the Christian people is salvation.’

For Zizioulas, salvation is to be equated with theosis, a sharing in the life of God. Whilst, of course, this can only be fully realized within the future Kingdom of God, nonetheless it is possible to receive a foretaste of this life on earth, in the Eucharistic community of the Church, the Body of Christ. Thus, it is likewise to be understood that, for Zizioulas, the Church draws her identity not from what she is but from what she will be, The church reflects the future, the final state of things. . . . This is, not least, because if the Spirit is present in the liturgical celebration, then so too must the reality of the eschaton.
For Zizioulas, eschatology is fundamentally linked to the Eucharist. It remains true to say, of course, that the Kingdom of God is, and can only be, a reality of the future, beyond history. In spite of this, the Kingdom of God has been inaugurated, it is already here, in a certain sense, as both Dodd and Fuller recognized. According to Zizioulas, the whole life and purpose of the Church is conditioned by the eschatological Kingdom of God and is directed towards it. The Church exists in order to bring men and women into the fullness of the life of God in an event of communion which will be completely manifested at 'the Day of the Lord'. Because of the eschatological basis of the Church, Zizioulas is able to state that 'her true citizenship is in heaven and her identity is not drawn from history but from the eschata: she is what she will be.'

It is because of this eschatological orientation of the Church that she is essentially 'unknowable' to the historian or the sociologist. They perceive only the exterior manifestation of the Church's life but cannot penetrate to the inner core of its existence, for that lies beyond history. However, it must be remarked that all too often the Church fails to manifest the Kingdom and instead reflects all too clearly the fallen world in which it abides. Although Zizioulas acknowledges this fact, it is open to question as to whether the theology of the Church which he is attempting to elaborate can have any real meaning when this is the case.

Zizioulas has observed that, in their approaches to the life of the Church, East and West have adopted differing perspectives which at first sight appear to be on a somewhat divergent track, if not actually incompatible:

**Eastern tradition** has tended to see the Church in terms of its eschatological nature, as a theophany; its liturgy is clothed in splendour and the impression this gives is one of triumphalism. **Western tradition** on the other hand has tended to see the Church in terms of her relational embracing of this world; it stresses constantly the duty to serve the needs of the world, and the impression this gives is one of activism and a utopian effort to build the Kingdom of God on earth.
The problem is to combine these two perspectives, for without so doing an imbalance is likely to occur. It is precisely in the Eucharist that Zizioulas sees the possibility of such a synthesis. This synthesis is not to be conceived of as a merely human creation but is rather the direct result of a Pneumatologically conditioned Christology as applied to ecclesiology. If the Holy Spirit is allowed to condition the Christological-Incarnational aspect fundamentally, Zizioulas argues, then we will impart an eschatological mentality in its involvement with the world.\textsuperscript{35} The result of this would be that the Church, whilst being intrinsically involved in the world, would nevertheless be orientated to the eschatological Kingdom of God, the 'beyond history', because of its pneumatological basis. Thus the Church would seek to manifest, not a progression towards a 'just' world reflecting the love of God in its life and social structures but instead would serve to make manifest the actual conditions of the Kingdom of God in the present, as a visitation.\textsuperscript{36}

It is because of such an approach that Zizioulas is able to describe the Church as an 'icon' of the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{37} Yet this iconic nature of the Church is both manifested in, and is dependent upon, the Eucharist. For Zizioulas, the Church, especially and most fully in the Eucharistic synaxis, is the sacramental anticipation of the ultimate salvation of the whole of Creation from the 'last enemy', i.e. death (1 Cor. 15:26). There is a dual character inherent in this idea. On the one hand, the Eucharist clearly takes place within history and as such is an event in the contingent world. Because of this, it is impossible that the conditions of the Kingdom of God can become permanently manifest in the Eucharist, for these conditions can be fully realized only at the Last Day. Thus these eschatological conditions are to be seen as being a 'visitation': the Kingdom is 'already but not yet', it exists in the here and now in the form of anticipation, of icon. However, an image or icon is not to be thought of as having no ontological substance. On the contrary, it belongs to the nature of an icon to have a 'participation' in that of which it is an image. This is precisely what underlies the Orthodox conviction that icons are themselves windows into eternity.\textsuperscript{38} They reveal that

140
of which they are an image. Zizioulas acknowledges that the use of iconic language for the Church admits of the possibility of thinking of the ecclesial reality in terms of the imaginative or the unreal. He is, however, convinced that there is no lack of reality but there is a lack of ‘objectified and autonomous reality’. At the same time, he is at pains to state that:

By being iconic in her existence the Church is two things: (a) she is an image of something else that transcends her - hence, again, a relational entity; and (b) she is in her institutions and structure so transparent so as to allow the eschatological realities to be reflected in them all the time.

It is no accident that the Orthodox tradition sees the Eucharist as being the moment at which the Church is most fully itself, is the icon of the Kingdom of God. It is precisely in the act of worship that the Church is most fully ‘at home’, so to speak. One of the leading American Orthodox theologians of the present time, Stanley Harakas, is in profound agreement with both Zizioulas and with the patristic and Orthodox tradition when he observes that the Eucharist reveals and manifests the body of Christ in all its fullness:

Each specific eucharistic service embodies and constitutes the whole Church in all its catholicity. Those gathered together “are” the Church, the whole Church, with all of its marks of oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity.

This is only so because of the eschatological context of the Liturgy. Zizioulas, drawing on ideas such as those presented by Jeremias, is insistent that the Eucharist is not:

a mere re-enactment of a past event but ... an anamnesis of the future, as an eschatological event. In the Eucharist the Church becomes a reflection of the eschatological community of Christ, the Messiah, an image of the Trinitarian life of God.

The Eucharist is to be seen as being primarily an eschatological foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. But how is this expressed in a
concrete fashion, here in the empirical world? Is it capable of such expression? Or is it all, at the end of the day, a fine theory but one which must forever be confined (and deservedly so if it is incapable of reaching expression) to academic articles catering for a small group of secluded scholars? It is the contention of Zizioulas that this is far from being the case. An ecclesiology such as his, he claims, is no mere utopian dream. A detailed examination of the eschatological bearing of some of that which is, perhaps, the most fundamental aspect of the Eucharist may help convince us of the worth of what Zizioulas and those who think like him are doing.

The Eucharistic Synaxis

Central to the Eucharist in the thought of Zizioulas is the very fact of the synaxis itself. This gathering of the people for the Eucharist is itself a primary image of the Kingdom of God. Zizioulas points out that it prefigures the convocation of the dispersed People of God in the heavenly Jerusalem on the Last Day. This is of decisive importance. As Zizioulas himself puts it:

This is of absolutely central importance, in that the roots of this particular ecclesiology are to be found . . . in the Biblical understanding of the People of God, gathered together in the last few days.

Indeed, the term ἐκκλησία itself means nothing less than a 'gathering' or an 'assembly' - that is, the coming together of all in one place. Alexander Schmemann, who has exercised a considerable influence on all Orthodox liturgical theology over the last thirty years or so, pointed out that with reference to the ecclesial synaxis:

This gathering is eucharistic - its end and fulfilment lies in its being the setting wherein the 'Lord's supper' is accomplished, wherein the eucharistic "breaking of bread" takes place. . . . St. Paul reproaches the Corinthians for partaking of a meal other than the Lord's supper in their gathering, or assembling for a purpose other than the eucharistic breaking of bread (I
Cor. 11:20-22ff). Thus, from the very beginning we can see an obvious, undoubted triunity of the assembly, the eucharist and the church, to which the whole early tradition of the Church, following St. Paul, unanimously testifies.47

Zizioulas has, throughout his career, consistently sought to stress the importance of this ‘gathering together’ for the eucharistic synaxis in terms related to the eschatological Kingdom. For Zizioulas:

One of the basic elements of the coming in the last days is the gathering of the scattered people of God - and by extension of all mankind - “in one place” around the person of the Messiah, in order for the judgement of the world to take place and the Kingdom of God to prevail.48

The Eucharist is, affirms Zizioulas, an image of the last times.49 That being so, it is vitally important that we see, with the Early Church, that the coming together of Christians for worship has an essentially deeper meaning to it than the meeting of people to worship God in fellowship;

The Eucharist was understood in the first centuries as the event that brought together the dispersed people of God “in the same place” (epi to auto) not only to celebrate but also to constitute the eschatological messianic community here and now.50

In common with Zizioulas, Romanides places great emphasis on this ‘gathering together’ for the Eucharist. Not without cause, each of these authors draws a good deal of inspiration not only from Pauline theology, but also from the writings of Ignatius of Antioch. For Romanides, who highlights the dichotomy between what Zizioulas terms the ‘biological’ and the ‘ecclesial’ hypostases, the eucharistic synaxis is the place in which Ignatius sees the power of Satan over Christians as being destroyed:

Because of unity with each other in the love of Christ Satan cannot prevail since love is the blood of Christ and eternal life by which the devil is destroyed. “Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God and show forth His praise. For when you assemble frequently in the same place (epi to auto), the powers of
Satan are destroyed and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith." (Ign. Eph. 13).

With Zizioulas, then, Romanides views the Eucharist as being the place, or event, in which the division and ontological failure which characterizes life in the 'world', that is, outwith the Church, is overcome. It is the culmination of the new life to which the Christian was introduced in Baptism and Chrismation. This is because it is the iconic realization of the eschatological Kingdom of God on earth. In participating in the Eucharistic liturgy, he is doing nothing less than sharing in a foretaste of the heavenly banquet; in eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ, he becomes 'divinized', changed into the likeness of God and led evermore into a sharing in the divine life which is Christ's.

Zizioulas is quite clear that the starting point for a discussion of the life of the Church must be the concrete local community. This is so precisely because the Church, being the Body of Christ, is inextricably related to Christology and hence to Pneumatology. A pneumatologically conditioned Christology leads inexorably to ecclesiology, for Christ becomes inconceivable without his Body, the Church. Thus Zizioulas can write that:

Ecclesiology in its being related to Christology in and through Pneumatology is to be conceived in terms of... the concrete community of the local Church as a natural creation of the communion of the Holy Spirit.

What is so special about the local Church that it has to be seen as being the focus of the life of the Church? Here Zizioulas would insist that it is precisely - and only - due to the celebration of the Eucharist that this is so. As Afanasiev insisted, the local Church is the fullness of the whole Church of God and not merely one constituent part of a larger, 'universal' whole.

There is an essential link here to the debate about the nature of the 'catholicity' of the Church. What does it mean to say that we believe
'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'? It is often assumed, both in Roman Catholic and more particularly in Protestant communions, that the catholicity of the Church relates to its actual or potential spread throughout the entire world. Thus, the term is interpreted in the sense of 'universal', with - in the Protestant view - the Catholic Church being composed of all those different denominational Churches spread throughout the entire world.

Yet it is just this interpretation that contemporary Orthodoxy - including Zizioulas - would ardently refute. It is the assertion of Zizioulas that the term 'catholic' was adopted by the Church from an original Aristotelian terminology. The Church did not originally conceptualize the term but kept firmly to a concrete reference, speaking of 'Catholic Church' or even (and, given the New Testament and Ignatian witness, this was the original) using the plural. The first known Christian use of the term is by Ignatius of Antioch (Smyrn. 8:2). 'This means that we cannot speak of 'catholicity' and ignore the concrete local Church.' It is precisely because of this that Zizioulas feels he has to express reservations about the nineteenth century Slavophile idea of sobornicity. This highly influential theory is, for Zizioulas, 'a conceptualization made on the basis of a translation of καθολική by sobornata in the Slavonic Creed and under the influence of eighteenth-century philosophical trends.' Zizioulas prefers, however, to see behind this rather diffuse notion an original reference to the concrete gathering of the local Church, not in the technical conciliar sense which the Slavophiles and their followers have often suggested, but rather in the συνέρχεσθαι ἐπι τὸ αὐτό of Paul (1 Cor. 11:20f) and Ignatius of Antioch (Eph. 5, 2-3). Such, of course, refers to the concrete gathering together of the community, to be Church in the eschatological celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, for Zizioulas, the catholicity of the Church is expressed, even realized, by the meeting together of the community for the Eucharist liturgy. This has practical consequences for the life and worship of the Church.
The term ‘Catholic’, then, refers not to any geographic concern. rather, it derives from the Greek adverb καθ’ ὅλου meaning ‘in reference to the whole.’ John Meyendorff tells us that, according to Ignatius’ use of the term:

> the “catholic” Church was that Christian Assembly which had accepted the whole of the divine presence in Christ, the whole truth, the fullness of life, and had assumed a mission directed at the salvation of the whole of God’s creation.58

This points to a fundamental ecclesiological fact that is all too often forgotten, especially in the ‘Catholic’ tradition. All the ‘notes’ of the Church - unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are not primarily attributes ‘possessed’ by the Church at all! These ‘notes’ are, definitively, Christ’s.59 Thus, the Church is Catholic not due to any ontological priority, but rather due solely to Christ. She ‘possesses’ catholicity by virtue of being his Body - and only so. Hence, her catholicity (as with her ‘possession’ of the other marks) is due to the fact of a relationship, to an event of communion. Yet this Christological reality can only be because Christology is itself pneumatologically conditioned in such a way that Christ is not Christ without his Body, from whom he may not be separated.

Here again, Zizioulas’ thought would seem to be directed by his use of the concept of the ‘One and the Many’. The Church is, for instance, Catholic because, being encapsulated and summed up in Christ, the One, she is infused with his attributes. It is only because she is the Body of Christ that she is able to call these attributes her own, when, definitively, they belong to none but her master. Too radical a distinction between Christ and the Church, as is the case in much Protestant thought, removes all reality from these concepts when applied to the Church - or else runs the risk of imbuing her with characteristics which can only be rightfully assigned to Christ. To do such would, it must be said, be to create almost an idol of the Church. However, by his use of concepts such as corporate personality and a pneumatologically conditioned (and
hence relational) Christology, Zizioulas has managed to avoid such a course. The ecumenical consequences of this move must appear only positive. Zizioulas has, it can be argued, found a way round the impasse over part of the problem concerning the very nature of the Church. Such an approach has the merit that it preserves both the 'high' Catholic appreciation of her 'divine' nature and also takes full account of the Protestant insistence on her being of herself utterly dependent on Christ and possessing of herself nothing. Such is by no means an insignificant contribution, which promises much for future debate on the nature of the Church. As Zizioulas says:

The Christological character of catholicity lies in the fact that the Church is Catholic not as a community which aims at a certain ethical achievement (being open, serving the world, etc.) but as a community which experiences and reveals the unity of all creation *insofar as this unity constitutes a reality in the person of Christ.*

Yet wherein does this catholicity adhere in the Church? Is it the attribute of each Christian cell or 'informal group', is it to be applied only to the Universal Church, comprising all members of the Church wherever (and whenever?) they may live, when considered as a corporate society, or does it, perhaps, have its locus in the particular local congregation?

Zizioulas argues that for many centuries the West (and also, for much of the time, the East too) has worked with the assumption that a universal ecclesiology is indispensable. Thus the Church is conceived of as being a universal society, made up of many constituent parts, each one of itself being less than the whole Church. In such a view, the Eucharist was thought of as a 'means of grace' dispensed by the Church, which was itself the preexisting guardian of the sacramental system. In this form of ecclesiology, the institution is all and, not surprisingly, the theology of the Church is dominated by the over-arching concepts of Christology. Now, Christology is of course determinative for ecclesiology, as Zizioulas freely admits. However, whilst he crucially makes pneumatology a controlling factor in his Christology, scholastic theology, and hence

147
ecclesiology, did not. The result has been nothing less than catastrophic.

Zizioulas argues that the early ecclesiological consciousness of the Church was intensely local. In this he reflects the thought of Afanasiev. It is just because the Eucharist is a relational, eschatological event brought about through the Holy Spirit, that this must be so. As I have already observed, in the Eucharistic synaxis the Holy Spirit is invoked, not merely to effect a change in the nature of the elements (though this, too, is involved) but to effect a change in the congregation. This occurs precisely by the Holy Spirit bringing in the conditions of the eschatological Kingdom of God. It is in this that we, the Church, are most perfectly manifest as Body of Christ. This is achieved through the *ek-stasis* of Christ, who in going ‘beyond himself’ incorporates us into him as his Body.

A major insight of the Liturgical Movement in the Western Churches during the earlier part of this century was the recovery of the insight of the Fathers that the Eucharist fundamentally involves the gathering of the dispersed People of God. This long-neglected insight is fundamental to the eucharistic thought of Paul,\(^6\) as well as to that of Ignatius of Antioch in particular. Without this gathering together, thinks Zizioulas, there can be no Eucharist and hence no Church.\(^6\) This is due to the fact that the Eucharist is an eschatological event, in which all will be brought together in the unity of the Body of Christ in the Kingdom.\(^6\) The catholic nature of the Church, as Body of Christ, means that the Church must express its unity in a concrete manner. This, in the early Church was expressed by the fact that all Christians living in a place came together for the Eucharistic act. Thus, affirms Zizioulas, there was a visible correspondence to the conditions of the Last Days in that all divisions, be they of sex, class, race or age\(^6\) were overcome in the eucharistic expression of the ecclesial hypostasis of redeemed humanity. It is precisely because there must be one Body as there is one Christ that the local Eucharistic community must be the fullness of the Church. It is not that there are many distinct
‘churches’ or that each local Church is a partial manifestation of the entire Church. Rather, because of its celebration of the Eucharist, which brings the conditions of the Kingdom into time, it is the full and total manifestation of the entire Church. Again, this does not mean that there are many ‘Churches’, for there are not many Christs, but one. Ecclesial arithmetic does not follow the normal rules, where 1+1+1=3. In this case, where we are dealing with the unity of Christ and the Triune God, 1+1+1=1. This is an essential part of the nature of the Church. Zizioulas says:

What each eucharistic community . . . was meant to reveal, was not a partial or local unity but the full eschatological unity of all in Christ. It was a concretization and localization of the general, a real presence of the καθόλου in the καθ’ έκαστον in the true Aristotelian sense. . . . the local eucharistic assembly understood itself as the revelation of the eschatological unity of all in Christ. This meant that no mutual exclusion between the local and the universal was possible in a eucharistic context, but the one was automatically involved in the other. 65

Now, it is my belief that in all of this Zizioulas is really saying nothing that is startlingly new. Indeed, as consciously involved in continuing to develop the ‘neo-patristic synthesis’ so ably advocated by Florovsky, it is unlikely that Zizioulas would wish to propose a ‘new’ ecclesiology. Rather, he is attempting to describe what he believes to be the primitive Church’s awareness of the nature of its own being and to propose this as the means whereby a full ecclesiology for today can be developed, after the tragic mutilation ecclesiology and theology in general have suffered as a result of centuries of scholasticism and counter-reaction. 66

Among the Orthodox, where the consciousness of the local nature of the Church has never been completely lost, 67 the Eucharistic basis of this belief was forcefully argued by Afanasiev in the years following World War II. 68 Central to Afanasiev’s thought is the dictum ‘where the Eucharist is there is the Church.’ The Eucharist constitutes the Church and reveals her to be what she is. Now, this is something
which, as we have seen, Zizioulas would agree with. Yet he would immediately seek to qualify this understanding, for by itself he believes it to be an insufficient definition of the Church. To start with, this implies that all that is necessary for a community to be Church is for it to celebrate the Eucharist. Zizioulas, however, rejects this, for 'You need a minister who will be the icon, the image of Christ and his presence.'69 This leads on to the crucial question of Church structures, which has so often proved to be the real bone of contention in ecumenical discussions.

Zizioulas stresses the need for there to be a coming together of all Christians in the locality. This, a fundamental precondition for the Eucharist, is an act of the Holy Spirit, whose function is to create life in an event of communion by 'rendering the life of God a reality here and now.' This means that:

in constituting the Church as the body of Christ he renders the totality of Christ a concrete existential reality in a particular milieu, i.e., a local community. Thus this constitutive function of the Spirit transcends fully the dilemma between locality and catholicity: the two exist in each other in the very roots of the Church's existence.70

In the thought of Afanasiev, this local dimension remains largely undefined. One is sometimes left with the feeling that this is almost immaterial, so long as the Eucharist is celebrated. In this way, each specific eucharistic service 'embodies and constitutes the whole Church in all its catholicity. Those gathered together "are" the Church, the whole Church, with all its marks.'71 Now, as Meyendorff suggests, this means that:

Any local Church where the "divine liturgy" of the Eucharist is celebrated possesses the "marks" of the true Church of God . . . In as much as a local church is built upon and around the eucharist, it is simply not "part" of the universal people of God; it is the fullness of the Kingdom which is anticipated in the eucharist, and the kingdom can never be "partially" one or "partially" catholic.72
This is no doubt, in Zizioulas' eyes, perfectly true - but it is not enough of itself. Taken in itself, such views could be taken to mean that a local church can be constituted at a conference, on board a ship, in a house-group or indeed anywhere where 'two or three are gathered' to celebrate the Eucharist. This has obvious problems.

On the one hand, there is the fact that this could be taken as meaning that the 'church' (i.e. a local eucharistic entity) is a temporary phenomenon, related solely to our convenience and to be disbanded as soon as the event which prompted the eucharistic celebration is over. Furthermore, nothing is said in this view about the end purpose of the Eucharist. If, as Zizioulas argues (and in common with much patristic and Orthodox tradition), the aim of the Eucharist is our theosis, our incorporation into the life of the triune God, then something is seriously amiss. Ultimately, the Eucharist in this approach is at risk of being used, inappropriately in my view, to signify membership of a 'club', or to express feelings of togetherness and common purpose which may not always be appropriate - as, for example, in a situation in which a group is meeting to celebrate its commitment to a cause which may be divisive within the Church as a whole.

For Zizioulas, the Eucharist is the catholic act \textit{par excellence} of a catholic and local Church. Because of this, it must express the catholic unity of all the Church in Christ. Thus, there is no place in the Church for eucharistic celebrations for local groups, students, children, societies, etc. Indeed, such were unknown in the Early Church. Given Zizioulas' premises, this is a logical conclusion but is one which also flies in the face of contemporary Western (and, it must be admitted, of Orthodox) practice. However, Zizioulas would respond that rather than adapting out theology to fit contemporary practicalities, we must rather seek to amend our practices in the light of sound ecclesiological principles. Thus other practices such as multiple celebrations in any one Church on a given day (e.g. the widespread use of an 'early' Low Mass) and 'house masses' are all to be deplored as being destructive of the eschatological unity of the
Church which it is precisely the task of the eucharistic liturgy to realize and express. It is noteworthy that Orthodox canon law actually expressly prohibits such practices, maintaining a principle of one Eucharist celebrated on the one altar of any one church - and, moreover, no priest (generally) being permitted to celebrate more than once each day.

What, then, is the local Church? Zizioulas agrees with Afanasiev that it is indeed a fellowship constituted by the Eucharist. Yet the emphasis is on the synaxis of a community, which must meet not just for occasional worship or fellowship based on certain, natural, common interests. Rather, their fellowship must be rooted in the life of a common geographical area, despite varieties of interests, class or race. In the Liturgy, as Alexander Schmemann realized, the people who have first come together from their separate places together move to a new place:

They undergo a journey, and like any journey, the moving process itself through time and space has transforming potential. To speak of the eucharist as a journey and as movement implies that it is a process which takes time. In speaking of the eucharist as a journey, then, Schmemann is highlighting the fact that the primary focus of the eucharist is not the transformation of the bread and the wine but of the participants themselves. They fulfill the Church themselves by becoming, through the Holy Spirit, the Body of Christ. “What 'happens' to bread and wine, happens because something has, first of all, happened to us, to the Church.”

Zizioulas certainly shares this concept of the Eucharist as journey, whereby we are transformed from the separated existence of our natural, biological, life, in which we our relationships are determined by self-interest and common factors into a fellowship based not on common interests but purely on the ecclesial mode of life as communion. This must, for Zizioulas, mean that the basis of the Church is the local community. As Zizioulas noted early in his career:
in the eucharist we do not have a part of the Church, but rather, the whole Church itself, the whole Body of Christ. Thus, the ecclesiastical fullness and "catholicity" of the Church residing in each distinct place, was the first and basic consequence of the unity of the Church in the Holy Eucharist.75

Yet what is this local Church? At first sight, it would, quite logically, appear to be the parish. This is because such is the basic ecclesial reality of modern church life. However, Zizioulas observes that we must, in order to properly answer this question, return to the principles of the Early Church. He notes that, in the New Testament, "there seems to be a tendency to identify ἐκκλησία or even ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ with the assembly of the Christians of a particular city."76 Indeed, Paul never uses the plural when referring to the church of a particular city. This Zizioulas finds conclusive:

we must conclude that the earliest form of local church that we know of is that of the church of a city, and that the concrete form of this city church is the assembly that comprises all the Christians of that geographical area.77

Thus Zizioulas enunciates the conviction that the Church of the New Testament held to the fundamental principle of one Church - one Eucharist - one city. In dealing with the problem raised by the κατ' οἶκον ἐκκλησία, the house-church, Zizioulas affirms that these did indeed exist but that, rather than being a church unit focused on a household, it in reality refers to the Christians of a city, the only Church of that city, which met as the guests of a particular family.78 Now, one may admit Zizioulas' point that nowhere does Paul use the term 'household Church' more than once with reference to the same city in the same text.79 However, even admitting this, it is possible - and on the basis of certain evidence - even probable that there is an alternative explanation to the one proposed by Zizioulas. If this is so, then it may cause us to have certain hesitations about an otherwise extremely attractive and powerful vision of the Church.
Whilst Paul was writing at a time when, by the very nature of things, there were but few Christians in each city, this is not generally the case in the sub-Apostolic and Patristic eras. The fact that Christianity was a growing religion, especially in the cities, has important ramifications. When the Christian community of a town comprised only, say, a few dozen people, it would have been perfectly possible, and indeed natural, for them all to gather in the one place for worship. Thus far we can agree with Zizioulas, and in this we would seem to be supported by his interpretation of the New Testament evidence. However, a problem immediately arises with the growth of Christianity. The fact is, in the larger cities, the numbers of Christians would inevitably make it increasingly difficult for all Christians of the town (and, it should be remembered, of the immediately adjacent countryside!) to gather in the one house at once. Such would remain the case even when Christians had use of the atrium of a large residence - and that would not always have been possible.

It is possible that we, in considering the situation of the Early Church, underestimate the numbers of Christians that would have been found in any given city. It has, for example, been estimated that the population of Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the second city of the Empire at that time, had a population of some 300,000.\textsuperscript{80} Now, even allowing for a Christian population of only 0.1% (a very low percentage indeed), we arrive at a total of some three hundred persons. Double the percentage of Christians and one reaches six hundred. Even the lower of the two figures would have been rather difficult to accommodate in a house of any sort!

Now, Zizioulas is dealing with the ecclesiological presuppositions of the early patristic era, roughly the first three centuries after Christ. One may ask where these ecclesiological presuppositions were first formulated. The answer, I would suggest, must be in the great metropolitan cities such as Rome, Antioch, Alexandria and so forth, which were the natural centres of Christian thought. Yet if, in the largest cities, it soon came to be the case that the numbers of
Christians made it difficult if not impossible for all the members of the Church to meet together at the same time, is it likely that what, for Zizioulas, is a main plank of primitive ecclesiology, actually came to develop at an early date? After all, the Christian community could not bank on the absence of a good proportion of its members on any given Sunday. On the contrary, it was mandatory for all to attend the Liturgy, unless good reason prevented it. This remained the norm in times of persecution. Those who failed to comply were excluded from the fellowship of the Church, becoming for a considerable period Penitents, and thus excluded from the synaxis after the 'Liturgy of the Word.'

Barbara Bowe, an American scholar working in the field of early patristic literature, has devoted considerable attention to the size of the early community in Rome. It is her conviction, derived from a close examination of Paul's correspondence, that the Church in Rome at the time of Paul would have numbered, at the absolute minimum, a hundred persons.\textsuperscript{81} It is not unreasonable to conclude, therefore, that by the time of Clement some fifty years later, the community would be considerably larger.

Given that the Christian community met, in the main, in private houses, we are immediately faced with an archaeological difficulty regarding Zizioulas' claims. It can be taken as read that the community would naturally meet in the homes of the wealthier members of the congregation, for only these would be of sufficient size to accommodate a reasonably large group. These, however, on the basis of trends elsewhere, were likely to have been few (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26). According to archaeological evidence drawn from first century Corinth, a house of moderate size would have been unable to accommodate more than fifty persons at any one time, thereby making full assemblies of the Church community in a city somewhat difficult.\textsuperscript{82}

Because of evidence such as this, Bowe feels justified in her contention that full assemblies were somewhat unusual, with the
normal pattern being smaller groups meeting in 'house churches' for their religious celebrations. She comments that:

1 Cor. 14:23 alludes to an occasion of “the whole church” meeting together, and in Rom. 16:23 Paul names Gaius, a prominent member of the Corinthian Church, as one who was “host to me and to the whole church.” Robert Banks is correct in pointing out that the qualified phrase ὀλίγῳ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, “would be unnecessary if the Christians of Corinth met only as a single group . . . [it] implies that smaller groups also existed in the city.”

The origins of the Church in Jerusalem are, although somewhat neglected as evidence for the early house-church structure of Christianity, nevertheless provide an alternative source of information to the Pauline letters: ‘The household setting features prominently in Acts from the very beginning, but the implications of this for the study of church order have not always been seen.’

Zizioulas, it would seem, does not pay sufficient attention to passages such as Acts 2:46, where we are told that the believers worshipped daily in the Temple and broke bread κατ’ οἶκον (in their homes), which has, without any doubt, given Luke’s use of the phrase elsewhere (cf. Lk. 24:30, 35; Acts 20:7,11; 27:35), a eucharistic meaning.

If any credence can be given to Luke’s account of the early rapid growth of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 2:41; 4:4) it quickly becomes apparent that the assumptions made by Zizioulas regarding the absolute requirement, from the earliest days, for the whole community to come together for the Eucharist as being either anachronistic or a misinterpretation of later patristic practice. Clearly, the size of ancient houses would have precluded such relatively immense gatherings, certainly in Jerusalem from the earliest days and, elsewhere, once the Christian congregation grew to any reasonable size.

Whilst it would be unwise to make any absolute claims regarding the
structure of the meetings of the earliest Church, nevertheless it would appear that Zizioulas is making his own claims without having given sufficient attention to the existence of evidence which sits uncomfortably with aspects of his own theological position. This suspicion is reinforced when one turns to examine Acts 8:1-3. Saul, in persecuting the Church κατὰ τοὺς οἶκους as he was, can most readily be comprehended as raiding the houses where the Church was meeting to catch Christians in flagrante delicto. It would be disingenuous to suggest that such meetings were for the purposes of prayer alone and that the whole community would come together in one place for the purpose of celebrating the Eucharist. It would be more natural for the small cohesive group to celebrate the Eucharist together with, perhaps, larger gatherings of the wider community as opportunity presented itself or as occasion demanded.

Although Zizioulas is fond of appealing to Paul in support of his contention that only one Church met in each city, this must be treated carefully. Whilst admitting that Paul indeed addresses no more than one Church in a city, nevertheless this is not quite as clear cut as may at first appear. Thus, for example, Zizioulas does not really discuss Romans 16:3f., where we find mention in Paul’s greetings of Prisca and Aquila and the church in their house. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to deduce that here we have a situation in which, within a large city, there may be a number of small Christian groups meeting, as Church, in private houses but which are so intimately connected as to constitute one Church, the Church of that city.

Thus, I would conclude that, although Zizioulas has once more woven a complex an appealing tapestry for us, nevertheless I feel impelled to express certain reservations. In the first place, on the basis of the evidence in the New Testament and from archaeology, I believe it unlikely that, at least in Jerusalem where, if Acts is to be believed, from the very earliest days the Church was relatively large, the entire Church would come together for the Eucharist. Basic practicalities of the sheer numbers involved, apart from any other
consideration, would seem to preclude such a happening. Secondly, it would appear more natural that the fairly small groups which met together for prayer would also generally celebrate the Eucharist together. Thirdly, and this is something which I do not believe should be overlooked, Zizioulas credits the earliest Christian community with a fairly advanced theological understanding of their role as the New Israel, the eschatological People of God who must of necessity come together at the Eucharist in an iconic realization of the conditions of the Messianic Banquet when the dispersed People of God will gather together from the ends of the earth.\textsuperscript{86} Quite frankly, I am inclined to believe that Zizioulas is here stretching his evidence further than is warranted. This approach leaves little room for the development of theological awareness. Whilst it is perfectly possible, indeed even probable, that the earliest Church had an incipient awareness of some of the implications of their vocation, it is implausible that such a theologically complex awareness should have existed as early as Zizioulas suggests. Indeed, given that the very most fundamental of the Church’s beliefs, that of the Trinity, did not arrive fully formed but was subject to a lengthy and intense process of evolution, it is likely that so too did the Church’s awareness of the implications of its vocation and liturgical praxis.

With reference to the situation at Antioch, Corwin refers to the cosmopolitan nature of the populations of large cities in the Roman Empire. Even on conversion to Christianity, it is unlikely that all competitiveness and even hostility between the various cultural, social and racial groups would cease.\textsuperscript{87} As she submits:

\begin{quote}
In so divided a population there were almost inevitably several small Christian churches of different religious and perhaps social backgrounds, meeting in houses in different parts of the city (Philem. 2; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19) and exposed to diverse influences.\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}

It was, perhaps, this physical separation, one group from another, that facilitated the rise of heretical tendencies which were so sore a trial to the Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius. Indeed, it is conceivable that it was just such a situation that caused Ignatius to insist so
forcefully on unity of a local Church in and with its bishop! However, Corwin herself does begin to wonder if, by the time of Ignatius, these little house-churches were beginning to meet together on a more regular basis for eucharistic worship.89

In spite of this very serious consideration, Zizioulas' position does have much to commend it. It would certainly account for the liturgical evidence from Rome, supporting his view. There, it was the practice for the Pope to send a piece of the consecrated Host from his own Pontifical Mass to each of the churches in the city of Rome, where it would be added to the chalice, thus signifying unity with the Pope, as head of that local Church. This, of course, is to be seen as a remnant of the days before the parish system, when all met for the Pontifical Mass and the district churches, or 'parishes', functioned as catechetical centres and places for the recitation of the Divine Office.

There can be no denying that the evidence is more mixed, at the least, than Zizioulas would lead us to believe. Certainly, there is much to commend Zizioulas' ideas here, but one has the feeling that his case remains 'not proven' at this point. Ultimately, it may be that no real damage is done to his theological theory if it should transpire that there was more than a single Eucharistic centre in each city, at least during the earlier period in the life of the Church. It would surely be unrealistic to expect a fully-fledged ecclesiology to show itself in the first century. I would suggest that, whilst in time most if not all of the Churches came to adopt the principle of one Eucharist in one town, at least where numbers made this possible, the situation in the early sub-Apostolic period may well have been more fluid than Zizioulas admits. This need not invalidate the worth of what he is trying to say, but it would suggest a greater fluidity in these matters. This, in turn, may allow us to hold it equally possible for more than one ecclesiology to function in the Church at any one time.90
The Structure of the Eucharist

An essential part of Zizioulas' eucharistic theology relates to the structure of the concrete eucharistic community when it came together to celebrate the Eucharist. As 'revelation' and 'real sign' of the Kingdom, the Eucharist communion reflected its catholicity within its actual structures. By *eucharistic structures* we do not here mean the structure of the actual liturgical rite, although, of course, this also has its part to play. Rather, what we mean here is the manner in which the eucharistic celebration is conducted, with special accent on the arrangements concerning its physical setting.

Zizioulas draws on the writings of both Hippolytus and, in particular, of Ignatius of Antioch. Basic to his approach is the conviction that 'The Divine Liturgy is an image of the Kingdom of God, an image of the last times.' As such, the Orthodox have tended to stress the vision of the Eucharist as that of the heavenly Kingdom, rather than the more usual Western approach which has, in its liturgical practices, often tended towards stressing the dimension of the Last Supper. Zizioulas views the physical gathering 'in one place' as being the primary way in which the eschatological character of the eucharistic celebration is manifested. There are, however, other aspects to this iconological vision.

Within the Eucharist, as within the Kingdom of which it is the iconic representation, there are no divisions of class, race or sex (cf. Gal. 3:28). Yet that having been said, there exist various 'ministries in the eucharistic community that would serve as types or images of the kingdom.' Zizioulas notes that the primary influence within the early Church on the formation of spirituality around the Eucharist and the structure of the Church is derived from Ignatius of Antioch. Drawing upon an already existing understanding of the Eucharist as participation in, or manifestation of, the Kingdom:

Ignatius forcefully developed the view that salvation and spiritual or eternal life are realized and experienced

160
through faithful communion in the eucharistic body of Christ. This body is "formed" in the community of the church, which brings together all the faithful under the leadership of the president of the eucharistic assembly, the bishop, surrounded by the college of the presbyters and assisted by the deacons. Ignatius insisted that no one can claim a relationship with God giving eternal life unless there is constant participation in this eucharistic community and, therefore, unless there is obedience to its head, the bishop.97

For Zizioulas, Ignatius clearly holds two distinct views of the iconic nature of the bishop: in the first, he represents the Father (God) and in the second he is the image of Christ. Yet, as Zizioulas notes, the Church adopted the Christological imagery for the person of the bishop. Within the context of the liturgical gathering, Zizioulas sees a clear correspondence between the eucharistic structure and the structures of the eschatological Kingdom:

As far as we can reconstruct this structure from the pieces of evidence that we possess, we can see that in the center of the synaxis of the "whole Church" and behind the "one altar" there was the throne of the "one bishop" seated "in the place of God" or understood as the living "image of Christ." Around his throne were seated the presbyters, while by him stood the deacons helping him in the celebration, and in front of him the "people of God," that order of the Church which was constituted by virtue of the rite of initiation (baptism-chriermation) and considered the sine qua non condition for the eucharistic community to exist and express the Church's unity.98

Given that the Eucharist expresses the nature of the Church in its fullness, then we can understand Zizioulas' insistence that 'the structure of the Eucharist becomes automatically the structure of the Church.'99 In this, Zizioulas is diverging from the views of de Lubac.100 Because the Eucharist is the most complete expression of the Church, the ministries involved in the Eucharist become the key ministries in the total life of the Church. The structure of the Eucharist is to be exactly equated with the structure of the Church, precisely because the Church is most clearly and fully itself in the Eucharist.

161
This is of prime importance for our subject. Certainly, the ministers, centring on the bishop, were considered indispensable for the celebration of the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{101} However, we must equally note the place given to the laity in this approach. It is axiomatic to the Orthodox tradition that it is impossible for the Eucharist to be celebrated without the presence of the laity.\textsuperscript{102} Private masses have always been prohibited in Orthodoxy for the very reason that such practices are detrimental to the eschatological imagery of the Eucharistic celebration.

What, then, are the implications of the Eucharistic structure of the Church for the structures of its ministry and the exercise of authority within the Church? The answer to that is complex and will be drawn out in the four chapters which make up the second part of this work. However, I will indicate, briefly, a few lines of approach which will be more fully examined in later pages.

In the first place, the Christological is balanced and constituted by the Pneumatological. In concrete terms, this implies that the hierarchical ministries of the Church, culminating in the person of the bishop, require the existence and presence of the laity in order to exist at all. Conversely, of course, the laity require the hierarchy. Neither can in any way exist without the other. Just as in the Eucharistic liturgy, where there can be no liturgy at all without the presence and 'Amen' of the laity, so in the general life of the Church. The consent and agreement of the whole People of God are required for the bishop to exercise his ministry. At the same time, the People of God are only so by virtue of their being gathered around the person of their bishop, the living icon of Christ in the ecclesial community. Each constitutes the other, whilst at the same time being constituted by it. Zizioulas holds that such an insight has profound theological and practical consequences for the structure of the Church. As such, it will be of immense ecumenical importance, for I shall suggest that an appropriation of such an understanding of the structure of the Church may be a valid way forward in our understanding of the Church's authority structures.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have endeavoured to describe how Zizioulas uses the Eucharist as a basis for our understanding of the nature of the Church and her ministries. We have seen how the Eucharist is related directly to Christ himself and how Zizioulas sees early eucharistic ecclesiologists such as Afanasiev using the very fact of a eucharistic celebration to argue for this alone as constituting the Church. I would also suggest that Zizioulas is being somewhat harsh in his judgement of Afanasiev in this respect, as the Russian certainly did stress the importance of communion with other Churches and the role of sound doctrine, though not, admittedly, to the degree which Zizioulas does. I have also argued that Zizioulas explicitly links the Eucharist with the initiation rites of baptism and chrismation in an organic way, so that they must be conceived of together. In such a light, which is that of an eschatological understanding of the Eucharist and associated sacramental rites, it makes no sense to divorce Holy Communion from the baptismal complex by admitting to communion those who are unbaptized. The Eucharist is intrinsically associated with theosis and hence with the creation of the human being in the ‘likeness’ of God through the effecting of the ecclesial hypostasis in the individual, thereby making him or her a new, relational being, a person in the full and true sense.

Beyond that, I wish to especially highlight the importance of eschatology, and hence of the Holy Spirit, in the eucharistic theology of John Zizioulas. It is true to say that eschatology underlies the whole of Zizioulas’ ecclesiology. With regard to the Eucharist, it is of particular importance, for the Eucharist is to be understood primarily in terms of the eschatological Heavenly Banquet, in which we see the coming together of the dispersed People of God around the person of Jesus Christ. For Zizioulas, it is precisely this which informs the structure of the Eucharist itself and of the ministries of the Church as a whole.
One major area of disagreement I have with Zizioulas' picture of the eucharistic structure of the Church lies in his insistence on the importance of the existence of only one Church, or eucharistic centre, in a given city. I can certainly appreciate the beauty of the imagery he uses and the attractiveness and simplicity of his theological schema, but would express disagreement with his treatment of the evidence. Far from the position Zizioulas believes the early Church held on this matter, I believe that the situation was more complex and have suggested reasons as to why caution should be exercised before accepting Zizioulas' assessment of the situation. In my next chapter, I will develop this theme and argue for an adaptation of Zizioulas' theological conclusions in a manner which I believe not only to do more justice to the intricacies of the historical situation but which I also consider to be ecumenically more profitable. At the same time, I will argue strongly for the main points of Zizioulas' treatment of the ministerial structure of the Church as being both faithful to the Orthodox position and, at the same time, theologically astute in the extreme.
Chapter Three

Notes


3. J. Zizioulas, The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition, p.44. See also J. Romanides' important article, The Ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch (n.d.), where this idea is developed in some depth.


5. J. Zizioulas, La Vision Eucharistique du Monde et l'homme Contemporain, p.85: 'La seule compréhension possible de l'Eucharistie est christologique: elle est le corps du Christ, le Christ Lui-même, le Christ total. Donc nous de devons pas voir en elle un moyen de grâce - d'une grâce abstraite et indépendante de la christologie, comme malheureusement nous la présenent encore nos traités de dogmatique.'


10. Cf. Chapters One and Two above.


13. 'Commentary on John', Homily 85, 3. Cited by S. Harakas, 165


20. J. Zizioulas, The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God (Part I), p.3. Zizioulas here goes on to notice that: 'As has already been observed by well-known biblical theologians (J. Jeremias and others), the "remembrance" of which the Lord speaks is most likely to refer to the remembrance of Christ before the throne of God in the kingdom which is to come. In other words, the eucharistic remembrance is in fact a remembrance, a foreshadowing, a foretaste and a "fore-gift" of Christ's future Kingdom. . . . The remembrance, then, of the Last Supper, and by extension of the Eucharist, is a remembrance not only of past events, but also of future "events", i.e. of the kingdom of God as the culmination and fulfillment of the whole history of salvation.'


23. O. Clement, The Eucharist in the Thought of Paul Evdokimov, p.117. It is unfortunate that Evdokimov's important works on Orthodox ecclesiology are not generally available in English. However, for a readily available article which is of concern to our topic see his Eschatological Transcendence in A.J. Philippou (ed.), Orthodoxy: Life and
24. Whilst it would be superfluous to examine this question in depth, an indication as to the liturgical witness would be appropriate. Within the Byzantine rite it is common, when celebrating a feast (for example), that there should be reference to the events commemorated by the feast day as happening now, ‘on this day’. Thus, the Kontakion for Christmas Day states that, ‘Today the Virgin gives birth . . . ’ This refrain of ‘Today’ is constantly repeated during the course of the celebration of the events of salvation history. Yet it must be observed that this is not a phenomenon which is purely part of an Eastern liturgical tradition and which has no parallel elsewhere in Christendom. On the contrary, this is a fundamental aspect of the liturgical experience of the early and undivided Church. Within the Western, Latin, tradition there is a similar liturgical practice. Thus, for example, this finds expression in the Qui pridie of the Roman Canon within the Eucharistic Prayer of Maundy Thursday, when the celebrant, changing the form normally used, recites ‘Who, the day before he suffered for the salvation of us and of all men, that is, on this day, took bread . . . ’ This is, again, shown at various times throughout the liturgical year. Perhaps it is clearest in the Prophecies on Holy Saturday, where a sense of participation in the events prefiguring the Resurrection itself is pervasive. In spite of this tradition, so evident in liturgical texts, it seems that, in the West at least, this sense of liturgical time has almost completely vanished in the consciousness of many Christians, clergy and laity alike.


particular, though firmly related to his eucharistic theology.


38. There are many books on iconography, treating it either as an art form or from a more theological perspective. The classic work available in English is perhaps L. Ouspensky & V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, N.Y.: SVS Press, 1982). Also worth consulting are L. Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon* (Crestwood, N.Y.: SVS Press, 1978) and J. Bagley, *Doors of Perception* (London/Oxford: Mowbray, 1987). As Bagley remarks (p.1), the term 'icon' (ἔικόν) is used in the Septuagint in Genesis 1:26f., where we are told that humanity is made in the image of God. It is noteworthy that Paul uses this same word when speaking of Jesus as the image of the invisible God in Colossians. The term, therefore, is full of theological meaning, not only for Zizioulas but also for all Orthodox theologians.


41. S. Harakas, *The Local Church: An Eastern Orthodox*
Perspective, p.142.

42. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.254.

43. N. Behr, Bishop, Priest and Parish in Sourozh, No.30 (Nov. 1987), p.46.

44. Cf. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, pp.121-122.

45. J. Zizioulas, The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition, p.49.


47. A. Schmemann, The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom, p.11.


52. 'But this is not an “other” world, different from the one God has created and given to us. It is our same world, already perfected in Christ, but not yet in us. It is our same world, redeemed and restored, in which Christ “fills all things with Himself.” And since God has created the world as food for us and has given us food as means of communion with Him, of life in Him, the new food of the new life which we receive from God in His Kingdom is Christ Himself. He is our bread - because from the very beginning all our hunger was a hunger for Him and all our bread was but a symbol of Him, a symbol that had to become reality. He became man and lived in this world. He ate and drank, and this means that the world of which He partook, the very food of our world became His body, His life. But His life was totally, absolutely eucharistic - all of it was transformed into communion with God and all of it ascended into heaven. And now He shares this glorified life with us. “What I have done alone - I give it now to you: take, eat. . . ”

We offered the bread in remembrance of Christ because
we know that Christ is Life, and all food, therefore, must lead us to Him. And now when we receive this bread from His hands, we know that He has taken up all life, filled it with Himself, and made it what it was meant to be: communion with God, sacrament of His presence and love. Only in the Kingdom can we confess with St. Basil that "this bread is in very truth the precious body of our Lord, this wine the precious blood of Christ." What is "supernatural" here, in this world, is revealed as "natural" there. And it is always in order to lead us "there" and to make us what we are that the Church fulfills herself in liturgy.'


57. J. Zizioulas, *The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition*, p.44.


60. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.159.


62. J. Zizioulas, *The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition*, p.44.

63. Cf. *Didache* 9,4; 10,5. These words are incorporated into many modern Eucharistic liturgies, but it is arguable as to the extent to which the implications are fully understood.


66. For an illuminating, if somewhat vitriolic, account of the tragic nature of this loss of the patristic vision in the Greek context, see C. Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West* in
As an example of this, see the important work by F. Gavin, *Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought* (London: SPCK, 1936). However, although vestiges of the local character of the Church remain and are even at times quite strong, as when dealing with the status of the various local autocephalous Churches, the *Eucharistic* basis of the Church has been largely neglected by Gavin’s authorities and this leads easily, for example, to a fairly uncritical acceptance of the ‘geographical’ nature of catholicity (cf. p.245).

Afanasiev’s work is unavailable, for the most part, in English. However, Nichols presents a lucid account of his thought in his *Theology in the Russian Diaspora* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1989), where there is also a complete bibliography.


S. Harakas, *The Local Church - An Eastern Orthodox Perspective*, p.142.


J. Zizioulas, *Orthodox - Protestant Bilateral Conversations: Some Comments in The Orthodox Church and the Churches of the Reformation: A Survey of Orthodox-Protestant Dialogues* [Faith and Order Paper No. 76], (Geneva: WCC, 1975), p.56.


81. B.E. Bowe, *A Church in Crisis: Ecclesiology and Paraenesis in Clement of Rome* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), p.13. My own view is that the figure of one hundred Christians is unduly conservative. Even allowing for exaggerations on the part of Christian propagandists, such a low figure would be difficult to justify in the face of the Neronian persecution, which would have appeared to have claimed the lives of numerous bona fide Christians among its victims.


86. Zizioulas claims here that “The existence of “Churches in the household” does not present a problem in this respect, even if these Churches are understood as eucharistic assemblies, for there are strong reasons to believe that - significantly enough - there was no more than one such “Church in the household” in each city.” *Being As Communion*, p.150, n.30.

87. Cf. for example Acts 6:1; 1 Cor. 11:17-22, etc.

88. V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch*, p.49.


90. The importance of this remark will become clearer in the following chapter, when we consider the precise nature of the bishop’s ministry.

92. There has been a good deal written on the meaning underlying the various parts of the eucharistic rites themselves. However, it is a vastly complex area, with which I do not propose to deal here. Among the many works which discuss this matter, see A. Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (ET Crestwood, N.Y.: SVS Press, 1966); A. Schmemann, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemann* edited by T. Fisch (Crestwood, N.Y.: SVS Press, 1990); Archimandrite Vasileios (Gondikakis), *Hymn of Entry: Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church* (ET Crestwood, N.Y.: SVS Press, 1984).


100. McPartlan observes that, for de Lubac, 'though the Eucharist is "the heart of the Church", de Lubac considers that it will not tell us everything about the Church; in particular, it will cast little light on the *structure* of the Church.' P. McPartlan, *Eucharist and Church: the Contribution of Henri de Lubac*, p.847.


Chapter Four

The Church and the Bishop

Introduction

For Zizioulas, the existence and position of the bishop is of decisive importance for the Church. The bishop is fundamentally related to the Eucharist, for the whole purpose of his ministry is not to be a manager nor an arbitrary despot but to be the celebrant of the Eucharist. Zizioulas sees the ministry of the bishop as being fundamental to the very existence of the Church precisely because of this eucharistic basis. Given that Zizioulas sees the Eucharist itself as being nothing less than the iconic participation in the Messianic feast, the place of the bishop, as principal or ordinary celebrant of the Eucharist, will be determined by eucharistic categories. As such, we can expect to see Zizioulas’ understanding of the bishop as having crucial implications for the role of the other ministries, particularly the laity, in the Church. In addition, how the bishop is conditioned by eucharistic categories will have a decisive effect on the exercise of authority in the Church.

The aim of this chapter is somewhat limited, for I cannot expect to cover in detail the whole of Zizioulas’ theology of the Ministry. That task is the focus of Joseph Areeplackal’s book, Spirit and Ministries: Perspectives of East and West, which is given over to a critical examination of the whole of Zizioulas’ theology of Ministry (along with that of Congar) within the context of a synthesis on the pneumatological presuppositions of Ministry. In this chapter, I intend to examine the implications for ecclesiastical authority of the iconological identification Zizioulas proposes between the bishop and Christ within the context of the Eucharist. In order to do this, I shall first discuss Zizioulas’ understanding of the Christological and
the Apostolic dimensions of episcopacy and the effect these have on the nature of episcopacy. My next task will be to relate the bishop to the pneumatological dimension, looking at how Zizioulas treats the bishop as 'giver of the Spirit' and guardian of the local Church’s ministerial offices.

At this point we would expect to be able to see some of the ways in which Zizioulas understands authority to be exercised within the Church becoming more manifest and therefore I shall devote a section explicitly to the bishop's authority. It will become evident that, because the bishop is intimately related to the community, Zizioulas does not accept the distinction between 'ontology' and 'function' which has bedevilled so many discussions on the nature and role of the Church's ministers over the centuries. On the contrary, Zizioulas believes that an ecclesiology such as his provides an opportunity to avoid what he believes to be such misunderstandings and enables us to construct a more fruitful approach to the nature of the minister's relationship with his community.

This brings us to the question of what constitutes a community. For Zizioulas, it is essential that the eucharistic community be understood as a geographically defined entity, for that is the basis of the catholicity of the Church, based on an understanding of the Eucharist as that which makes manifest the eschatological Kingdom of God in the one locality. It is at this point that I shall identify a major disagreement I have with Zizioulas and point towards a model which I believe to be more fertile, not least in the ecumenical field. Of course, I can do no more here than indicate certain lines of thought, for the subject is potentially vast. A final section, prior to my concluding remarks, concerns the place of the bishop in determining the relationship of the local eucharistic community with the wider Church throughout the world, a subject to which I shall return in Chapter Six.
Christology and Ministry

There is no ministry in the Church other than that of Christ, for it is Christ himself who is 'the unique priest of the new covenant.' Thus, all ministries in the Church must be fundamentally related to Christ. As Zizioulas affirms, one must always take as one's point of departure a Christological point of view. In the New Testament writings, all ministerial titles are predicated primarily of Christ. It is he who is apostle (Heb. 3:1), prophet (Matt. 21:11; Lk. 4:24; Jn. 7:40, etc.), priest (Heb. 2:17; 5:6; 7:24; 8:4; 10:12), bishop (episkopos, 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Heb. 13:20), deacon (Rom. 15:8; Lk. 22:27; cf. Phil. 2:7). Christ is in every way preeminent (Col. 1:18). Precisely because of this, Zizioulas would hold that ecclesial ministries are not in any sense parallel to that of Christ, but must rather be seen as being identical with his ministry. As he remarks:

Le Christ n'a pas simplement institué certaines formes de ministère que l'on peut maintenant concevoir en elles-mêmes; il a bien plutôt voulu qu'à travers ses différents ministères l'Église soit le reflet et la réalisation dans le monde de son ministère à lui, jusqu'à la parousie.  

Joseph Areeplackal notes that here 'Zizioulas identifies the ministers of the Church with Christ himself by means of what he calls a "christological mystique."' This seemingly bold move is, for Zizioulas, demanded by the New Testament evidence, especially in Lk. 10:16, where Jesus is recorded as saying, 'He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects the one who sent me.' This particular text is of great importance in the thought of Zizioulas, as it is of other Orthodox. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that similar ideas are absent in non-Orthodox theology. On the contrary, they are a central plank of the Roman Catholic theology of Order.

Very importantly, Catholic theology has absorbed, especially since the first part of the present century, a theology of the priest as representing, or even manifesting, the munus triplex, the threefold
office of Christ, as prophet, priest and king. Although it has its origins chiefly in the work of Protestant Reformers, most notably Calvin, Catholic theology from the eighteenth century sought to make this concept its own. So popular was this form of Christological analysis of the task of the Church and her ministry that the concept was incorporated into two important encyclicals of Pope Pius XII: *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947), and from thence into Vatican II.

In making Christology the departure point for his treatment of the ministry, Zizioulas is in continuity with mainline Christian thought, both inside and beyond his own communion. Florovsky, whom Zizioulas holds to be a major influence on his thought, was firmly convinced that ecclesiology (and therefore the doctrine of the ministry) must be based on Christology. This by no means suggests that one should preclude the contribution of Pneumatology, only that priority must be given to the Christological element and a synthesis reached on this basis. However, in spite of Florovsky's own claim to be aiming at a Christic-pneumatic synthesis in this matter, Zizioulas considers that he actually fails in that he ultimately places too much stress on the priority of Christology, at the expense of the pneumatic element.

It was Florovsky's considered opinion that the Christological basis of ecclesiology was under severe pressure. Of course, Florovsky was by no means advocating that ecclesiology can or should be constructed from Christological material alone. Rather, he expressly advocated a synthesis, without, however, managing to convincingly demonstrate the means by which this could be achieved.

Zizioulas likewise sees Christology as forming the basis of the doctrine of the Church. However, he gives this position a distinctive character. In common with many Orthodox (not least among whom rank Afanasiev, Berdyaev, Bobrinskoy, Bria, and others), Zizioulas is deeply critical of any theology which would seek to reconstruct the doctrine of the Church, and hence of the ministry,
from Christological material alone. Zizioulas, again with many Orthodox observers, feels that Vatican II was guilty of this fault and, consequently, this had an adverse effect on its teaching on ministry.\textsuperscript{15} However, we should note that Orthodox theology has also been subject to this temptation to bring in the Holy Spirit only \textit{after} it has constructed its ecclesiology from Christological material.\textsuperscript{16}

Zizioulas is clear that such a conception of the Church, whereby it exists as the Body of Christ, and \textit{only then} is quickened by the Holy Spirit, is unbiblical and consequently unacceptable. Underlying such a conception of the Church, he believes, is an inadequate Trinitarian theology. Such a theology fails to take proper account of the \textit{perichoresis} essential to the being of the Trinitarian Persons. It is a fundamental theme of Zizioulas' thought that there can be no Christology without, or prior to, Pneumatology. As he points out:

\begin{quote}
The Holy Spirit is connected with the very roots of the reality of Christ as God's personal involvement in our existence, since he is at work in the very fact of the Incarnation, of Baptism and of the whole ministry of Christ (Matt. 1:18-20; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 1:35; 4:18, etc.).\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

This being the case, it should come as no surprise that a cardinal concern of Zizioulas in his account of the ministry is to attain the synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology which he advocates throughout the rest of his ecclesiology. In this he is being remarkably consistent. The ministry of the Church is dependent upon Christ, but it is axiomatic that Christology itself must be Pneumatologically conditioned in its very roots. As such, this has important ramifications for an understanding of the nature of the Ministry and not least for the exercise of authority in the Church.

\section*{Christ and the Bishop}

The starting-point of all ministry is, and must be, Christ.\textsuperscript{18} This is
particularly so when we are discussing the ministry of the bishop, for not only is the episcopate the highest Order in the Church, it is also (from an ecumenical point of view) the most contentious. If we are to rightly comprehend the nature and role of the episcopate in the Christian Church it would appear reasonable to concentrate our enquiry on an examination of the part played by the bishop in relation both to the ministry of Jesus Christ and to the community of the Church.

Zizioulas maintains that, in his person, the bishop is *alter Christus*. Here it is important to note that Zizioulas draws a line of demarcation between the theology of the ministry present in the Church of the first three centuries and that which gained predominance from the fourth century. It is Zizioulas' view that, in order to fully understand the true nature of the episcopal ministry, we must go back to the sources of this earlier period. Thus the writings of Ignatius, Clement as well as the *Didache* are to be viewed as being primary source materials.

For Ignatius of Antioch, the meaning of the bishop is to be found in the celebration of the Eucharist. 'In the Eucharist Christ represents the community to the Father. He offers the Eucharist as the first-born of the brethren, as *part* of the community.' In earlier sections of this work I have discussed at some length Zizioulas' fundamental striving for what Areeplackal has termed a 'Christic-Pneumatic synthesis' with regard to Christology. Being constituted as Christ by the Holy Spirit, Jesus is by definition a relational being and therefore cannot be understood apart from his Body. If the bishop, in the mind of the early writers of the Church, is an icon of Christ, then we would expect this to play an important part in their understanding of the ministry of the bishop. If that is so, this may be able to shed some light upon the exercise of authority by the bishop, who is the highest minister within his diocese.

Why should it be held that the bishop is an icon of Christ, an *alter Christus*? The answer to this lies, affirms Zizioulas, precisely in the
Eucharist itself and nowhere else. Underlying such a view is the conviction that, at the root of the liturgical celebration, is the reality of the eschaton. The Eucharist is nothing less that the iconic portrayal of the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God. One must remember that, in Zizioulas’ framework, an icon is not a mere representation, but is rather a participation, although necessarily an incomplete, even temporary one, in the truth which it portrays.

Zizioulas locates the question of the nature and purpose of the bishop within the context of what he believes to be one of the central ecumenical problems in ecclesiology: that of dialectic. Generally speaking, Western theologians have insisted on the necessity of maintaining a distance between Christ and the Church - the two cannot be identified. Zizioulas, however, insists that this is a false distinction. Rather than simply focussing on a Christ-Church dialectic, though he would not entirely remove this, he insists that we must increase our awareness of there being 'a certain dialectic between Christ and the Father.' What is the nature of this dialectic and how does it relate to the problem of the nature of the Ministry, especially that of the bishop? Zizioulas again reminds us that:

Because the Eucharist gathers ἐπὶ τὸ ἀντιστὸς the dispersed people of God in a particular place, all ministry in the Church derives its form, its existence and its theological specification from the typology of the Eucharist.

Given this position, which he holds to be that definitively promoted by Ignatius of Antioch, it is logical that Zizioulas should attempt to derive his vision of the theology of the episcopate from liturgical sources.

Posing the question ‘who prays in the Liturgy?’ Zizioulas remarks that in the normal position, assuming a Christ-Church dialectic:

it is assumed that there is on the one hand a community called “Church” which is human, and a person called “Christ” who is divine. Thus the Chalcedonian dialectic
of divine versus human nature is transferred in to ecclesiology, and the question arises whether the Church is distinguished enough from Christ or not. But the question of who prays in the Church is far more complex, and takes us away from the dialectic Christ-Church.32

Noting that it is the ancient liturgical custom of the Church to address the Eucharistic Prayer to the Father and not to Christ, Zizioulas argues that such prayers are heard by God (the Father) only because it is Christ himself who presents them before the Father on our behalf (cf. Heb. 7:25). Rejecting any concept of Christ as a sort of third party, a ‘go-between mediator’ who ‘listens first to the Church speaking to him and then like a messenger transmits the prayer to the Father’, Zizioulas stresses that:

the Son-Christ has identified himself so much with the ecclesial community that any separation, or even distinction in this particular case, would render these prayers meaningless and fruitless. How can one speak in this case of a dialectic between Christ and the Church? Unless the two are identified the eucharistic prayer will lose its meaning as a prayer of the Church addressed to the Father by the Son.33

Whilst acknowledging the indisputable fact that Christ is at the same time also the recipient of the prayers of the Church, Zizioulas nevertheless insists that this ‘Church plus Christ-Father’ dialectic is of the essence of the eschatological nature of the Eucharist. One must remember that at the centre of Zizioulas’ eucharistic theology is its nature as the ‘visitation’ of the conditions of the Kingdom in the here and now. It is thus essential for him that we see the Eucharist as ‘the liturgical anticipation of the eschata.’34

What, for Zizioulas, is the effect of such a liturgical identification? In the first place, it is this identification which renders meaningful the holiness of the Church and her members. The Church itself has no inherent holiness. The Church is indeed described as being holy, glorious and so forth, but these attributes do not belong to the Church as such, for the Church has no hypostasis of its own. In a

181
somatic ecclesiology such as that advocated by Zizioulas the attributes of the Church are those of Christ himself. Thus, the Church is holy precisely because Christ is holy, she is catholic because he is catholic. Such a vision, based as it is on pneumatologically conceived Christology, obviates any necessity for resorting to a juridical declaration of righteousness to the Christian or, on the other hand, a quasi-magical sacramentalism which assumes to effect the remission of original sin. On the contrary, Christians are 'holy' in exactly the same way as the Church is 'holy' - solely through participation in the holiness of Christ. Effected through the use of Zizioulas' fundamental concept of 'the One and the many', this makes of the Church a relational entity, for such identification is possible only in and through the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit.

However, this is not the end of the matter. If the Eucharist is, in essence, nothing less than the iconic indwelling in the Church of the eschatological reality then certain consequences would seem to logically flow from this. Drawing on the ecclesiological vision of Ignatius, Zizioulas firmly insists on the fact that he saw the Eucharist not:

as an object that contains in its nature supernatural powers of immortality [here referring to Ignatius' view of the Eucharist as being the 'medicine of immortality' (Ephesians 20.2)]. For him the Eucharist is primarily and basically an event of communion, a *synaxis* (gathering together) in the same sense in which the Bible understood it in connection with the earliest eschatological expectations of the gathering of the dispersed people of God in the parousia.

Stressing as he does the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist, Zizioulas wishes to view all ministry in the perspective of the communion-event of the Eucharist. With reference to the composition of the Eucharistic community itself, Zizioulas can state:

If the Church in its localization fails to present an image of the Kingdom . . . it is not a Church. Equally, if the eucharistic gathering is not such an image, it is
not the eucharist in the true sense.38

We must keep it firmly in mind that Zizioulas holds that as 'a replica of the Kingdom of God, the eucharistic gathering reflects the heavenly court'39 - for only then will it be possible to understand what appears to be the drastic move he, in common with Orthodox ecclesiology in general, makes with regard to the place of the bishop.

Ignatius of Antioch appears to be in no doubt that the bishop, precisely in the Eucharistic context, occupies the place of God.40 There is here, perhaps, a difficulty inherent in Ignatius' position with which Zizioulas has to deal. Ignatius, perhaps not surprisingly as he was giving expression to a generally unarticulated awareness of the Church, was not absolutely consistent in his iconic identification. There are present in the Ignatian writings two distinct typologies with regard to the bishop. On the one hand, the bishop is taken to represent God (and in Biblical/Patristic usage this means the Father), whilst on the other hand he represents Christ. Cognizant though he is of Chadwick's view that the belief according to which 'the bishop is the earthly representative of the divine prototype leads Ignatius to attribute to the bishop the characteristics that he predicates of God,'41 Zizioulas yet notes, with reference to the developed thought of Hippolytus and certain, unspecified, 'ancient liturgies', that the Christological imagery prevailed.42 Commenting on this situation, McPartlan notes that 'It is only via his identification with Christ that the bishop is identified with the Father,' and that Zizioulas feels it better 'to leave it as the background and focus on the Christocentric typology which is the immediate reference of the liturgy.'43

However, in adopting such an approach to one of his major authorities, Zizioulas is at least in some danger of being charged with treating his sources in a somewhat cavalier fashion. It is difficult to see just how he can claim the weight of Ignatius in his support for a Christological identification of the bishop when the Ignatian texts are somewhat confused about the matter. It is a very
different thing to identify the bishop with the **Father**, for such an identification could lead to severe complications, as McPartlan indeed notes.44

A major difficulty in positing a developed doctrine of the iconological nature of the bishop in Ignatius' theology lies in an area which Zizioulas unfortunately does not raise, that is, within the context of his doctrine of God as a whole. As the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was subject to a lengthy and complex process of evolution, it would be unrealistic to expect Ignatius or any other theologian of the earliest centuries to present a properly developed Trinitarian theology. It may be that, whilst elements of a certain subordinationism may be present in Ignatius' thought, he was unconsciously thinking within a somewhat modalistic framework. This may go a considerable way towards accounting for the inconsistency of thought in his attribution of both the role of the Father and of the Son to the bishop and, at the same time, making a somewhat tenuous and undeveloped link between the ministry of the deacons and that of Christ.45

The bishop, for Zizioulas, has the special ministry of representing Christ to the community.46 This, he says:

> was necessary and was attached to a particular person in order to manifest both in liturgy and in life the coming and presence of the Lord among his people, and the unity of the people around the Lord. In the *Eschaton*, in the Last Days, the people will be convoked around Christ; they will not be headless.47

In keeping with this basically eschatological vision of the Eucharist, Zizioulas insists that 'when the people gather together they gather around Christ, not around any other centre.'48 What is the fundamental meaning of this for the bishop? Here Zizioulas is unequivocal:

> you cannot experience the presence of Christ without putting it in the form of a ministry, of a minister. For a
Protestant, for instance, it is easy to say that we gather together and invoke the name of Christ and that Christ is then present. But this would be insufficient for the Orthodox. You need a minister who will be the icon, the image of Christ and his presence.\textsuperscript{49}

The bishop is the image of Christ precisely because he performs that same work which Christ himself does, namely he presents the Church and its offering (which is, paradoxically, a gift from God) to the Father. He does visibly what Christ does invisibly, thereby himself acquiring the prerogatives of Christ.\textsuperscript{50} As the eschatological People of God will gather solely around Christ, so too in the Eucharist, which is the iconic portrayal of the Kingdom, do they gather around Christ in the person of the bishop. Thus it may be said that for both Ignatius and for Zizioulas:

The bishop is the focus of the unity of the Church, not because he possesses some individual charism nor because he is the administrator of the local community, but because he iconically represents the living presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of the People of God gathered in the local community.\textsuperscript{51}

Essentially this appears to be a strongly Christological model of ministry and on one level so it is. Yet we here again encounter the indispensable link between Christology and Pneumatology. The bishop is only the \textit{icon Christi} by virtue of the action of the Holy Spirit, who transcends the limitations of time and brings in the conditions of the eschatological Kingdom of God. Christology is thus again seen to be constitutively conditioned by Pneumatology. This makes of Christ - and hence the bishop - a relational being, whom it is impossible to understand in isolation. The bishop, like Christ, can only exist in communion - and, also like Christ, is the centre and focus of communion within his Church. That is what underlies Zizioulas' rejection of the claim that the episcopocentric ecclesiology of Ignatius is one of 'monepiscopacy.' On the contrary, the Ignatian concept of the episcopate, which seemingly is concentrated on the 'One' is fundamentally conditioned by the absolute necessity of the 'many' - the laity and the other ministries

185
of the Church. Thus, whilst the local Church may be 'episcopocentric' it is not 'episcopomonistic', for episcopacy (like the person of Christ himself) must be constituted by relationships. There is no ministry which exists above or exterior to the community, including that of the bishop. As with Christology and Pneumatology, the ministry (definitively that of the bishop) constitutes the Church whilst being constituted by it. Zizioulas is here, in stressing the essential role of the bishop, critical of the eucharistic ecclesiology of Afanasiev, for whom the Church is constituted by the Eucharist in such a way that where the Eucharist is celebrated there is the Church. For Zizioulas this, though to a certain extent true, is insufficient. Pertinently criticizing Afanasiev's failure to take into account the structure of the eucharistic community, he remarks that this approach is one-sided in that it fails to adequately take account of the unity of the universal Church.

The Bishop as *alter Apostolus*

Observing that the eschatologically orientated model we have examined above is not the sole model for the role of the bishop to be found in the patristic era, Zizioulas suggests that the bishop is also to be seen as being *'alter apostolus'* and that a synthesis between these two approaches is necessary. Taking *1 Clement* as a starting point, Zizioulas notes that here we find a vision of authority committed by the apostles to their successors in lineal descent. It is true that (though one should note that the highly important truth that Clement was clearly unaware, discussing the role of the presbyters, that his own Church of Rome should have a *single* bishop!) it is the fact that a bishop stands in historical succession to the apostles that makes him a 'valid' bishop. As Zizioulas says, in this approach the continuity of the Church comes from the side of the past, it means succession or survival in time.

Although this is the familiar pattern in the West, it is not without
its difficulties. Essentially, it is heavily weighted in a Christological direction, with the Holy Spirit being 'the animator of a basically pre-conceived structure.' Whilst there may be a temptation, which was yielded to later in the Church's history, to conceive of such an approach in non-eucharistic terms, this was not initially the case. Indeed, Zizioulas reminds us that in describing the function of episkopé, '1 Clement calls it a leitourgia and quite clearly identifies it with the offering of the eucharist.' What is crucial, however, is the fact that bishops (or presbyters, both before and after the two became clearly distinguished) in this view as in the other, could not be separated from their communities. There was thus no sense of an independent order existing aside from the local Church.

Zizioulas sees the definitive synthesis of these two approaches in the thought of Hippolytus, 'whose Apostolic Tradition contains all that is needed for a complete knowledge of what the Church at that time meant by episcopacy.' With him, the Church arrives at:

the first synthesis of two different functions within the one episkopé: what we have called the christological and the apostolic functions, which are now combined in the ministry of the bishop.

The Apostolic Tradition, noteworthy as containing the earliest consecratory prayer for a bishop that we have, makes it clear that the bishop is seen as being closely associated with the ministry of the apostles. At the same time, however:

The bishop represents the invisible Christ who is with his Church to the end of the world. In his consecration the bishop receives the same spirit which was given to Christ, and is encouraged to follow the example of the Good Shepherd whom he represents.

Yet although Zizioulas makes full use of iconic language in discussing the bishop, he in no way confuses the bishop with the reality of Christ. They remain distinct, even though the bishop acts as the vehicle of Christ's presence in the Eucharist:

The iconic language . . . presents reality on the one hand
transcendent and on the other hand relational in character. In its aspect of transcendence an ἐχθέν or τριτος of something always points to something beyond the actual and experiential reality. This fact beyond it is so crucial to the language of ἐχθέν that in its application to the alter Christus idea in the case of the bishop . . . we have a real presence of the person typified and figured, yet a presence which goes beyond the actual agent which carries it, to a person who is not tangibly and experientially controllable and inclined to manipulation. Owing to this iconological consciousness which has established itself so deeply in the East the bishop is always treated by the Orthodox people as the living icon of Christ in such a way as to involve simultaneously a profound religious feeling (kissing the bishop's hand is for the Orthodox equivalent to kissing any icon in the Church), and a sense of human realism which does not overtake but accepts and understands the fact that the bishop is a weak and sinful human being and must not be confused with Christ himself, except so far as he points by his presence, especially in the Liturgy, to Christ. In other words, it is by virtue of the fact that the Church is the image and the type of the eschatological community that the bishop, too, who is the head of this community is alter Christus. It is not by virtue of the fact that he possesses in his being qualities of a superhuman or divine kind that he is treated as ἐκθέν Χριστοῦ.62

By combining the eschatological, iconic approach, in which the bishop is truly the icōn Christi, with a more linear, historical approach such as that of viewing the bishop as alter apostolus, Zizioulas is able to overcome the distance which otherwise exists between ourselves and Christ. The bishop, in the liturgy, makes us apostolic people, witnesses to Christ, by making Christ present to us in the here and now. We are therefore enabled to act in the world as witnesses of Christ, having had experience of the heavenly Kingdom. Of course, for Zizioulas, this is not an abiding presence. Indeed, because this eschatological dimension is the work of the Holy Spirit it can only be experienced as visitation. It has no abiding presence in this world. Rather, it breaks in through the epicletic action of the Spirit, giving us a foretaste of that which is to come.63
For Zizioulas, then, the bishop draws his identity and meaning from the reality of the eucharistic celebration. It is an intensely liturgical perception and, at the same time, is one which is based upon an understanding of a pneumatically-constituted Christology. It places the institution of episcopacy on a Christological footing and, simultaneously, permits us to understand the concept of the Apostolic Succession in a more dynamic manner. This can only be beneficial, not only for a sound ecclesiology per se, but also in ecumenical dialogue.

Despite this, Zizioulas' treatment of the bishop has, one might feel, something lacking. In attempting to understand the bishop as alter apostolus Zizioulas has failed to deal adequately with the preaching mission of the bishop. Zizioulas is emphatic in his contention that the Early Church did not identify apostolic succession with a succession in teaching. However, Zizioulas is here engaging in special pleading. The bishops, acting collectively, were employed in the explication of the apostolic faith, in conscious and radical distinction from the teachers of the various 'parties' or heresies. Indeed, towards the end of the second century, well within the era which Zizioulas considers to be determinative for ecclesiology, Irenaeus wrote:

The [heretics] are all later than the bishops, to whom the Apostles have transmitted the churches, and the manifestations of their doctrine are different and produce a veritable cacophony. But the path of those who belong to the Church, dwelling throughout the world and holding firm to the tradition of the Apostles, shows that all have one faith and one kind of organization.

Irenaeus quite clearly saw the absolute importance of continuity in, and orderly transmission of, a body of teaching:

Over against the heretical teachers Irenaeus sets the bishops. The bishops do not draw their authority from their own personal merits. They have been instituted and invested with an office which is to transmit a doctrine older than they are, and if we ask to whom this
doctrines go back, we see that it is to the Apostles, who instituted the first bishops.66

For Zizioulas, it was the function of the presbyters, rather than the bishop, to teach.67 This is important in his schema because, having made the bishop the sole liturgical celebrant, he requires to find a liturgical function for the presbyter. True, the presbyters had an indispensable role in forming the bishop’s council. As one recent writer in the field noted:

From earliest times, the presbyters of a city or diocese formed the bishop’s council. They were known as “the court or sanhedrin of the presbyters”, “the Council of the Church” and “the bishop’s counsellors”. St. Cyprian in the third century made a promise to his clergy that he would “do nothing without your advice and the consent of the people”.68

Although Zizioulas draws heavily on the thought of Ignatius of Antioch for his description of the nature of the bishop, he is somewhat handicapped in dealing with the presbyter, for Ignatius does not give us much information here. What does emerge from early evidence is that the presbyter in the earliest times appeared not to have a clear and unambiguous liturgical function, in distinction from both the bishop and the deacon.69

Although Zizioulas can find some support for his views on the ‘silence of the bishop’, nevertheless his overall stance on the bishops as being eucharistic celebrants and not preachers can scarcely be accepted uncritically. Chadwick, although accepting that in Ignatius’ thought there is an underlying theology concerning the silence of the bishop, yet makes the assumption that the bishop did preach.70 If Zizioulas is attempting to recover a patristic understanding of the episcopal office as being a synthesis of the two approaches which he isolates, those of alter Christus and alter apostolus, then it is hard to see how he can maintain a position in which it is not the bishop who is understood as the primary teacher. Both Christ and the apostles had, at the centre of their ministries, the function of teaching. It is therefore inconceivable, even given the

190
explicitly eschatological dimension of Zizioulas' understanding of the function of the bishop, that the bishop should not be understood as the teacher *par excellence*. This, of course, is not to suggest that *only* the bishop would teach. On the contrary, others would share in the ministry, and not only the presbyters. With regard to the deacons, Hall notes that:

Though in principle serving a secondary, even menial, role, the deacon was close to the bishop, and shared in the rise in importance of the bishop. The model of Acts 6 suggests that their administration of charity was intended to free the bishops (here represented by the Twelve) for their preaching and teaching role. But such a diaconate would itself be a powerful position, since the day-to-day letter-writing and administration of money might fall to him; and it seems not at all odd that two of his "deacons" (Stephen and Philip) should become very active as preachers too.71

Thus we have a situation in which the bishop is the primary teacher of the community, with others sharing in this ministry. Zizioulas may well have his reasons for wishing to deny to the bishop this role but it would seem that in this case he is failing to give adequate treatment of, or weight to, the teaching role of the bishop. The Roman Catholic Church, in its official Catechism, is closer to one of the most important and ancient understandings of the role of the bishop when it states authoritatively that:

Bishops . . . have as their first task "to preach the Gospel of God to all men", in keeping with the Lord's command. They are "heralds of faith, who draw new disciples to Christ; they are authentic teachers" of the apostolic faith "endowed with the authority of Christ".72

Zizioulas, unfortunately, stresses the role of the bishop as eucharistic celebrant at the expense of his role as teacher and proclaimer of the *Word*. Given his long ecumenical involvement with the various Protestant Churches, this is perhaps somewhat surprising. At the same time, his failure to give adequate consideration to this dimension of the bishop's ministry handicaps his vision of the bishop both as *alter Christus* and as *alter apostolus*.

191
Given his undoubted interest and ability in seeking theological syntheses, it is somewhat disappointing that he has not been better able to hold these two dimensions together in a more constructive and equitable manner.

**The Bishop as Giver of the Spirit**

Yet there is another aspect to the role of the bishop as the living icon of Christ. Besides the Christological function of feeding the people, there is also the fact that in a Biblical perspective, definitively in John's Gospel (20:21-23), it is the risen Christ who is the *giver of the Spirit*. This brings us once more into the Trinitarian heart of ecclesiology. Not merely does the Holy Spirit constitute Christ and thus create communion between us and him in his Body, the Church, but also the Spirit is not given save through Christ, to whom he bears witness. There is thus a mutuality here which reflects the nature of divine personhood.

This spirit of interdependence, of communion or *perichoresis*, is the proper locus for the ministry of *episcopé*. For Zizioulas, the differing charisms of the Holy Spirit are not causes of division within the Body of Christ but are rather to be conceived of as being *constitutive* of it. Zizioulas is absolutely insistent, on the basis of his reading of 1 Cor. 12:11, that "the Holy Spirit unites only by dividing." Just as within the Trinitarian paradigm, the unity of the Godhead is guaranteed not by the common participation in the divine *ousia* but by the mutual indwelling love of the distinct *hypostases*, so too in the Church the members are united not by common participation in an undifferentiated unity but rather through their distinct and separate *charisms*. Though distinct, each of these charisms is given, not for the benefit of the recipient, but for the building up of the whole Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12). The Church itself requires this multiplicity and diversity of gifts for its very survival in the world. Therefore, although the gifts themselves divide, and not all are of the same importance for the life of the Body, nevertheless the whole
Church is united precisely through these diverse charisms.

Admission to ordination in this perspective, one which is fundamentally different from the usual theologies of Order in the West, be they Catholic or Protestant, is necessarily confined to the person of the bishop. This is not due to a matter of a spiritual potestas which is the possession of the episcopate alone, but is rather to be seen as being an indispensable corollary of the Christological role of the bishop as eucharistic centre of unity. The function of being sole ordainer is, for Zizioulas, a vital aspect of the bishop's existence as alter Christus:

By being the sole ordainer to the ministry the bishop becomes alter Christus in the double christological function: he unites the Church in one body and at the same time he diversifies this unity by distributing the ministries and orders in the Church.75

Yet one must immediately ask the question: is it through ordination alone that the Holy Spirit is given to the community? It would seem reasonable to suppose that this is, given Zizioulas' view that it is precisely through being sole ordainer that the bishop's role as giver of the Spirit is ensured. However, if this is the case, then we are compelled to wonder if such a clerical vision is either appropriate or even possible, seeming as it does to leave aside the fact that it is precisely in baptism/chrismation that the Holy Spirit is definitively given - and, of course, baptism does not pertain solely to the ministry of the bishop!76

However, we must instantly note that, for Zizioulas, baptism is itself an ordination, the act which constitutes the Christian precisely at the same moment as rendering him a member of the community of the local Church - presided over by its bishop:

It is a mistake to call the lay members of the Church "non-ordained". Baptism and especially confirmation (chrismation) as an inseparable aspect of the rite of initiation involves a "laying on of hands" and a "seal" (sphragis), and inevitably and immediately leads the baptized person to the eucharistic community in order to
assume his particular “ordo” there. The laity do not represent either a morally lower or a generically general and “prior” kind of charismatic existence, but exist together with the other orders.77

Classically, of course, baptism was generally only administered within the context of the Eucharist, which was itself presided over by the bishop. Having been first baptized by the presbyters (or deaconesses in the case of women), the newly-baptized was led to the bishop, seated at the other end of the church, to be chrismated and then, for the first time, to take full part in the Liturgy, receiving Holy Communion as a full member of the Body of Christ. By retaining the three ‘sacraments’ (baptism, chrismation and communion) in an unbreakable unity, Zizioulas sets then firmly within the context of the local Church, the Body of Christ, presided over by its bishop.78

Thus, the bishop remains the giver of the Spirit in his community, even if it is through the hands of others. This is an important ecclesiological point and one which is fundamentally in line with the Ignatian viewpoint.

The Bishop and the Community

All of this might lead us to believe that, as the bishop is the ‘ecclesiological presupposition par excellence of the Eucharist’79 - and there can be no Church without the Eucharist - the bishop in some sense precedes, or is exterior to, the local community. Certainly, this has been the understanding in much Catholic theology until recently. In this view, there is a distinction between two aspects of the episcopal ministry: the potestas ordinis, the power of order, and the potestas jurisdictionis, or the power of jurisdiction. Episcopal consecration confers the former absolutely, but does not of itself confer the latter. In pre-Vatican II understanding, this latter was conferred by the Pope independently of the potestas ordinis. This:

led to a restricted concept of the potestas ordinis which is bestowed on the ordained; this power was viewed only as a lasting ability to sanctify the people by means of
confecting the Eucharist and remitting sins. The other functions, those of preaching and governing, were attributed to the *potestas jurisdictio*ns which comes from ecclesial authority and not from Ordination.80

Such an understanding had the effect of separating the ordained from the community. It is then possible to see the bishop, at least theoretically, as being first ordained as a bishop and only then being dispatched by ecclesiastical authority to a diocese. This is to introduce the idea of an ‘absolute’ ordination, which is carried out without reference to the local community. However, we should note that since Vatican II the *potestas jurisdictio*ns is given (albeit indeterminately) with episcopal consecration. This obviates at least some of the criticisms made by Zizioulas.

Drawing on the example of his definitive period, the first three centuries, Zizioulas maintains that the local Church, *precisely in the form of the people*, has a crucial role to play in the election and ordination of the new bishop. It is here, more than perhaps anywhere else, that the relationship between bishop and people ought to be manifested. Modern arrangements, in either the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church or, indeed, the Orthodox Churches, would not appear to meet Zizioulas’ requirements.

Already in the New Testament era, the Church was faced with the problem of *episkopé* in the face of the death of the original Apostles, the Twelve (with Paul being associated with their particular ministry) and the somewhat wider apostolic group evidenced by, for example, Barnabas. This peripatetic ministry, along with the less exalted ministry of the ‘prophets’ (also an itinerant ministry), had universal respect and ‘authority’. Indeed, the prophets were, in the ecclesial situation which produced the *Didache*, able to celebrate the Eucharist as and where they saw fit. However, it ought to be noted that Zizioulas sees the *Didache* originating at a time when ‘the main concern seems to be how to secure the transition from the apostolic to the post-apostolic generation’81 and is thus an important witness as to fuse the local and the universal. The
centrality of this problem for the immediate post-apostolic Church is confirmed by Brown, who envisages a period of second-generation apostolic delegates working in a 'universal' context prior to the Church's final opting for a settled, local, ministry.\(^8^2\) Citing in his support the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes in 3 John, Zizioulas argues that the resolution of the problem can be located in the:

understanding of the local church as a "catholic" i.e. full church (which can judge and eventually expel a supralocal minister) and the letourgia or ministry of the eucharist "offering the gifts of episkope (1 Clement)".\(^8^3\)

The fact that the bishop cannot be understood, in this primitive era, apart from the local Church is of decisive importance. Noting the transition which was becoming apparent in the Didache, in Clement and in Ignatius, Zizioulas believes that the way to ensure transition was:

through the ordination of episkopi kai diakonoi who will replace the charismatic "teacher and prophets" and perhaps apostles in their function (letourgia) of eucharistein . . . . these episkopi kai diakonoi are not introduced for the first time into the community to replace the "prophets and teachers": they are simply made now the focal ministry in the transition at the expense of the travelling ministers who no longer constitute the link between the apostolic and the post-apostolic churches.\(^8^4\)

Arising out of the local community, the bishop was not unnaturally elected locally. It was not unknown for spiritually gifted Christians to have to skulk around the countryside through fear of being seized upon by one community or another and chosen as its bishop! Indeed, it may rightly be said that:

The phenomenon of flight from ordination makes clear the nature of vocation as understood in the early Church. The call comes through the community. Call and choice are one; the people express their choice by calling a man to office. A man who was called was expected to obey this call, accepting the choice by the community even against his own will.\(^8^5\)
Such an interpretation is supported by *Didache* 15.1, but this cannot be taken as necessarily being a universal practice. Zizioulas himself, citing Canon 13 of the Synod of Laodicea, readily admits that this election by the people may, at least on certain occasions and in certain places, have been omitted. What, however, may not be omitted under any circumstances - and this is of great importance - is the 'axios' of the gathered congregation at an episcopal (or any other) ordination. Crucially, in the Orthodox tradition at least, all ordinations must take place within the context of the Eucharist.

This grafting of the bishop onto the concrete local community, which was precisely the meaning behind the acclamation of the people, was further emphasised by two other factors. In the first place, the very name of the local community which the bishop was being ordained to lead was inserted into the prayer of ordination itself. This has the effect of tying the bishop to a particular community, thereby ruling out the possibility of an 'absolute' ordination. Furthermore, Zizioulas observes that this rite of ordination has strong similarities with the rite of matrimony and may therefore be seen as a sort of 'marriage' between the ordained and the concrete local community.

If we are to ask why it is the *eucharistic* community and not the community *per se* which is of decisive importance in ordination, Zizioulas would remind us that it is precisely because it is in the community gathered for the Eucharistic celebration, properly comprehended as community, that 'Christ is present here and now as the one who realizes God's self-communication to creation as communion with His life and in the existential form of a concrete community created by the Spirit.' There is substantial evidence that the laity had, even in the West, an important part to play in the election of all clergy, including the bishop. Merely by way of example, Noakes can point to the fact that 8th century Gallican liturgical texts provide for the necessity of the agreement of the people, at least within the context of the liturgy itself.
The Authority of a Bishop

Given that I have been describing a situation in which we have, on the one hand, the bishop as the head of the local eucharistic community, the ‘One’ through whom the ‘Many’ find their meaning, and even their very being as Christians, as members of the Body of Christ, what can be said about the authority of the bishop and how it was expected to be exercised?

Zizioulas has painstakingly constructed a model of the Church based on his understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God and, directly stemming from this, on the nature of the personhood of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God. This ought to be determinative for his understanding of the exercise of authority within any ecclesial structure, and in particular with regard to the bishop, whom he views as being the living icon of Christ for the local ecclesial community. However, how far does this actually correspond with his developed views on the exercise of episcopal authority?

First of all, Zizioulas appears to set an extremely high value on obedience to the bishop as head of the local Church. It is because the bishop is iconically identified with the person of Jesus Christ, he believes, that Ignatius is correct in counselling the Christians of Ephesus to ‘be very careful not to resist the bishop, that through our submission to the bishop we may belong to God.’94 In line with this, Zizioulas accepts Ignatius’ demand in requiring that:

no one can claim a relationship with God giving eternal life unless there is constant participation in this eucharistic community and, therefore, unless there is obedience to its head, the bishop.95

However, Zizioulas denies that this is to introduce concepts alien to the biblical understanding of the Christian community into theology. On the contrary, it is because the Eucharist is to be understood not in terms of quasi-magical sacramentalism but definitively as an event of communion that Zizioulas believes this obedience to the bishop to
be essential:

Whoever disobeys the bishop disobeys God or Christ himself, who is the true bishop of the church, because the bishop sits in the place of God or is the type of God. For Ignatius eternal and true life is an eschatological reality and is granted only through participation in the eschatological community, which is prefigured and manifested in this eucharistic community. . . . The crucial importance of the bishop lies in his being the head of the eucharistic community and not in an office he holds as an isolated individual. Like the Eucharist itself, the episcopacy is a relational ministry: both of these are crucial for spiritual life because they are crucial for the presence of the eschatological community here and now in history.96

The style or content of episcopacy advocated by Zizioulas as reflecting that understood in the first centuries of the Church is somewhat different from that which is today commonly understood in the Church. Rather than the bishop belonging to a completely separate caste, based more on the mediaeval notion of the bishops as being vicarii Christ et clavigeri regni caelorum (proxies for Christ, who carry the keys to the kingdom of heaven), they should be understood as fulfilling a crucial eschatological function in relation to the rest of the community.

Ignatius is often accused of having been the founder of a monarchical episcopate, in distinction from a more 'democratic' style of Church government which had supposedly prevailed up until that time.97 Yet just how accurate is this picture? In recent times, several feminist scholars have seen in this period the rise of a hierarchalizing tendency which, among its other detrimental effects, deprived women of the power in the Church to which they had had access in the New Testament period. This era, perhaps most vividly illustrated by Irenaeus, is also blamed for the rise of an autocratic bishop, replacing more democratic structures of authority. However, far from adopting secular, Imperial, political models:

Irenaeus' conception of Church leadership can be labelled "hierarchical" only in so far as teachers may be
said to stand in hierarchical relation to their pupils. Such a "hierarchy" differs fundamentally from the political hierarchy of the Roman Empire. The relation between leaders and followers is based on persuasion and agreement, not on command and obedience. Moreover, though teachers must compete directly with those who oppose their doctrines, the ultimate aim of the teacher in handing on knowledge is to empower his or her followers, not to monopolize power.\textsuperscript{98}

Although this view differs from Zizioulas in that it directly compares the episcopal office with that of teacher or leader of a 'school', it nevertheless agrees with his own assessment that episcopal authority in this era cannot be termed either dictatorial or absolute. Rather, he views ministerial authority as being essentially conditioned by the concept of communion:

This means that authority does not flow from the ministry as such, as its ontological or moral effect and that it is not the result of some institutional purpose. Rather, authority consists in the relationship that is given to the minister by his ordination.\textsuperscript{99}

Here we are reminded of the fundamental preconceptions which underpin the whole of Zizioulas' ecclesiology and which I examined in the first chapter. Being in the image of God, humanity is called to his likeness, into existing as he does, as relational beings engaged in a perichoretic dance of mutual love. The Church, which is the eucharistic anticipation of the Kingdom, must manifest the conditions of the Kingdom in its life and structures. As such, although the bishop stands in the place of Christ, his authority must be exercised in the same way as Christ's for, properly speaking, the only authority he can exercise is that which belongs to Christ. This leads to a conception of authority which is exercised with the dictates of the requirements of a totally loving relationship.\textsuperscript{100}

For Zizioulas, it is essential that the bishop exercises his authority within his own Church in a way that is determined by the basic principles of \textit{koinonia}. First, this means that authority is collegial. The bishop, it is true, is 'in the place of Christ' - yet this does not
mean that he can be understood as standing outwith the community, judging it from beyond. On the basis of his theology of personhood, drawn from Trinitarian categories, Zizioulas is emphatic that the bishop must act in a collegial fashion. His office is controlled by a relationship to which his ordination introduces him. Zizioulas states that:

*Un évêque . . . représente une autorité non pas en raison d’un titre ou d’une fonction particuliers qu’il détient grâce à une ordination, mais en raison de la relation de cette fonction à la communauté.*

The fact that his authority is determined by a *relationship* with a given community is of great importance for an understanding of Zizioulas’ approach to the nature of the ordained Ministry of the Church.

**Ontology versus Function**

Zizioulas attempts to overcome the divide between *function* and *ontology* with regard to the question of ordination. For him, as for many other contemporary Orthodox theologians, this is a false distinction, originating in a mistaken understanding of what ordination actually is. Zizioulas states that ‘What is affected of man in ordination is to be understood neither in “ontological” nor “functional”, but in personal terms.’ Underlying this is the concern that ordination does not impart something which can be *possessed* by the individual who is ordained. Because ordination requires the action of the Holy Spirit, this means that the ordained cannot be conceived of as existing in isolation, for it is fundamental to any understanding of the nature and role of the Spirit that he always acts to bring about an event of communion.

Zizioulas rejects the idea of ministry being purely functional because it is the result of the action of the Holy Spirit. According to Zizioulas, ‘a “function” which has no ontological content denotes
something utilitarian which . . . is sheer blasphemy when applied to the communion of the Holy Spirit.'106 We should always recall that in Zizioulas' thought there can be no true being without communion. Yet a 'communion' which is purely temporary and dependent upon the continuing carrying out of a specific function is no true communion at all. However, an ontological understanding of ordination likewise poses problems for Zizioulas. He believes that:

an "ontology" of ministry which is conceived or articulated in abstraction without pointing out its relational character is incompatible with the pneumatological vision of Ordination, according to which ministry is dependent on communion.107

An ontological understanding of ordination seems, for Zizioulas, to indicate the very individualism against which his whole theological endeavour is directed: 'man is defined as an individual; he . . . possesses something'.108 He believes, rather, that we should conceive of ordination in relational terms, whereby the ordained receive certain charisms of the Spirit for the building up of the whole Body of Christ and not for any personal advantage. This he believes to be the whole thrust of Paul's theology in 1 Cor. 12-13.109 Zizioulas is convinced that:

A la lumière de la charité et dans le contexte de la communion, l'ordination relie si profondément et si existentiellement le ministère ordonné à la communauté que dans le nouvel état qui est le sien après l'ordination on ne peut le concevoir en lui-même en aucune façon; il est devenu une entité relationnelle.110

It is because Zizioulas views ordination as having a deeply relational impact on the ordained that he is unhappy about the idea of a character indelebilis being imprinted upon those being ordained. In his opinion, this is not only unnecessary but even unhelpful, since it appears to remove the ordained from the necessity of communion with the eucharistic community into which they are ordained. The gift of the Holy Spirit which is truly given in ordination cannot exist apart from the relationship which exists between the ordained and the community:

202
It is a bond of love, such as every gift of the Spirit, and its *indelible character* can only be compared with that which is possessed or given by love. Outside this existential bond with the community it is destined to die, just as the Spirit who gives this *charisma* once, and constantly sustains it, does not live outside this community because He is the bond of love.\(^{111}\)

Because the ordained, and specifically the bishop, depend on the community just as, and at the same time as, the community itself depends upon him, there exists a profoundly relational character in ordination. This is so much the case that:

The authority of the bishop is fundamentally the authority of the Church. However great the prerogatives of the bishop may be, he is not someone set up *over* the Church, but the holder of an office *in* the Church. Bishop and people are joined in an organic unity, and neither can be properly thought of apart from the other. Without bishops there can be no Orthodox people, but without Orthodox people there can be no true bishop. “The Church,” said Cyprian, “is the people united to the bishop, the flock clinging to its shepherd. The bishop is in the Church and the Church in the bishop.”\(^{112}\)

This is in agreement with Zizioulas’ view. Undoubtedly, in adopting this approach Zizioulas draws heavily upon his cardinal theological principle, his theology of the ‘One and the Many.’ Given that this is the key to the understanding of his whole theological this comes as no surprise. The authority of the hierarchy is set within a context in which the ordained and the laity constitute each other at one and the same time in a definitive act of love. Authority is therefore not something which the hierarchy possess in order that they may impose it upon the remainder of the Church, in much the same way as a despot may impose his commands upon his subjects. Rather, authority is to be understood as something which is exercised by the hierarchy on behalf of the entire Church for its good. Yet this does not mean that the hierarchy is merely the delegate of the community. Timiadis remarks that ‘Of course the assembly plays a certain role, but it is not the people only who make the ministry.’\(^{113}\) Given by God, the charismatic gifts include those pertaining to ordination. It

203
is because of this that Orthodox theology:

makes a clear distinction between God's action on ordaining a minister and the people's participation. The people sustain, attend and contribute by their fervent prayers invoking God's help upon the ordinand. But the main action of ordination is done by the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{114}

Zizioulas, in understanding ordination as being constitutive of a certain community, insists absolutely that the ordained be tied to a specific community. This, he argues, is the thought of the ancient Church, in which the name of the community to which a bishop was being ordained was inserted into the very text of the ordination prayer itself.\textsuperscript{115} For Zizioulas, ordination is always to a particular eucharistic community and consequently there can never be any 'absolute' ordination. This brings us to the important controversy of what actually constitutes a community.

The 'Local' Eucharistic Community

Within contemporary Orthodox ecclesiology there is near unanimity on the necessity of there being one local Church in each place or city. In theory, at least, Orthodox theologians require that the canonical provision that there be no more than one bishop in each place be strictly adhered to. Meyendorff, in addressing this matter, stated that:

No canonical regulation has ever been affirmed by the Tradition in the Church with more firmness than the rule which forbids the existence of separate ecclesiastical structures in a single place. The strictly territorial character of Church organization seemed practically self-evident to the Fathers of all the councils, and it is implied by all the canons dealing with ecclesiastical order.\textsuperscript{116}

This determination that there should be no overlapping jurisdictions is reflected in Canon 8 of the First Ecumenical Council and reinforced sixty years later at Constantinople, which stated that:

204
The bishops are not to go beyond their own diocese to churches lying outside of their bounds, nor to bring confusion on the churches. ... And let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordinations or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited.

Zizioulas reflects this canonical concern, which was reiterated in Canon 8 of the Third and Canon 20 of the Sixth Ecumenical Councils. For Zizioulas, the existence of only one bishop in each 'place', or geographical locality, is of primary importance. The Early Church, according to Zizioulas, established a principle that wherever there was a Church all the faithful should be gathered around one bishop in each place and one eucharistic gathering.'117 Why does Zizioulas emphasize this?

Fundamental to this conception is Zizioulas' eschatological identification of the Eucharist with the presence of the Kingdom of God, as icon, through the action of the Holy Spirit. As Zizioulas puts it:

Ecclesiologically speaking, it is due to the ministry of the bishop that the local Church acquires its catholicity and fullness as the "Church of God" in one place. For since he is the εἰκὼν of the eschatological Christ in his Church the bishop makes his Church a full image or εἰκὼν of the eschatological community. ... It is for this deeper theological reason that there should be only one bishop in each local Church. Two or more bishops automatically means two or more Churches.118

Quite clearly, this rules out the practice, widespread at least in Anglican circles, of having with a diocese a number of assistant or suffragan bishops. Given the presuppositions of Zizioulas' position regarding the iconological character of the bishop, with which I would broadly agree, it is hard to make any ecclesiastical sense of such an institution. However, whilst his strictures in this regard may be accepted, certain questions come to mind regarding his overall view here.

In insisting upon the necessity of union of the local Church around
one bishop, Zizioulas claims that the theological importance of the bishop lies in his ability to ‘unite all ministries and orders in one body and thus to transcend all divisions, nationally, culturally, socially, etc. in his person.’¹¹⁹ It is because of his insistence upon the nature of the eucharistic community as icon of the eschatological Kingdom that Zizioulas finds it essential that the local Church transcend all natural divisions in an inclusive, ‘catholic’ unity. Thus:

A eucharist which discriminates between races, sexes, ages, professions, social classes, etc. violates not certain ethical principles but its eschatological nature. For that reason such a eucharist is not a “bad” - i.e. morally deficient - eucharist but no eucharist at all. It cannot be said to be the body of the One who sums up all into Himself.¹²⁰

Yet Zizioulas faces a problem here, even if the above quotation may be understood more as slightly exasperated hyperbole than as reflective theological conviction. At the same time as emphasizing the importance of cultural differences being transcended in the Eucharist, he wishes to maintain a positive attitude towards human cultures. Zizioulas suggests that:

The Church is local when the saving event of Christ takes root in a particular local situation with all its natural, social, cultural and other characteristics which make up the life and thought of the people living in that place.¹²¹

If the Thomistic tenet that grace perfects but does not destroy nature has any truth in it, then we should see this principle as having application to our human cultural situations. In identifying ‘place’ and ‘culture’ Zizioulas is, I would wish to suggest, erecting a serious difficulty. It may once have been true to say that all the residents of a particular ‘place’ shared certain cultural presuppositions. However, in an age in which each ‘place’ has people of many cultures within it, at least in the Western world, this can no longer be said to be true. Therefore it will be necessary to find an alternative model whereby the truth of Christ may be appropriated in each situation.
This is precisely because:

Reception requires *inculturation* of the gospel. Different people receive the gospel and Christ himself in different ways. There should be room for freedom of expression and variety of cultural forms in reception.\textsuperscript{122}

Fortunately, there is a precedent within the tradition of the Early Church for such an understanding, not withstanding the strictures of Zizioulas, Meyendorff and others. In 1944, the Roman Catholic Church historian, Francis Dvornik, published a remarkable little book which is useful in providing evidence of an alternative approach to the problem of the local Church.\textsuperscript{123} Dvornik demonstrated that in certain cases the Early Church knew of, and readily accepted, local Churches existing side by side in the same geographical locality, under their own ‘ethnic’ bishops, yet remaining in full communion with each other and seeing in the other the reality of the Catholic Church of God.\textsuperscript{124} In neglecting such an approach, Zizioulas is omitting to give due consideration to a valid expression of the ecclesiology of the Early Church. Rahner noted that:

> It is impossible to divide up the Church *exclusively* on a territorial basis. . . . The territorial principle is *one* important natural and permanent structural principle. . . But it is not the only structural principle.\textsuperscript{125}

Such an approach has immense possibilities. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church has taken steps to guarantee the place of culture within the structural organization of the Church. Thus, for example, one is to adhere to a specific *rite* rather than a purely geographical jurisdiction. Practically, this allows there to be a Ukrainian Catholic Church with its own customs and liturgy, owing allegiance to its own bishop based in England, whilst at the same time being physically located within the geographical boundaries of the Archdiocesan of Edinburgh and St. Andrew’s. Thus *cultural* identity is given a valid expression through the person of its own episcopacy without in any way compromising the catholic nature of the Church.\textsuperscript{126}

Recently, Allen Brent has made a case for a renewed understanding
of the theological basis for a culturally conditioned understanding of episcopacy.\(^{127}\) Without total abandonment of elements of a geographical understanding of episcopacy or of the iconic nature of the bishop, such an approach has the benefit of truly relating our human cultures to the Gospel in such a way that they may be the subject of the redemptive action of the Holy Spirit. Whilst Zizioulas has powerfully presented the case for a representative ministry for the bishop, who sums up in his person the Many, the members of the Body of Christ, in order to present them to God that they might be transformed into his likeness, nevertheless I would suggest that closer attention to the cultural context of episcopacy would strengthen an otherwise overly rigid dimension to his ecclesiological approach.

**The Bishop and the Universal Church**

We have seen that, for Zizioulas, the bishop unites the local Church in and around himself in his double aspect of *alter Christus* and *alter apostolus*. The mystery of the 'One and many' is Zizioulas' preferred means of explicating this episcopocentric ecclesiological perspective.\(^{128}\) Indeed, the very title of his first work, *The Unity of the Church in the Eucharist and the Bishop*, presupposes that the bishop is as important as the Eucharist in this respect. Unlike Afanasiev, Zizioulas is fully alive to the necessity of linking the local with the universal. Afanasiev, the real founder of Orthodox eucharistic ecclesiology, although by no means totally unaware of the necessity of the universal alongside the particular, has nevertheless opened himself up to criticisms of espousing an 'Orthodox congregationalism' through an inadequate vision of the relationship between the two.\(^{129}\) Zizioulas, however, seeks to transcend any dichotomy between the local and the universal precisely through the ministry of the bishop and the concept of the 'One and the many'. Zizioulas cannot insist strongly enough that:

> The ministry is what makes the ecclesial community and the ordained person relational not only to each other
and the world but also with regard to the other communities that exist or have existed in the world.\textsuperscript{130}

Not only is each local community a full Church, but it can only be so when in relation to, and in communion with, all other Churches. Here again, we enter in to the mystery of the 'One and the many', rooted firmly as it is in the Trinitarian understanding of God. Just as the divine Persons can only exist in relationship to each other, so too can the local Churches exist only in communion. Their very nature, as the Body of Christ, demands that each 'cell', which contains in itself all that is needed to be 'Church', be fully integrated with all the other 'cells'. Constituted by the Holy Spirit as it is, the local community cannot but be in an interdependent relationship with all other local Churches. This is, in fact, a demand of the Eucharist itself:

As is made clear in the Orthodox Liturgy, every Eucharist is offered on behalf of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The whole Catholic Church throughout the world is involved in each eucharistic celebration, and therefore the nature of the Eucharist itself points to the need for communion among the local churches.\textsuperscript{131}

We are here driven back to Zizioulas' views on the eschatological nature of the Eucharist as Feast of the Kingdom. If the Eucharist is, in reality a foretaste of, and a participation in, the Heavenly Banquet, which itself demands and presupposes the unity of all around Christ, then unity between the local eucharistic communities is imperative. Because it is precisely the task of the Holy Spirit to create koinonia, then unity among the churches is demanded as they are brought by the Spirit to participate in the Kingdom. It is precisely, too, because we are 'Body of Christ' that our unity is demanded, for this unity is primarily and definitively in and with Christ. There can be no disunity in Christ and therefore in order to be united to him, each local Church must be in communion with the others. Because there is only one eschatological banquet, so every eucharist is a participation in that one banquet. It is because of this that the Churches require to be in communion and unity with each
How is this unity made manifest? Zizioulas does not accept that it can merely be left to 'the love or faith of ... individual members'\textsuperscript{132} to express or realize this unity. Not only would such an approach make unity depend on emotion or belief, it fails to take into account the necessity (as required, for example, by Cyprian) of being grafted as a member of a local Church in order to be in relationship with the universal Church.\textsuperscript{133} This leads Zizioulas to assert that:

\begin{quote}
If we admit that the ek-static and relational nature of the local community must be realized whilst this community retains its unity and not through its individual members independently and directly, this leads us inevitably to the special importance of the head of each local community, the bishop.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

The person of the bishop effects unity in two ways, through apostolic succession and through conciliarity. With regard to apostolic succession, by which the bishop is joined to those who have preceded him, Zizioulas cautions us against thinking of this in terms of a tactile, linear succession.\textsuperscript{135} Rather, the bishop is not to be considered in himself but purely as head of his eucharistic community. We are thus enabled to see, through the prohibition of absolute ordinations and the demand for the name of the community to be inserted into the consecratory formula, that 'apostolic succession' is, at least for Zizioulas, primarily a succession of communities through their heads: 'apostolic succession is essentially a matter of charismatic identification of the various communities in time.'\textsuperscript{136}

I wish, because of the complexity of the subject, to devote further space to the idea of conciliarity in Zizioulas' thought and therefore will leave detailed discussion of the subject until Chapter Six. However, there is a crucially important aspect of this which bears directly upon the unity of the various local communities in the persons of their bishops. This is the provision, made much of by Zizioulas, that each bishop be consecrated by at least three other
bishops from the same ecclesiastical province.

In Western, Latin, theology, there is a distinction between **validity** and **licency**. If it is also held that, having the plenitude of priestly power, the bishop is the **sole** condition for ordination, having power to transmit Order, then it becomes possible for a bishop, even if under ecclesiastical censure, to ordain and consecrate others. It should therefore come as no surprise that the West has, over the last century, seen a proliferation of 'episcopi vagantes', all claiming valid episcopal Orders.\(^{137}\) If the grace of Order is given solely through the imposition of a validly ordained bishop's hands, where the correct rite is used, then situations such as this will surely arise.

However, the canonical provision\(^{138}\) that a bishop be consecrated by three others acts as a safeguard here and prevents us viewing the bishop as an ecclesiological entity *in his own right*. The necessity for three consecrators has nothing to do with any deficiency of 'power' to consecrate on the part of a lesser number. On the contrary, this number serves to give expression to the fact that a bishop is, at his consecration, made one of a *college*. At the same time, precisely because his attachment to a particular local community is of the essence in the consecratory prayer, he is constituted by the local community at the same time as he, in effect, constitutes it and gives it ecclesiological meaning through its continued incorporation in the universal Church, made possible only in his person. Because a bishop is not related solely to his own Church but, contains it (the 'many') within his own person (the 'One'), he is fundamentally related to the rest of the Churches - something signified in the demand for his incorporation into the college of bishops through his consecration by three other bishops, three other heads of local eucharistic communities.

The local community is not a self-defined entity, but exists ecclesiologically only in relation with the other local churches. The local church, whilst it may chose its own bishop, must nevertheless submit its choice to the approbation of the other churches. Hence,
whilst three of the bishops from the province are required to consecrate the new bishop, all the other bishops of the ecclesiastical province must give their assent in writing. This act makes of the bishop a link between local and universal:

He is part of a local community, and yet not in the same way as are the presbyters, the deacons and the laymen of that community. He is ordained by more than one bishop and as such his ministry transcends the local community. In fact it is the Bishop that makes each local Church catholic.\textsuperscript{139}

Here we have an increasingly important ecumenical concept, at least as regards relations between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. The collegial character of the episcopate is one of the areas where these two bodies have reached wide agreement and is of paramount ecumenical importance. This collegial character, expressly realized through the necessity of multiple consecrators for an episcopal ordination, was advocated by the 1977 Chambéry 'common statement' on ministry:

This unity of the local church is inseparable from the universal communion of churches. It is essential to a church to be in communion with all. This communion is expressed and realised in and by the episcopal college. Through his ordination, the bishop is made the minister of a church which he represents in the universal communion. He enters thereby into the college of bishops. Episcopal ordination, carried out by at least three bishops, expresses the communion of the churches of those consecrating bishops with that of the newly ordained man: it unites the latter to the college of bishops.\textsuperscript{140}

Zizioulas has thus located the bishop within the context of the universal through the use of his understanding of the concept of the One and the Many. The local community and, hence with it, each Eucharist, becomes a catholic entity precisely through the ministry of the bishop and in no other way.
Zizioulas, in his analysis of the role of the bishop as definer and absolute presupposition of the local ecclesial community, has presented us with a powerful, complex and appealing vision, based on a reading of the ecclesiology of the first three centuries in particular. It remains, however, for us to evaluate this vision, not only in the light of Patristic evidence, but also as measured against ecumenical consensus (if, indeed, such exists on this point) and specific theological considerations. Furthermore, as Zizioulas specifically presents his ecclesiology as being faithful to the Orthodox understanding of the Church, we must enquire as to whether he is justified in making this claim.

Central to Zizioulas' eschatologically-orientated theology of the episcopate is the notion of the bishop as icon Christi. Although, recently, an ecumenical group which included an eminent Orthodox bishop felt able to say that Orthodox ecclesiology was wary of an identification between the bishop and Christ, placing as it does too much emphasis on the Ordained at the expense of the community,141 this is not an approach which has been advocated by Orthodox ecclesiology as a whole. Zizioulas can find support for his views from many respected sources, too many to detail here. However, we may note, as a sample, the very important (both for its own sake as a balanced and official piece of writing and for its ecumenical possibilities) 1976 'Moscow Agreed Statement' between the Orthodox and the Anglicans affirmed both that the eucharistic celebrant is a representative of the community before God and is 'an "icon of Christ", representing Christ to the community'.142 Acknowledging his debt to Zizioulas, the American Orthodox writer Stanley Harakas likewise affirms that in the eschatologically understood Eucharistic vision of the Church, the bishop acts as the iconic portrayal of Christ, around whom the eschatological people gather.143 A major Orthodox figure in ecumenical dialogue, Archbishop Kokkinakis, drawing on 1 Clement in particular, also accepts the iconographical nature of the bishop.144
Modern writers within the Orthodox tradition tend to draw heavily upon patristic sources in constructing their ecclesiological edifices. One of the most important patristic writers, ecclesiologically speaking, is St. Symeon the New Theologian, who has been the subject of an important work by the late Archbishop Basil Krivocheine. Referring to Symeon's scathingly critical writings on the character of the clergy of his day (10th/11th Century), Krivocheine yet highlights the fact that, despite any possible shortcomings in the actual person of the bishop, it is the bishop who nevertheless remains the icon of Christ. Kallistos Ware, who - interestingly enough - participated in the ecumenical dialogue led by Allchin which has been alluded to, likewise supports the idea of the bishop as being an iconic portrayal of Christ and cites Dositheus in support of this.

One of the most interesting books on Church order from an Orthodox point of view to have been produced in recent years is by another Orthodox hierarch, Metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis. For Timiadis (as for Zizioulas), it is Christ himself who is the celebrant of each Eucharist. This compels him to adopt the view, which he finds expressed in Chrysostom, that the celebrant is merely a representational character through and in whom Christ works. Lest one be inclined to think that this approach is a peculiarly Greek one, Timiadis cites Cyprian to the effect that:

If Christ is the highest priest of the Father, who offered Himself and gave the commandment to his disciples, and to those who officiate in general, that we should do this in remembrance of Him, it is quite apparent that every priest takes the place of Christ, inasmuch as he repeats all the deeds of Christ.

Finally, Father N. Behr, in an address published in 1987, takes the concept of the icon Christi as being absolutely fundamental to the position of the eucharistic celebrant.

Now, whilst this allows us to see that the understanding of the bishop as being the iconic representation of Christ, which Zizioulas
places at the heart of his episcopocentric ecclesiology, is indeed a commonplace within the Orthodox tradition, it says nothing regarding the validity of the concept in itself. Indeed, such an understanding may appear to be so alien that it presents a major problem for the ecumenical observer.

In New Testament terms, the function of being an ‘icon of Christ’ surely belongs to all the baptized and not merely to one person within the community. Thus, all Christians are called to ‘put on Christ’ (Gal. 3:27) and to be ‘ambassadors’ (presbeus) of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). If, precisely through our incorporation into the Christian community in Baptism, we are each made images of Christ, then one may legitimately ask wherein lies this special gift of representing Christ which Zizioulas posits of the bishop.

Zizioulas, here fully in line with much ecumenical thought, wishes to insist on the full integration of community and ministry. The Church’s ministry is to be seen within the context of the community of the local Church. However, to then raise up a member, or members, to a situation where they are seen to differ from the generality of the members of the Church, is to run the risk of creating a clerical caste. Through a firm denial of a character indelibilis which is given to the ordained at ordination, Zizioulas attempts to remove this possibility. However, is he successful in this?

It would be a misunderstanding to assume that Zizioulas removes all ontological content from the ordained ministry. Yet this ontological content is not to be conceived of as grace transmitted to the ordained, but rather as a specificity of relationship. This brings the person ordained into a permanent (though this is open to some qualification in Zizioulas’ thought) relationship with the community. Although Zizioulas wishes to remove us from the ontological/functional realm which has characterized much of the debate on ministry, he does believe that ordination has a profound effect on the person ordained, but in an eschatological and
This is not to be understood in terms of an ontological permanence but of eschatological decisiveness and finality. . . . no ordained person - whether "layman" or "clergyman" - can appear before God pretending that he has never been ordained.\textsuperscript{154}

Although Zizioulas repeatedly insists on the necessity of a complementarity between 'lay' and 'ordained' members, it is not difficult to see how, given the fact that the various Orders are distinguished, one can arrive at a situation whereby it may be said that:

Priests and bishops are, as it were, the interpreters and messengers of God, commissioned in his name to teach men the divine law. They act in this world as the very person of God. It is evident that no office greater than theirs can be imagined. Rightly have they been called angels (Mic. 2:7), even gods (Ex. 22:28), holding as they do among us the very name "power of the living God."\textsuperscript{155}

Yet in attempting to remove most of the ontological content of ordination Zizioulas is surely going too far. If ordination constitutes a permanent relationship between the ordained and the community then it is surely appropriate to describe this relationship in terms of ontology. A close parallel can, perhaps, be made with baptism/chrisimation. The rite of initiation constitutes the baptized in a new relationship to the Body of Christ. At the same time, this is, in Zizioulas terms, to be understood precisely as an ordination. Now, a minister may, in Zizioulas' eyes, be deposed and removed from his position as a minister of the Church, with certain consequences:

if he is isolated from the community he ceases to be an ordained person (no anathematized or excommunicated minister can be regarded as a minister). The fact that in the case of his rehabilitation this person is not re-ordained does not imply a recognition that he was still a minister during his excommunication . . . the community having once ordained someone recognizes his position in re-admitting him, and thus does not repeat the service of ordination.\textsuperscript{156}
Although this does have the advantage of excluding the possibility of vagantes clergy, it nevertheless represents a distinct move away from the position of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. Theologically, however, there is another difficulty. Baptism/chrismation represents an 'ordination' to the ranks of the laity of the Church and, as such, once having been baptized no person can lay his or her baptism aside. It constitutes a permanent change in that person's relationship to the community. Even if he or she should voluntarily leave the community or even be cast out, the effect of the baptism remains and that person is in a different position to one who has not received baptism. Thus, on rejoining the eucharistic community, baptism is under no circumstances repeated. Even expelled from the Church, a person once baptized is in a very different situation from one who has never received baptism.

In the case of the ordained, a new relationship is effected through the action of the Holy Spirit in ordination. This, too, is permanent and cannot be annulled through any action. Of course, the Church may forbid the minister to exercise any ministry in the Church but nevertheless the effect of the ordination remains and, on reconciliation, ministry is again resumed, with no liturgical act being necessary. Incidentally, the very fact that a ministry may not be exercised without the express consent of the diocesan bishop likewise in no way affects the status of a minister, even if he is not permitted to exercise his ministry within a given diocese. A theology which relates the minister to the community through the concept of relationship need not necessarily or beneficially exclude the concept of on. The two are by no means mutually exclusive!

Before we can attempt to properly evaluate Zizioulas' theology of ministry it is necessary to discuss how he sees the other Orders, particularly that of the layman, in relation to the ministry of the bishop. Only then will one be able to consider how these elements relate to each other in the Body of Christ and how each, in relation with the others, manifests the unity of the Church through the communion of a diversity of charisms.
Chapter Four

Notes

1. **Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry** (Geneva: WCC, 1982); 
   *Baptism*, para. 17.


   
   'In no sense would this exclude a strong emphasis on the operation of the Holy Spirit. One should only keep in mind that the Church is the Church of Christ, and He is her Head and Lord. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Son . . . (Jn. 16:13-14). In any case, the “Economy of the Spirit” should not be so construed as to limit and reduce the “Economy of the Son.”’ (p.168).

Florovsky is here consciously correcting ideas presented by Vladimir Lossky in his justly famous work, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, which first appeared in English in 1957, though originally published in French in 1944. In this work, Lossky devotes a chapter (Chapter Eight) to ‘The Economy of the Holy Spirit’.


Lossky, of course, was strongly influenced in his views on the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology by the thought of Khomiakov, as were so many (though by no means all - Florovsky being an obvious exception) Russian theologians working in the West at this time. This was itself a reaction to an almost Christomonistic emphasis in the theology of Khomiakov’s own generation and of even later pre-
Revolutionary theology. With regard to the difficulties inherent in Khomiakov's theology on this point, O'Leary remarks:

'The difficulty lies . . . in Xomjakov's separation of the mission of the Spirit from that of the Word. This reflects, to some extent, his philosophical presuppositions, but more fundamentally it is a reflection of his rejection of the "filioque". Because he accepts that the Scriptures assert a sending of the Spirit by Jesus he must hold that this sending cannot be Pentecost, since Pentecost is a reflection of the inner life of God, and in God's life the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. The sending of the Spirit by Jesus he reduces to a rather vague general outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all creation. The Spirit indwelling in the Church, making Christ present, is not sent by Jesus, but by the Father alone, since the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. Thus, Xomjakov's theology separates the Christ-event and Pentecost and results in an ecclesiology which minimises the role of human history and human events, and human cooperation and instrumentality in the life of the Church.'


Unfortunately, for all that Khomiakov's thought has had immense positive influence on ecclesiology, it must nevertheless be said that his theology leads to a conception of the Church that is too docetic. It reduces the Church to a single interior principle - that of the mutual love of the faithful - which is the direct consequence of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church at Pentecost. For all that it has helped us to see beyond the merely structural elements of the Church, there are many problems associated with such an ecclesiology.

9. Florovsky identifies two basic approaches in dealing with the theology of the Church. In the first, the christological basis of ecclesiology is asserted. Florovsky believes this to be the prevailing approach of the Fathers of both East and West until long after 1054. As Florovsky remarks, "it is almost traditional to develop the whole doctrine of the Church out of the Christological doctrine and to take for guidance the famous Pauline phrase: *the Body of Christ.* In the final account, "Christology" and "Ecclesiology" will be organically correlated in the inclusive doctrine of "the Whole Christ" - *totus Christus, caput et corpus*, in the glorious phrase of St. Augustine." However, Florovsky sees the strong Christological content of this model as having been endangered, not least since the 19th Century. In his opinion, the Church has been considered in
post-Reformation theology much more as a 'Body of Believers', *coetus fidelium*, than as the *Corpus Christi*. In the 1950s, when he was most forcefully expressing his concerns, Florovsky saw the influence of both Möhler and Khomiakov, as expressed particularly through the successors of the latter, as so stressing the role of the Holy Spirit that "The doctrine of the Church is in danger of becoming a kind of "charismatic sociology."" See his *Christ and His Church: Suggestions and Comments*, especially pp.163-165.

It is, however, worth noting that a more common complaint against much ecclesiology, especially Western, Roman Catholic, ecclesiology of the time, is that it was excessively Christological, rather than pneumatological. In fact, it was around this very time another Orthodox working in the West, Vladimir Lossky, in his *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, was castigating the West, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, for its lack of attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in its life and structures. One of his main criticisms revolves around the *Filioque* clause, which in common with the majority of Orthodox he sees as being both cause and consequence of a subordination of the Holy Spirit.


16. Christos Yannaras has identified such an approach as being characteristic of a prolonged phase of Orthodox, and particularly Greek, theology. Writing in 1971, he noted, with regard to Orthodox theology then current in Greece that:
The works of both men [C. Androutsos and P. Trembelas, leading Greek theologians] represent typical examples of Western criteria imposed on Orthodox dogmatic theology. The views of Androutsos and Trembelas regarding ecclesiology and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as well as Christology and Soteriology are different from those of the West only in the letter of dogmatic formulation. But as regards presuppositions, criteria and theological mentality they are one. Both of these Greek scholars begin with a theological gnoseology which is exclusively based on the individual's rational comprehension and religious feeling; no hint of apophaticism, no suggestion of personal participation, in revealed truth is to be found in their works. They do not know the distinction between the Essence and Energies of God, the qualitative difference which distinguishes Orthodox theology from every other theology and spirituality, and both are entirely silent as regards the ascetic and mystical tradition of the Fathers of the East. On the other hand full endorsement is given to the scholastic ontic conception of God, the Western juridical understanding of the relations between God and man, the theory of satisfaction of divine justice through the death of Christ on the Cross, the juridical understanding of the transmission of original sin, autonomy of the laity and other similar Western ideas.'


Whilst there may be a good deal of truth in Yannaras' accusations against Greek theology, it is unfortunate that here, as in other works, he adopts what I can only view as an exaggerated hostility to Western theological approaches. Additionally, his attacks seems to pay little attention to the quite remarkable shifts in emphasis and tone of theology in the West which have taken place over the last few generations. His hostility appears to be directed more towards a parody of Western theology, bearing little resemblance to contemporary theological endeavour. This manifest dislike does his cause little good, betraying as it does an unwillingness, or even inability, to sympathetically consider any Western theology as beneficial. It is noteworthy that Zizioulas, although having much in common with Yannaras, is considerably more open-minded with regard to much of the Western theological endeavour. This may have something to do with the fact that much of Zizioulas' academic career has been spent in the West, whilst Yannaras, although having studied in Western Europe, has spent his working life in Greece.

17. J. Zizioulas, On the Concept of Authority in The

19. This is clearly appreciated in BEM's section on Ministry. Traditionally, in modern schemes for union between episcopal and non-episcopal Churches, its has been the question of specifically episcopal ordination which has proved to be the decisive stumbling-block. This has been true throughout the history of ecumenical dialogue between episcopal and non-episcopal Churches. This was clearly perceived from an early date (see e.g., K.E. Kirk (ed.), *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of Episcopacy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), p.v, and has remained one of the most contentious aspects of ecumenical dialogue.


Zizioulas explicitly demands here that a clear distinction between the two periods be made:

'The understanding of episcopacy differs fundamentally in each of those two periods. It is misleading to assume, as it is commonly done, that the idea of episcopacy which has been known to the Church from the fourth century onwards and which determined the debate between the Roman Church and the Reformation in the sixteenth century and afterwards, is identical with that of the first three centuries.'


'If the presence of the Spirit pervades liturgical celebration in its entirety, so does the reality of the eschaton [and] ... the eschaton is that life in which the community of believers already participates through the Spirit. In fact, it is precisely that life
which the faithful come together to celebrate.

26. Cf. J. Zizioulas, *The Ecclesiological Presupposition of the Holy Eucharist*, p.343. This is the clear meaning of Zizioulas' words here:

 `'The eschatological community both in its ecclesial and its eucharistic form is above all a synaxis *epi to auto* of the dispersed people of God.'

27. Zizioulas is at pains to emphasize this point. See the rather full and highly intriguing comments he makes in *The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition*, pp.297f.


34. J. Zizioulas, *The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church*, p.28.

35. Zizioulas' article, *The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition*, explicitly sets out to extrapolate certain consequences from agreed basic principles. In this article, he holds that the Western individualization of Christ underlies many of the ecclesiological problems between Orthodoxy and the Western Churches.


223
44. Cf. McPartlan’s comments in *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, p.196.
45. Admittedly, Kelly gives cogent reasons for not accepting such reasoning, believing it to be misleading and based on a cursory examination of the relevant texts. He prefers to see Ignatius’ thought as being rooted in the Johannine tradition, reflecting texts such as Jn. 1:1f, 10, 30; 14:9; 17:5.
   ‘In tracing His divine sonship to His conception in Mary’s womb, he was simply reproducing a commonplace of pre-Origenist theology; the idea did not convey and was not intended to convey, any denial of His pre-existence. So far as Ignatius is concerned, he definitely states (Magn. 6:1; 7:2) that He “existed with the Father before the ages”, and that He “came forth from the unique Father, was with Him and has returned to Him.” Phrases like these imply a real distinction, as do the passages (Trall. 3:1; Magn. 6:1; 7:1; Smyrn. 8:1) in which he compares the relation of deacons to the bishop, or of the Church to the bishop, or that of Christ to the Father.’
   Despite this, I believe that we cannot look for a formulated Trinitarian doctrine in the mind of Ignatius, he living near the beginning of the long struggle to discover the mind of the Church on this matter. Likewise, whilst his iconological identification between the bishop and Christ may be of great help, I cannot but question the advisability of so readily assuming, as Zizioulas does, that we can make a straightforward appeal to his typology, to justify the demand not only for the existence of a particular ministry, but also for a particular understanding of that ministry.
47. J. Zizioulas, *The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition*, p.49.


52. The definitive account of Afanasiev’s thought here is to be found in A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, especially Chapter Four.


63. This is an important dimension of Zizioulas’ thought. The Eucharist is, for Zizioulas, the image of the heavenly realities. Having said that, we must note that this is by no means to
deny the actual reality of the event as true portrayal of the Kingdom. In Zizioulas' eyes, it is not a matter of mere role-play or a subjective conceptualization of the eschatological conditions. Rather:

"Zizioulas points out that image means "something real and as true as truth", the difference being that image is the appearance of truth in a context in which it is not fully at home and therefore cannot abide. Truth is an "eschatological reality", namely the life of communion, which can indeed enter history and has done so in Christ, but only as "a visit and a 'dwelling' (cf. Jn. 1:14)" with its real home elsewhere. That it cannot abide in history, or more correctly in fallen and fragmented history, is conveyed by Zizioulas' description of its visits as events; it enters history "to open it up in a communion event" [Being As Communion, pp.99, 100]. Such entries occur in eucharistic celebrations and the image of Christ is the gathering itself, the one-many configuration of bishop and people at the Lord's table, the image in the Spirit of the future truth which is the heavenly gathering of all around the throne of God and of the Lamb. Christ is corporate, Head and members, One and many. The liturgical "Amen" to the prayer of the bishop, the one, is strictly the prerogative of the laity, the many, as their essential contribution to the corporate revelation, in the eucharistic event, of Christ in his heavenly totality. By it, the laity do not so much just respond to the bishop's action as complement his action, so as to show forth with him the whole Christ, that is the Catholic Church [cf. L'eucharistie: quelques aspects bibliques in J. Zizioulas, J.M.R. Tillard, J.J. von Allmen, L'eucharistie (Mame, 1970), pp.42-43 and Being As Communion, p.121]. In this sense, bishop and people both, complementarily, make the Eucharist and, in so doing, are both edified and confirmed in their respective orders by the inbreaking of the eschatological reality: "the Church constitutes the Eucharist while being constituted by it" [The Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist, p.341]. The Apostolic Succession of bishops is expressly seen as the succession in history of those who are at the centre of these successive eschatological gatherings: "apostolic succession goes through the concrete episcopal community" [Being As Communion, p.166]. Thereby, eschatology grounds the role which history and historical succession fully and properly play in the Church. History enters the realm of eschatology [cf. Zizioulas' contribution to T. Weiser (ed.), Whither Ecumenism? (Geneva: WCC, 1986), pp.62-
71 and 72-73].


64. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.198, n.97. Zizioulas cites a number of patristic sources in his support here. However, this does not resonate with the Early Church’s concern for apostolicity of faith. Whilst a deeper scholarly appreciation of the subtleties surrounding the formation of a body of ‘orthodox’ doctrine may question the accuracy of the manner of its formation, the fact remains that the Early Church did, indeed, have a great concern with the transmission of, and continuity in, an apostolic succession of doctrine. Zizioulas emphatically denies that the bishop had, at least until the middle of the second century, a strong didactic function: ‘it was . . . felt always deeply that the Church is not a “school” and that the successors of the apostles were not perpetuators of ideas like the heads of philosophical schools nor teachers in the same sense that the presbyters were.’ (*Being As Communion*, p.240).


66. J. Danielou and H. Marrou, *The Christian Centuries*, Vol. 1: *The First Six Hundred Years* (London: DLT, 1964), p.111. We should note, however, that we need not concern ourselves here with the historical accuracy of Irenaeus’ statement. For the present purposes, all that is of consequence is the Irenaeus believed that there was a distinct body of teaching, its guardians were the bishops, and both it and they had their origins in the apostles.


70. H. Chadwick, *The Silence of Bishops in Ignatius*, pp.171-172. Chadwick argues that for Ignatius the silence of the bishop is of importance precisely because he sees it as being a primary characteristic of God himself. Therefore: ‘Ignatius is led by his theory that the bishop is the earthly counterpart of the divine archetype to his notion that the
silence of the bishop is a matter of the profoundest significance. God is silence; therefore when men see their bishop silent, the more reverence they should feel towards him, for it is then that he is most like God. and if he should preach, his sermon might perhaps be considered as a “Logos proceeding from silence” (cf. Ignatius, Ephes. 15; Philad. 1:1). Nevertheless, Chadwick is here implicitly assuming that the bishop included preaching among his ministries.


76. Whilst it is true that any Christian (or even, in the Western theology accepted since the time of the baptismal controversy between Pope Stephen and Cyprian, any non-believer acting with the intention of doing what the Church does) may baptize in the case of necessity, this is not the case with regard to Chrismation/Confirmation.

In the Early Church, it was normal practice for baptism to be administered once a year, at the Easter Vigil. It was a unified rite, as may be clearly seen in Hippolytus’ *Apostolic Tradition*. It is important to stress that in the time of Hippolytus Initiation was conferred in one, unified, rite. The very title this rite, *Of the Paradosis of Holy Baptism*, clearly indicates this. Confirmation as we understand it, administered some years after baptism, did not yet exist. In the rite of Hippolytus, the candidates were first anointed with the oil of exorcism and then baptized in water by a presbyter. After anointing with chrism, again by a presbyter, the newly-baptized persons were led at once to the bishop, who laid hands on them, praying: “O Lord God, who has counted these thy servants worthy of deserving the forgiveness of sins and the laver of regeneration, make them worthy to be filled with thy
Holy Spirit and send upon them thy grace that they may serve thee according to thy holy will: for thine be the glory . . .

Two things are of the greatest importance here. First, the Rite of Initiation was a whole, generally performed at the same time. The only exception permitted in the Early Church was in the case of emergency baptisms, but even then it was required, as an absolute necessity, that the baptized person be presented to the bishop for the laying-on of hands if he or she survived. This requirement was made part of Church law as early as 305, in Canons 38 and 77 of the Council of Elvira.'


Thus, even here, we see the bishop's role as bestower of the Holy Spirit as being guaranteed in the very heart of the baptismal rites, which were the sole means of entry into the Christian community.


'Didache 15:1 indicates that the community itself could select leaders; but in other areas and times it may well have been that the leaders of sister-churches intervened, or that the presbyter-bishops sought to
have their own children succeed them. There is nothing in the New Testament literature about a regular process of ordination. (And a fortiori there is nothing to support the thesis that, by a chain of laying-on of hands, every local presbyter-bishop could trace a pedigree of ordination back to "the apostles."). Nor do we know whether Church offices were held for a limited time or for life.'

87. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.218.
88. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.218.
89. J. Zizioulas, The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church, p.31.
90. Canon 6 of the Council of Chalcedon explicitly ruled out any such ordinations.
91. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.213, n.12. This is an interesting parallel, which is perhaps better applied to the Orthodox than to the Roman Catholic understanding of ordination. For the Orthodox, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, divorce followed by remarriage, whilst never desirable, is permissible. As regards the bishop (or any other minister), Zizioulas would hold that he may, for good and sufficient reason, be downgraded, even to lay status - perhaps something parallel to divorce. Within Roman Catholic theology, even when a minister is prohibited from exercising a ministry, he remains ordained.
94. Ignatius, Ephesians V.
This would appear, at first sight, to lead to a major difficulty with regard to Church discipline and pastoral care. Does not a loving relationship preclude the right or authority of one party to exercise discipline over the other? How can the bishop or his clergy exercise discipline within the confines of a relationship rooted in love? We should consider a reply to the question on two fronts.

a) Historically. The Church has never felt this to be a problem, even in the early period, when - if Zizioulas is correct in his interpretation of the early theology of the Church - we should most expect to see great restraint in the exercise of discipline by the hierarchy and perhaps also a greater liberty on the part of the laity in rejecting such discipline. However, this is by no means the case and:

'The Church, like every other social group in the past and present, has vindicated the right under certain conditions to expel some of its members, either permanently or for a time. For any organization to endure, a certain degree of conformity must be maintained among its members.'


In the Early Church, as in the medieval era, we find that:

'. . . the bishop's "superintendence", his disciplinary role and his central ministry of reconciliation as president of the eucharistic community, come together in early, patristic and medieval tradition most conspicuously in the exercise of "the power of the keys". This is consistently seen in patristic and medieval tradition as a commission from Christ to decide points in dispute as well as to give rulings concerning the position of individuals who err. It was in line with the understanding that the bishop is the person who acts on behalf of the community in admitting to membership, that in the serious instances of lapse into sin . . . in the early Church, the bishops pronounced a sentence of excommunication on behalf of the community; this was simply an exclusion from Communion. The readmission of penitents was also a public act of the whole community, and it symbolised a return not only to a state of forgiveness before God, but also to the
community of Christ’s body. Cyprian says that the final decision to restore the penitent must be in the bishop’s hands, but that he must be advised by his presbyters and the “confessors”, and act before the congregation.’


b) Theologically. The Church has exercised discipline in various forms, from the awarding of light “penances” in Confession up to a total excommunication, with the aim both of preserving discipline within the community as a whole and with bringing the sinner back to living a Christian lifestyle within the fellowship of the Church. The Roman Catholic Catechism states that: ‘Certain particularly grave sins incur excommunication, the most severe ecclesiastical penalty, which impedes the reception of the sacraments and the exercise of certain ecclesiastical acts, and for which absolution consequently cannot be granted, according to canon law, except by the Pope, the bishop of the place or priests authorized by them.’

Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 1463.

Most, if not all, Christian denominations have made use of discipline and even excommunication, even if their use is somewhat neglected in the present age. In Scotland, public penance and excommunication were perhaps most widely used during the latter part of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries. Gordon Donaldson noted that, until this period:

The sacrament of penance had been mainly a matter between the individual penitent and his confessor, though public penance and public punishment were not unknown, but now the main emphasis was on public penance in the face of the congregation, and excommunication and absolution alike became proceedings in which there was congregational involvement. Excommunication was pronounced by “the minister in public audience of the people” or “at the commandment of this Thy present congregation,” and when the penitent received absolution “the elders and deacons with ministers (if any be), in the name of the whole church” were to “take the reconciled brother by the hand and embrace him, in sign of full reconciliation.”


Biblically, the usual New Testament warrant for excommunication is found in Matt. 18:15-18; cf. Matt. 16:19; Jn. 20:23; 1 Cor. 5. The purpose should always be to recall and reform the sinner, never punishment for its own sake or to
an excessive degree. Love is not thereby compromised or denied. On the contrary, true love requires that discipline be exercised. It would rather be a failure to condemn sin and error if such were to lead to others to fall!


104. This is the theological witness of both East and West. Chrysostom, in his six books *On the Priesthood* remarks that:

'The work of the priesthood is done on earth, but it is ranked among heavenly ordinances. And this is only right, for no man, no angel, no archangel, no other created power, but the Paraclete himself ordained this succession, and persuaded men, while still remaining in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels.' (III.4).

Recognizing the Spirit-centred nature of ordination, and indeed of Christian ministry as a whole, Max Thurian observes:

'Mission and ministry in the Church are the work of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son. The Church's mission and ministry can only exist in the power of the Holy Spirit, sent from the Father and in the name of Christ. . . . A ministry in the Body of Christ presupposes a gift of the Holy Spirit; a gift of the Spirit is bestowed in order to establish a ministry in the Body of Christ.'


For Zizioulas, 'the fact that Ordination is an act of the Holy Spirit means that this sacrament always finds its relevance in the context of community.' (J. Areeplackal, *Spirit and Ministries*, p.197). This gives a powerful dynamic to any understanding of ordination, in Zizioulas' view.

105. Zizioulas believes that ordination depends, at its deepest level, not on the action of either the ordaining bishop nor on that of the community, although he would see both as being essential elements in ordination, but rather on the action of the Holy Spirit. In Zizioulas' view, all ordination is an *epicletic* matter. As he points out:

'The liturgical formula of ordination itself reveals the same approach in (i) making God the subject of the verb "ordain" ("The divine grace ... ordains"), and (ii) requiring that the eucharistic assembly sing the "Kyrie eleison" during the moment of ordination. The
meaning of all this is that ordination depends essentially on prayer and not simply on an objective transmission of grace. This is to be conceived not in the usual understanding of prayer as assisting us in something we do, but as attributing the very action to God Himself.

J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.218. Zizioulas notes, in a footnote to this (n.23) that, 'For Eastern theology, this "epicletic" approach is a fundamental consequence of the pneumatological conditioning of Christology and ecclesiology.'

120. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.255, n.11.


124. Dvornik notes (pp.14-15) that:
'It is somehow remarkable that the Greek colonies scattered over the Roman part of Armenia refused to mix with the native Church and were provided by the Mother Church with their own Greek bishoprics, as was the case with Theodosiopolos (Erzerum), which was made subject to the metropolitan of Caesarea, whereas in the Persian part of Armenia, Syriac bishoprics were made subject to the Katholikos of Persia. The Armenian Church indeed grew to be so national that neither the Greeks nor the Arameans settled in the very midst of the Armenian population felt themselves at home in Armenian churches and had Greek and Syriac churches built for their own use. This is a curious case of particularism which so far has not been appreciated by Church historians at its full value.'


126. There is need to give consideration to the possibilities this approach to episcopacy offers in both the contemporary Anglican Church, where a substantial schism is still very possible, and to the ecumenical scene. Allen Brent's excellent book on the subject (see n. 127, below) has dealt with these in some depth and is currently the most complete exposition of cultural episcopacy. Certainly, the Anglican Churches, whilst maintaining, at least in theory, the view that there should be no more than one bishop in each geographical 'place', have made some moves, even if they be patchy and inconsistent, towards some form of cultural episcopacy. Thus, for example, the Church of England has a non-territorial Bishop to the Armed Forces. At the same time, it also maintains a Bishop in Europe, who covers much the same territorial ground as an American Episcopal counterpart - surely a prime example of 'ethnic' jurisdiction! In recent years, the Church of England has been experimenting with the concept of 'Provincial Episcopal Visitors', or so-called 'flying bishops', to cater for those opponents to the ordination of women to the priesthood who, in all conscience, cannot accept the ministrations of their diocesan or suffragan bishops who have ordained women. Again, this is clearly making provision for some sort of cultural
episcopacy, though on theological rather than strictly cultural grounds (although it is not stretching things too far to term a distinctive theological position a 'culture').

With a perhaps typical Anglican sense of openness to somewhat illogical compromise, however, the Church has adopted an institution which makes little theological sense in order both to try to satisfy Anglo-Catholic desires for their own episcopate and at the same time maintain the territorial unity and integrity of their constitution. In refusing to create proper, non-territorial dioceses for the 'flying bishops' the Anglican authorities have played fast and loose with the theology of the episcopate, effectively reducing it to a dispenser of pastoral care and confirmation - although only at the behest of the Diocesan bishop! Some serious analysis of the nature of the episcopate is therefore called for, taking on board Zizioulas' strictures concerning the dual nature of the bishop as alter Christus and alter Apostolus, deriving from the eucharistic nature of the bishop's ministry.

On an ecumenical level, the model proposed offers considerable advantages to uniting Churches. The bishop should be understood as representing not only the people per se to God, but also their culture. That being the case, our cultures, though needing redemption from a fallen world, also need to be brought to God. We are cultural animals. Who and what we are is, to a considerable extent, determined by our culture. As something human, it is also God-given, just as much as our various talents are. Of course, we cannot just accept culture as it stands, because it exists as part of a fallen world and therefore needs redemption by God. The bishop is the means by which this can be achieved. This is precisely because, as representative of his people before God, he re-presents a community in process of being redeemed and displays the quality of the life of theosis. As a sacramental representative, the bishop signifies the existential expression of this life in a particular community, in a 'culture.'

If an episcopally-ordered Church is to unite with a non-episcopal body, the issue of episcopacy has to be squarely faced. The commitment of episcopal Churches to a territorial model of episcopacy means that, in a uniting Church, in any given area, one (or more) of the partners would have to accept as a bishop someone from a different theological and spiritual 'culture' as their bishop. Given that the bishop must represent his local Church to God, this creates a difficulty. How can a culture find its true expression in the person of someone who does not share that culture?

If we were to see episcopacy in terms of cultural representation instead, that difficulty could be resolved. It would become possible for partners in a uniting Church to retain their own episcopates. Although in full communion, this would last until life together within the body of one Church brought
about such a convergence as to make a single bishop in any area a true representative of their by then common cultural heritage.


129. On this aspect of Afanasiev's thought, see A. Nichols, Theology in the Russian Diaspora, pp.177-188.

130. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.236.


133. J. Zizioulas, Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement, p.22.

134. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, pp. 237-238.

135. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.238.


137. The best work on the episcopi vagantes is H.R.T. Brandereth, Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church (London: SPCK, 19612). For a more recent estimate of the numbers of these 'wandering bishops', see Alan Bain, Bishops Irregular: An International Directory of Independent Bishops (Privately published, Bristol, 1985). The character of these episcopi vagantes varies widely. Some stress a conservative theology and serve tiny, but properly constituted, Churches. On the other hand, there exist those who are, quite frankly, ecclesiastical eccentrics or even blatant charlatans.


237


146. T. Ware, The Orthodox Church, pp.252-253, citing Dositheus, Confession, Decree xii.

147. E. Timiadis, The Orthodox Understanding of the Ministry, p.110, with reference to Chrysostom, Homily 1 on Pentecost 4; Homily 82.5 in Matthew. The passage quoted is from Cyprian, Epistle 63.

148. N. Behr, Bishop, Priest and Parish in Souroz, No.30, pp.46-49.


152. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.220.


156. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, pp.233-234.
Chapter Five

The Laity in the Church

Introduction

For John Zizioulas, Ministry is not something which is confined to the hierarchy of the Church. On the contrary, in line with his understanding of 1 Cor. 12, he sees every member as having been given a charism and hence some sort of participation in the ministry of the Church. Therefore, there is no such thing as a subservient laity, dominated by a hierarchy and neither is there a division of the Church into ‘teaching’ and ‘taught’. Equally, however, the Church is not to be understood as a ‘democracy’ in which all charisms, however necessary they may be to the life of the Church, are of equal importance in determining the life of the Church. Yet the place of the various charisms within the context of the local Church is determined not by the power or prestige of the individuals concerned but rather by their relation to the Eucharist, which is the central, defining dimension of the Christian community. The charism are not given for the use of specific individuals, but rather that those individuals may, through the gifts bestowed, be of service to the eucharistic community.

It is a central conviction of Zizioulas that a ‘correct’ understanding of the relationship of the Christological and the pneumatological dimensions of the Church is essential for a proper comprehension of the respective roles of laity and clergy. On the basis of the Trinitarian model which he has been at pains to identify as the underlying foundation of ecclesiology, we can see that, for Zizioulas, the two dimensions are equally necessary and neither can precede the other, thereby acting as the principle of causation of the other. If Christology is conditioned by pneumatology in its very origins,
then we are driven to affirm that the institution must likewise be co-
constituted by the charismatic, the hierarchy by the laity. In this
way the extremes of Western ecclesiology, as developed in the Middle
Ages and later, may be avoided. Similarly, an overly-enthusiastic
stress on pneumatology, at the expense of the Christological
dimension must be avoided. In ecclesiological terms, this might
manifest itself as a disregard for the institution and hierarchy, with
a strong emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, frequently conceived in
individualistic terms.

The laity occupy a place of particular importance in the thought of
Zizioulas. At first sight it might appear that Zizioulas, whilst
discussing in great depth problems concerning the ordained ministry,
spends relatively little time on the laity and even then mentions the
subject only in connection with ordination. Yet, for Zizioulas, the
laity represents the primary order of the Church, 'the first
fundamental ministry of the Church.' Although it is true that he
spends more time in discussing the role of the clergy than of the
laity, this is due more to the nature of modern ecumenical
discussions, with which Zizioulas has been intimately involved, than
with any preconceived notion of the relative unimportance of the
laity. It is essential, for Zizioulas, that all discussions concerning
the various ministries within the Church take place within the
context of the understanding of the Church as a united, if
differentiated People.

The People of God

Throughout this work, I have stressed that fundamental to Zizioulas'
theological task is the demand for a 'balanced synthesis of
Christology and pneumatology in ecclesiology,' a demand which
Zizioulas believes to have heightened importance through its neglect
by theologians of both East and West. Although he has a strong
appreciation of the awareness of the role of the Holy Spirit within
the theological life of the Orthodox Churches, he is by no means
sanguine as regards their development of a synthesis with Christology. Indeed, if we are to agree with Zizioulas' own conclusions on this matter, we would see that the last few centuries have seen strong swings from one extreme to the other.5

Zizioulas believes that the question of the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology is not merely a matter of academic interest but is something which has profound importance for the life of the Church. This is perhaps nowhere so evident as in the whole theme of Ministry and the laity in the Church. Basic to his ecclesiology is the conviction that a Christic-pneumatic synthesis such as the one he is attempting to develop requires that any division between the two elements be transcended. This he roots in his understanding of the experience of God at work in the world: 'The basic view . . . that the operation of God ad extra should be regarded as one leaves no room for a division of the economy between Christological and pneumatological.'6 Thus for Zizioulas the one necessarily implies the other. For ecclesiology, this means that:

Christology itself cannot be treated as an autonomous subject; it is to be conditioned constantly by Pneumatology, and as such it is to be organically related to Ecclesiology. This brings Trinitarian Theology itself into Ecclesiology.7

It has been recognised that, for many centuries, the West was extremely Christocentric in its theological approach. This was manifested in its ecclesiology.8 It was precisely because such a stress was placed upon Christ, at the expense of the Spirit, that the institutional, or Christological, aspect of the Church came to dominate the pneumatological, or charismatic. Indeed, Zizioulas regards this as inevitable unless pneumatology is an integral part of Christology.9 In an ecclesiology where office is identified with Christology, with the institution, then it should come as no surprise when the laity are subordinated to this higher power. If Christ is thought of as being prior to the Spirit in the economy, then the hierarchy are likewise conceived of as being prior to the laity. We would have developed a model of Christ - Spirit - Apostles - Laity, with
the latter being understood as deriving their very existence as members of the Body of Christ solely by virtue of the action of the hierarchy. Indeed, in the majority of Latin ecclesiological thought:

the Holy Spirit was given only or exclusively to the Twelve Apostles at Pentecost who transmitted it by laying on of hands to the Bishops their successors. It follows equally that the college of Bishops in exercising the threefold set of functions ... have a similarly exclusive possession of the Holy Spirit which can only reach the other members of the Church through the ministrations of the Bishops.10

All this is subject to change when the Spirit is made constitutive of Christ. We are then able to apply this relational model to ecclesiology, producing a more balanced structure, with the charismatic existing at the same moment as the institutional and thereby co-constituting the Church. Instead of an ecclesiological model in which we have an exclusively pyramidal structure, with authority and grace flowing in a one-way channel down from the top, we are able to be open to a model in which, deriving from the Trinitarian paradigm, authority can be conceived of as being relational in nature, with reciprocal privileges and obligations.

The fundamental question of 'What is a layman?' is one which needs to be addressed in both East and West as a matter of urgency. Of course, there has been a great deal of attention paid to the topic over a period of time, especially since the publication of Congar's book, Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat11 - which also provided the platform for further study. Already in 1953 Congar was placing renewed stress on the role of the sacraments of initiation as the means of entry, or ordination, into this basic ministry of the Church. Although this was a recovery of an old doctrine, it should come as no surprise that Congar was an early advocate of it, as for many years he had a lively interest in Patristics. However, this appreciation of the place of the laity would not have been readily possible without the preparatory work of the late nineteenth century, notably the Liturgical Movement and Catholic Action, 'which
together would reawaken the sense of the laity as the "holy people of God", their fully ecclesial character within the mystery of the Church.'12

Congar made the point, which is essential for a correct understanding of Zizioulas' own vision of the place of the laity, that in the Septuagint we find not the individual *laikōs*, but rather the corporate *laos*. Thus our word *lay* 'is connected with a word that for Jews, and then for Christians, properly meant the sacred people in opposition to the peoples who were not consecrated.'13

Congar is here echoing the concerns of Henri de Lubac, in seeking 'the eradication of individualism in Christianity.'14 This individualism, which is a mark of our own age in particular,15 has led to the conception of the Christian as a 'believer', i.e., one who professes certain intellectual beliefs. It has lost the primary connotation of membership of a *people*. Yet this is precisely the context of the Christian! Congar, in reflecting on the traditional term, *fidēls*, 'one of the faithful', remarks that in the authentic Christian tradition:

a *fidēls* was someone sacramentally incorporated in the ecclesial reality. Not only was the faith he professed essentially the Trinitarian faith of the Symbol, it was the reality in him of baptism and his being part of the Church which, after having brought him to birth, formed him, nourished his life, governed all his actions, consecrated and united every moment of his existence to Christ.16

Zizioulas has richly embroidered this approach to the mystery of the laity. Stressing the fact that 'all baptism in the Church is a participation in the history and call of the People of God',17 he emphasises the *communal* nature of Christian belief and life.

For Zizioulas, the term 'laity' does not conjure up images of the secular usage of layman as non-expert. 'On the contrary, the term is meant to signify a *particular status and mission within the whole*
body of the Church. For Zizioulas, it is no longer possible to conceive of the laity in negative terms, as all those Christians who have not been ordained:

In fact the lay people are also ordained so that they can be distinguished from those who are not members of the Church. Their ordination takes place at baptism which should include or have organically attached to it a form of laying on of hands or chrismation - the so-called confirmation - which is nothing else but the assignment and placement of someone in the order of the layman.18

Allied to the term 'Body of Christ', contemporary ecclesiology has made considerable use of a more pneumatic concept, that of 'People of God'. The term rose to prominence not least because of its place in the documents of Vatican II. The communal nature of the Church was stressed, for each believer can only be considered as such because of their belonging to a people:

it has not been God's resolve to sanctify and save men individually with no regard for their mutual relationship. Rather he wants to establish them as a people who would give him recognition in truth and service in holiness.19

The importance of this concept is highlighted by the actual structure of the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The first chapter of this document is given over to both reflection on the total mystery of the Church and consideration of her earthly manifestation as a structured community. One might have expected that the Fathers of the Council would then turn to discussion of the hierarchical ordering of the Church, a move which would be in congruence with traditional approaches to ecclesiology. However, they boldly moved on to devoting a whole chapter to a consideration of the Church as 'People of God':

The order of exposition thus adopted is in line with the council's vision of hierarchy, government, and teaching authority as all constituting a form of "ministry" or service of the Christian community and indeed of all mankind.20
We are given entry into this People through Baptism. However, the concept of a People would seem to imply diversity and individualism as much as unity. True, we are united into this community and Vatican II itself saw this as a means whereby we are saved not alone but in communion with others. Despite the validity of this insight, we are nevertheless still individuals, albeit gathered into a community. This is a point which is of very great concern to Zizioulas, one which he himself terms a paradox.21

Zizioulas is constantly engaged in working out his ecclesiology in terms of his controlling principle of corporate personality, 'the One and the Many'. In the idea of the People of God, an idea which permeates, even dominates, both the Old and the New Testaments, there is an emphasis on the 'many': As Zizioulas says, 'In this image the Church is understood as a community dispersed throughout the world and therefore as a community “on the way”, that is, in constant movement and expectation.'22

However, that truth having been stated, Zizioulas is anxious that we do not accept this as being the end of the matter. Theologically, to do so would be to concede a fairly extreme pneumatology as being at the centre of ecclesiology, unbalanced by the Christological dimension, by the unity of 'the One'. Zizioulas, here a disciple of his teacher, Florovsky, believes that this is not possible, as our starting point must be Christology. To start elsewhere would be to create a permanent imbalance at the heart of the structure of the Church.

The People of God is scattered throughout the whole world. This diaspora is itself the result of the Christ-given mission of the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19). Thus, in the early days of its mission, Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. Baptized, this man did not repair at once to Jerusalem to live physically among the apostolic fellowship there, but rather 'went on his way rejoicing' (Acts 8:39).

Yet, in spite of there being no contradiction implied between being gathered into a people and this people's scattering, Zizioulas assures
us that the People of God is not simply abandoned to its diaspora. Rather, “Its destiny is to find its ultimate completion in one place and in a single body that is now taking shape.”23 This body is none other than the Body of Christ, whose entry creates the paradox which Zizioulas insists upon. We should note that this dual image of People of God and Body of Christ is an expression, of the paradox of the “One” and the “many” which Zizioulas insists lies at the heart of Christology and, as such, is definitive for a proper understanding of the role of the laity in the Church.

It is through the union of these two inter-related themes of People of God and Body of Christ that Zizioulas is able to combine in a creative synthesis Christology and pneumatology. The Body of Christ is formed precisely through the creation of a special People, who are called to exist, not in isolation, but uniquely joined to Christ and hence to each other in communion. This is none other than the work of the Holy Spirit himself, who “inaugurates the history of the Church by bringing isolated persons into true communion.”24

Zizioulas believes that the Church must reflect the paradox of scattered People and united Body in its very existence. It is a dictum for Zizioulas that, in the very choice of the term ekklesia, the:

- clear intention was to express the “gathering together” of the people of God, not its dispersion. The Church was no longer simply the “many” in the “One”, but also the “One” in the “many”: the “many” united to the “One”, and the “One” spread abroad in the “many”.25

It is Zizioulas’ conviction that in the Eucharist alone will we find the key to the understanding of the role, not only of the laity, but of the other ministries in the Church. We must, therefore, turn to Zizioulas’ treatment of the laity’s essential liturgical, priestly role.

246
The Priesthood of All Believers

All ministry in the Church is Christ’s: ‘Jesus Christ is the unique priest of the new covenant.’ Zizioulas himself affirms this principle strongly but nevertheless asserts that the Christian people is a *priestly* people. For Zizioulas, as for others in our day, it is proper to speak of the Christian community as being priestly in a *derivative* sense. Its priestly character depends upon its relationship with Christ, our great high priest (Heb. 4:14) and is not derived from itself. Zizioulas observes that as Christ, through the Holy Spirit, becomes the community of the Church, it is therefore proper that this Body be priestly in the sense of 1 Peter 2:5,9. What is essential to note here is that Zizioulas conceives of the community as a *whole* being priestly. One is priestly because, *and only because*, one is a member of the Body.

The difficulty for Zizioulas with an assertion of the priesthood of the laity is not the assertion *per se*. Rather, it is the *manner* of the interpretation of this biblical concept. Individualism is inimical to the position of Zizioulas. Therefore, any claim to priestly status for the *individual*, ‘ordained’ or ‘lay’, is to be objected to. Priesthood belongs to the *community*, not the individual.

Zizioulas is adamant that there can be no question of there being a priestly body which exists prior to (either chronologically or ontologically) the ordained ministry. There can be no sense in which the community of the faithful, for the good ordering and pastoral care of the body, delegates part of its priestly authority to a pastor. There can be no implication that:

the community *precedes* the individual ordination in a sense ... of causality. We cannot speak of a *charismatic nature* of the community representing, so to say, the source and the generic principle of the particular ministries.

Terming such a view ‘charismatic essentialism’, Zizioulas remarks
that this would imply that we have first a charismatic nature, which is to be equated with the community itself, and only then particular charisma magna, manifested through ordinations. Zizioulas is emphatic that such an approach would not accord with Orthodox theological consciousness. Underlying this view, one detects echoes of Zizioulas' awareness of the necessity of positing a strong, balanced Trinitarian theology as the basis of ecclesiological reflection. Just as the being of the Trinity itself is composed of the hypostases, so the various charismata together form the priestly Body of Christ. An imbalance here would seem, in Zizioulas' way of thinking, to indicate an imbalance in Trinitarian theology. In line with this approach, Zizioulas is insistent upon viewing each ordo as being different from the other and as being mutually constitutive. He sees the relationship between the two not in terms of a difference in essence between the 'ordained' and the 'lay', but rather 'in terms of a specificity of relationship within the Church.' Naturally, we will notice the consistency here with Zizioulas' basic concern to see relationship as being constitutive of being.

For Zizioulas, the 'Many' require the 'One' as a necessary condition of their own royal priesthood, just as the 'One' - the Bishop - requires the 'Many' - the people - to render his own ministry an ecclesial reality. Precisely because of this, 'all Christians, in their respective orders in the Eucharist, exercise the priesthood of Christ'. Thus, in this view, there is no conflict between charism and order, between laity and clergy. It is noteworthy that this avoidance of conflict and dichotomy is due to the stress, founded on the basis of a clear Trinitarian theology, on the nature of the Church as a community. This permits Zizioulas to construct an understanding of the laity, as of the other orders in the Church, in terms of relationship.

Whilst the concept of the Church as koinonia is currently in vogue, this is nevertheless a fairly recent rediscovery. Indeed, so respected and dynamic a thinker in the realm of ecclesiology as Yves Congar was able, as recently as the 1950s, to construct a model of the
Church based on a linear model, whereby 'Christ makes the hierarchy and the hierarchy makes the Church as a community of faithful.'38 The major breakthroughs in this field began appearing in the 1960s, particularly with the publication of highly influential and deeply original works such as The Church is a Communion by Jerome Hamer, a Roman Catholic scholar.39

In his comparative study of the thought of Congar and Zizioulas, Joseph Areeplackal has shown that Congar moved considerably from his earlier, more overtly hierarchical, position to one based upon the model of communion. This has the advantage that:

it avoids a dichotomy between the ordained priesthood and the common priesthood on the one hand, and the corollary that the lay apostolate is but a function of hierarchy's ministry on the other.40

Zizioulas has learned from the problems encountered by theologians working in the field, such as Congar, and thus stresses the fact that, because it must be based upon the insights of Trinitarian theology, the concept of the priesthood of all believers is a communitarian one. Complementarity is crucial.41 Yet 'complementarity' does not mean that all Christians share the same underlying identity as members of the community before being differentiated into the various orders on the basis of recognized gifts. Zizioulas regards any such notion as being a Protestant conception which is alien to his understanding of the Patristic concept of the Christian royal priesthood.42 By this, Zizioulas means that the 'priesthood of all believers' is, on the pattern of the Trinity, not undifferentiated, but that it finds its fullness and very meaning in existing as differentiated mutuality. This finds its clearest expression in the very structure of the Eucharistic community itself. It is characteristic of this community that the various orders exist in a state of mutual interdependence and, in fact, are constituted by the others whilst, at the one and the same moment, constitute them in their turn. This becomes most evident in the celebration of the Liturgy.
The laity exercise their priesthood by virtue of the very fact that, according to Orthodox praxis, it is impossible to celebrate the liturgy without their presence. As Zizioulas never tires of pointing out, the liturgy is the convocation of the whole People of God epi to auto, as eschatological community. Consequently the laity, without whom the People could not be complete, must be constitutive of the Eucharist and hence of the Church. It is not enough to say that the clergy can themselves represent the People. They cannot, precisely for the reason that in the Eucharist theirs is quite a different function altogether. It is this awareness which is responsible for the fact that the liturgical ‘Amen’ may not be said by the priest, but belongs strictly to the People. Therefore, ‘a fundamental ecclesiological presupposition of the Eucharist is the gathering of the laymen in one place. The Eucharist is a λειτουργία, an act of the People.’

For the Orthodox, it is the entire Church together, not an individual or a particular group within the Church, which is priestly in character. This is not to say that the contemporary interest in the priestly character of all Christians, which rightly emphasizes their ‘proper share in the universality of Jesus,’ means that the essential, priestly nature of the ministry of the ordained is denied. Indeed, it is a feature of Zizioulas’ thought that these two dimensions of the priestly ministry of the Church are held together, each depending upon the other for its very existence. As Areeplackal comments, ‘The unique mediating existence and action of Jesus are not relativized but are symbolized by the person and mission of the ordained ministers of the Church.’

Yet we cannot ignore the fact that, both in the New Testament itself and in the subsequent century or so, the term hierus applied to the whole body, not the clergy. This is because, at the time of its writing, the Christian community had not yet adopted a split between ‘clergy’ and ‘laity’ - there were just ‘people’ (Rev. 1:5b-6; 5:9-10), all of whom were called to be saints. Of course, this is not meant to imply that Christians were undifferentiated. On the
contrary Zizioulas is particularly keen to emphasize a conviction that the unity of the Church, even its very nature as Church, depends upon a differentiation. He is supported by Faivre, a Reformed Church historian, in his contention that the priestly identity of the people as a whole in no way precludes a diversity of spiritual gifts. In this, however, there 'is no question of a hierarchy of power or of holiness. What is involved is a hierarchy of service.'

This has received recognition from other Orthodox writers, reflected in the words of Romanides:

Within this “royal priesthood” sharing in the one bread of life which makes one body (1 Cor. 10:17) the clergy is set apart by the grace of ordination with the responsibility of preserving the corporate character of the sacramental life. What distinguishes them from the rest of the community is not of any individual power to perform the liturgy and the other sacraments as intermediaries between God and man; . . . The clergy was never accepted as intermediaries between God and man. . . . The clergy are not over the local body, but themselves members of the local body who are given the special grace of being the center (sic) of unity and the regulating force which protects and increases the life of corporate love in Christ.

The concept of a distinct ministry within the Church to which the majority of members are not admitted, even though they be members of the priestly people of God, may seem at first sight to be antithetical to the understanding of Christians as being part of a royal Priesthood. Such, of course, was the objection of Luther. However, in more recent times some Protestant writers have moved away from such criticisms. Thus:

the idea of the royal priesthood of the people of Israel in the Old Testament did not prevent the emergence of the cultic levitical priesthood, and so one cannot argue from the royal priesthood of Christians against the existence of a Christian specialized cultic priesthood. Moreover, the idea of a universal Christian priesthood is never connected in the New Testament in any way with the Eucharist. The statement in 1 Pet. 2:5 that Christians offer “spiritual sacrifices” is a figurative reference to a holy way of life. Elliott cites with approval the dictum of
Y. Congar, "Nowhere in the New Testament is there any reference to the worship and priesthood of the faithful in the Eucharist or even in the sacraments... or in the Church's public worship."51

Despite this presence of a special priesthood, understood in terms of service rather than rule and privilege, by the 4th Century there had been a major shift away from the earliest doctrine. John Chrysostom was already participating in a movement which was to culminate, in both East and West, in a radical distinction between laity and clergy. According to Chrysostom, it is the liturgical functions of the priest which causes his office to be so highly exalted. In his Six Books on the Priesthood, written around the year 388, Chrysostom argues that it is precisely by virtue of the Eucharist which he celebrates that the priest holds a more august office than his Old Testament predecessors:

Though the office of the priesthood is exercised on earth, it ranks nevertheless, in the order of celestial things - and rightly so. It was neither man nor an angel nor an archangel nor any other created power, but the Paraclete himself who established this ministry, and who ordained that men abiding in the flesh should imitate the ministry of the angels. For that reason, it behoves the bearer of the priesthood to be as pure as if he stood in the very heavens amidst those powers.52

This is of importance in that it demonstrates a move away from a communal, communitarian concept of the whole community as being priestly, with no member being more of a priest than another, towards one in which there is an ontological difference between laity and clergy.53 It follows from this, then, that if the liturgical priest bears this character, then there are members of the Church, the laity, who do not. Whether or not the intention of the Fathers in making statements such as this which greatly elevated the role of the hierarchical priesthood, the clear effect was to create, perhaps almost imperceptibly at first, an understanding of the Church as stratified into degrees of dignity and importance.

Zizioulas does not adopt this approach. Rather, accepting that the
whole Church is priestly, he nevertheless views the distinctive charisms as being constitutive of the Church. These charisms are differentiated and Zizioulas follows Paul (1 Cor. 12:28-30) in believing that differing charisms are given to different individuals. Among these is the 'charism' of Eucharistic presidency, without which no one may celebrate the Eucharist.

In holding that distinction, differentiation into an ordo, does not necessarily imply an ontological difference, Zizioulas would appear to be rooted in an early understanding of the priestly character of the whole People of God.\textsuperscript{54} There is sufficient liturgical evidence, not least the absolute requirement for the presence of the laity for the Eucharist to be celebrated, to support the concept of the priesthood of all believers. That having been said, Zizioulas would not advocate interpreting this concept in such a way as to permit of the notion that the community must somehow precede the existence of the ordained, hierarchical priesthood.\textsuperscript{55} Rather, each is constitutive of the other at precisely the same moment. The priesthood is exercised by the body as a whole, with each member exercising it according to the charism which has been bestowed upon him or her in the charismatic act of 'ordination' to the laity, which Zizioulas holds takes place in chrismation.\textsuperscript{56}

If, as Areeplackal contends, the priestly nature of the community is derived from the universality of the gifts of the Spirit,\textsuperscript{57} then it becomes essential that we recognize the entire community as being priestly. However, this leads us to ask how this priesthood is exercised by the members. The Eucharist may be offered by the priestly community as a whole, but this leaves unanswered the problem of who may actually preside. Furthermore, is the priesthood of all believers to be viewed as being solely in relation to the liturgical roles within the Eucharistic celebration, or is it possible to extrapolate from this to a wider exercise of priestly functions - an issue which must raise questions about the nature of Christ's own priestly ministry, for if one adopts the position taken by Zizioulas that there is a strong identity, based upon the constitutive

253
role of the Holy Spirit, between Christ and his Body the Church, then it must follow that the Christian community can be priestly only insofar as Christ himself is a priest. The priestly ministry exercised by the Body must reflect that exercised by the Head, Jesus Christ himself.

**Lay and Ordained?**

For Zizioulas, chrismation is to be linked to baptism in an unbroken unity. In a work published in 1969, he set out demonstrate the crucial importance of this unity for ecclesiological reflection. Zizioulas observes that, in the New Testament, Christ’s own baptism is intimately associated with the descent of the Holy Spirit (Mk.1:10). Therefore, Zizioulas strives to link Pneumatology with Christology in a constitutive way even with regard to the rites of initiation. Just as the Incarnation is the work of the Holy Spirit, so too is the inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry, an event initiated by his baptism. Given this close connection between baptism and the Holy Spirit it is no surprise that the early Church insisted upon a continuation of this in its liturgical life. True, baptism in water alone without the gift of the Spirit is known in the New Testament (cf. Jn.1:26, 31, 33), but it is not Christian baptism. Rather, the earliest Christian understanding of this rite held that ‘the Baptism of the Church was always a baptism which included the descent of the Holy Spirit.’

Commenting on Acts 8:14-17, Origen remarked that, ‘In the Acts of the Apostles, through the laying on of the apostolic hands the Holy Spirit was given in Baptism.’ Zizioulas cites this and other patristic evidence to buttress his contention that baptism divorced from the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit is inconceivable. Given his concern for a pneumatologically conditioned Christology, this is hardly surprising. If baptism is the means of incorporation into the Body of Christ, then it follows that Zizioulas will understand this in pneumatological terms. Pneumatology and Christology are
inseparable in the very constitution of the Son of God as Christ and, hence, in the very being and life of the ecclesial community. What, then, is the function of chrismation in the baptismal rite? It is, for Zizioulas as for the Orthodox tradition in general, the initiation not into an undifferentiated community but rather the conferring of a charism, the granting of a specific place and relationship in the community, the status of layman.

The immediate bestowal of chrismation on the newly-baptized is a graphic portrayal of the theological truth that there can be no incorporation into the Body of Christ without, at one and the same time, the obtaining of a new set of relationships. This is precisely why Orthodoxy has insisted upon the retention of the close connection between baptism and chrismation. Aidan Nichols is in full agreement with this Orthodox approach when he acknowledges that during the patristic era chrismation/confirmation was viewed as 'the induction of the baptised into the full status of members of the laos - the royal and universal priesthood of all believers.'

Zizioulas points out that the use of chrism, of anointing, was hardly accidental. On the contrary, we may see here a deliberate application of an Old Testament action to the Church. Zizioulas comments on the fact that, in the ancient liturgical tradition of the Church, there are frequent references comparing the anointing of new Christians with that given to Old Testament kings and priests. Additionally, when one also considers that, at the same time, the anointing was understood as the anointing with that chrism which Christ himself received, it becomes easy to see why Zizioulas can hold that:

In its baptismal context this anointing means participation in Christ’s royal priesthood, by virtue of which the baptized would become himself a king and a member of the People of God, “an anointed one” (creosotes) which is nothing else but a layman in the specific sense of the word ....

Chrismation, then, is nothing less than the ordination of the
baptized to a particular status and relationship in the Church. It is, insists Zizioulas, a complete error to assume that the Church is divided into ‘ordained’ and ‘non-ordained’, for there is no such thing as a ‘non-ordained’ person within the Christian community.\textsuperscript{68} If chrismation is the bestowal of \textit{charismata}, which Zizioulas deduces from a study of 1 Cor. 12 - an important text in his ecclesiology - then he can assert that:

the particular charismata do not follow the existence of the Body of Christ, but are constitutive of it. Here the mystery of the Church - and of Christology - becomes absolutely dependent on pneumatology: the Body of Christ is constituted and defined by the concrete charismata. The conclusion is that ordination is a \textit{primordial and constitutive act of the Christian community.}\textsuperscript{69}

Just as the Spirit constitutes Christ and is not ‘additional’ to his being, so it is with ordination and the Church. The Church cannot first exist and then be subject to the bestowal of the charism of priestly ordination. To take this line would be tantamount to affirming that Christ exists apart from his constitution by the Spirit, a position which Zizioulas sees as receiving no Scriptural support! In this view:

The basic characteristic of the community is that no such person as “non-ordained” member exists in the Church. All the members possess the Holy Spirit through the rites of Baptism and Chrismation, and each member manifests one of the \textit{charismata} of the Spirit. It follows that being a member of the Church means in the last analysis being a “charismatic”; all members are united by the Spirit who distributes the various \textit{charismata} or Orders.\textsuperscript{70}

Given this position, then, it comes as no surprise that Zizioulas is insistent on the necessity of the laity for the existence of the Church. The ‘People of God’, proclaims Zizioulas, is:

that \textit{order} of the Church which was constituted by virtue of the rite of initiation (baptism-chrismation) and considered the \textit{sine qua non} condition for the eucharistic community to exist and express the Church’s unity.\textsuperscript{71}
The understanding of chrismation as ordination is normative in the Orthodox tradition today, at least as regards theology, even if it is often forgotten in the consciousness of the people. Zizioulas observes that the technical term όσμα (seal) is applied to ordination, in the sense of appointing to the 'major Orders', and to the *ordination* to the ranks of the laity in Baptism-Chrismation. For Schmemann, this is:

the personal Pentecost of man, his entrance into new life in the Holy Spirit, which is the true life of the Church. It is his ordination as truly and fully man, for to be fully man is precisely to belong to the Kingdom of God.72

It is because the Church was perceived to have its fullest expression in the Eucharistic liturgy that ordination to any position in the community was to be placed in relationship to the eschatological Kingdom of God. If the Eucharist is the *icon* of, or earthly participation in, the messianic banquet, then the members of that community will reflect the conditions of participation in that eschatological feast.

Schmemann, for good reason considered to be the leading Orthodox liturgical theologian of the century,73 has pointed out that Chrismation, by virtue of being 'the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit', is 'both the fulfilment of baptism and a new mystery taking the neophyte beyond Baptism.'74 Chrismation is eschatological in that it is not so much the means whereby the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to the person chrismated as *the gift of himself*.75 This is reflected in Cross's argument that Cyril of Jerusalem made a clear connection between this rite and the gift of the Holy Spirit himself.76 Thus:

in Baptism, having been baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ. Christ is the Anointed and we receive His anointment; Christ is the Son and we are adopted as sons; Christ has the Spirit as His Life in Himself and we are given participation in His Life.77

For Zizioulas the gift of the Spirit in chrismation is an
eschatological gift. This depends on the close identification of the Eucharistic context of the bestowing of the gift of ordination with the eschatological, heavenly feast:

Precisely because of the identification of the eucharistic community, into which one is ordained, with the worshipping community before the throne of God, ordination is not something of a temporal nature but of eschatological decisiveness. ... Ordination (baptism being included) realizes the movement of creation towards its eschatological end; the eucharistic altar expresses here and now the eschatological nature, the πέρας, of the community and, through and in it, of creation.⁷⁸

Zizioulas goes on to claim that the Greek Fathers, at least, believed that Chrismation was to be equated with ordination in an eschatological sense, that it brought about a definitive relationship with the eucharistic, eschatological Body of the Church. This ordination to the state of layman in the Church has an eschatological decisiveness which makes it a σφατις ἀκατάλυτος⁷⁹ or ἀνεπιχειρημος.⁸⁰ However, Zizioulas is adamant that the Greek Fathers did not comprehend such a state as being ontological, but rather relational. Thus one is not transformed into something which one was previously not. Rather, one receives a particular existential state of being, which can only be conceived of in terms of relationship.⁸¹

Charisms and Charismatics

Reflecting upon 1 Cor. 12:29, Zizioulas as early as 1970 was posing the question of the specificity of the ministries of the Church's members.⁸² He wonders if all have the same ministries within the Body. His answer is unequivocal:

Ce caractère personnel conféré par l'ordination au ministère de l'Eglise fait de chaque ordination l'acte par lequel une spécification est introduite dans la notion de ministère. ... les membres du corps sont “ordonnés” à un ministère
It follows that, as all are 'ordained' into the Church through Chrismation, all have a specific ministry to perform. Thus, those who are ordained to membership of the laity, men or women, must be viewed as equally able to perform the proper tasks of their position.

Orthodox liturgical tradition, in common with that of the Latin Church, is emphatic that the Holy Spirit is given in the initiation rites. Yet it is of the essence of these rites that they are Christologically directed:

By baptism, chrismation, the divine eucharist and the rest of the spiritual life we are incorporated into Christ, we receive a Christian being, that is, a christocentric and christlike being, and the form and life which correspond to it.

Precisely because the Spirit is given in these rites, each Christian should be thought of as possessing the gifts of the Spirit. Paul is insistent that all Christians manifest these gifts (1 Cor. 12:7), though their particular manifestation will differ in each individual. There is thus diversity within the Body and these Spirit-given charismata are given in order that the Body of Christ be built up. Thus the Spirit is constitutive of the Body, in precisely the same way as he constitutes Christ himself qua Christ - that is, as a relational person.

For Zizioulas, being a member of the Church necessarily implies being a 'charismatic'. It is, for him, impossible to be a member of the Church without having received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Of course, Zizioulas would not deny that there are many Christians who fail to manifest such a gift. Yet this does not mean that they are without such gifts. Rather, we may assume that these remain dormant until such a time as the person, of his or her own free will, chooses to cooperate with God.
Zizioulas sees the gift of the various charisms as being nothing less than the act which is constitutive of the community. One is not first of all baptised into the community and then, and only then, assigned to a particular ordo within it. On the contrary, the very act of baptism, by being bound to the gift of the Spirit in Chrismation, states unequivocally that here one is assigned one’s place within the community. It is for just this reason that Zizioulas deplores the modern habit of separating the administration of baptism from chrismation.89

Zizioulas emphasizes the Church as being united precisely through the diversity of charisms:

We usually overlook the fact that the Holy Spirit is not only a power that unites; he is also a power that “divides”. When Paul says that the one Spirit “divides” (“distributes” - diairoun) his charisms or gifts, he is alluding directly to the mystery of the many personal existences in each community. The Holy Spirit unites precisely when he divides, for every charism and therefore every ministry (for their is no ministry without a charism) is strictly linked to a particular person yet also manifests the unity and unicity of the Church.90

The unity of the Church is manifested in this diversity, precisely because all ministries are for the service of the Body. Paul, in his use of body-imagery (1 Cor. 12), is clear that there must be diversity, for no body consists of the same organs but is composed of a great variety of parts, each with their essential and specific function, without which the Body could not operate properly. Relationship, or koinonia, must provide the key, for this reflects the essence of Trinitarian theology itself and is summed up in Zizioulas’ primary theological concept, the mystery of the ‘One and the Many’.91 Zizioulas believes that Scripture itself demands that we have a relational understanding of the charisms of the Spirit. Zizioulas interprets 1 Cor. 13, the famous ‘hymn of love’, as being expressly to do with this problem.92 Commenting on Zizioulas’ position here, Areeplackal notes that:

If a charism is not exercised in the context of love, it
loses its meaning and reduces itself to nothingness. All charisms are given to individuals, not to be possessed by them but to be exercised for the common good.\textsuperscript{93}

Zizioulas himself is emphatic on this matter.\textsuperscript{94} The charismata are given in order that the community be built up and served. Therefore, varieties of service are essential.

For Zizioulas, the charisms are derived not from administrative necessity but directly from the Eucharist itself. Zizioulas elicits this position from his belief that the charisms are comprehensible only within the ecclesial community.\textsuperscript{95} Here, we may note the underlying theological priority of Zizioulas: the Spirit's role is precisely to bring about and build up the Body of Christ. Just as the Spirit constitutes Christ, so too he constitutes the ecclesial community which is Christ's Body, through the giving of the various charismata. Furthermore, although the Spirit blows where he wills (Jn. 3:8), we know that he wills to blow in the direction of Christ (Jn. 16:14).\textsuperscript{96} Therefore, it follows that the charisms of the Spirit will be directed towards the Body of Christ.\textsuperscript{97}

Zizioulas is here attempting to carry through a creative synthesis between the Christological and the Pneumatological within the Church. He asserts that whilst it may be possible to affirm that the 'institutional' aspects of the Church (e.g., sacraments and ministry) relate strictly to Christology, we must nevertheless seek to avoid any resulting dichotomy between 'institution' and 'charism'. The avoidance of such a split is possible only if 'we make pneumatology an integral part of Christology.'\textsuperscript{98}

With Paul, Zizioulas is concerned that the charisms of the Spirit are not perceived as being gifts solely for the individual but are rather directed towards the strengthening of the community.\textsuperscript{99} Thus, 'it is significant that in the Apostolic communities all these gifts, like prophesy, glossolalia, etc., were expressed during the Eucharistic gatherings (1 Cor. 10-14).'\textsuperscript{100} Areeplackal has observed that Zizioulas here manifests a strong degree of agreement with Congar.
Both hold that it is precisely *through the charisms* that the Spirit makes the Church a ‘new creation’, in which all cultural and social divisions are transcended (cf. Gal. 3:28).\textsuperscript{101}

**The Priestly Task**

Having been inserted into the royal priesthood of the Church through the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit himself in Baptism/Chrismation, the newly ‘ordained’ person is ready to take his or her place in the Body of Christ. Zizioulas, in the spirit of the liturgical theology promoted by Alexander Schmemann and John Meyendorff in particular, decries any attempt to separate Baptism and Eucharist. It is axiomatic for Zizioulas that these are intrinsically related to each other - a linkage which he believes to be derived from the Gospels themselves:

It is not an accident that Our Lord uses the term “Baptism” in connection with his death (Matt. 20:22; cf. Lk. 12:50). This ‘cup’ of his death and the “Baptism” of his death to which he refers there, can hardly be understood apart from the cup of the New Covenant of the Last Supper. And in the entire Pentecostal scene described in Acts 2 the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Baptism of the three thousand people and the participation of all in the “breaking of the bread” form one indivisible unity. There is thus an essential unity in the origins of all three, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, so that any attempt to look at them outside the light of this unity would create serious theological and historical problems.\textsuperscript{102}

Although current Orthodox liturgical practice frequently separates these elements of the ‘rite of initiation’, this is a regrettable situation not endorsed by this understanding of the nature of the Church.\textsuperscript{103} The very purpose of Baptism being to integrate us into the Church, it necessarily follows that the Eucharist is the fulfilment of Baptism:

if the Church’s ultimate being and essence are revealed in and through the Eucharist, if Eucharist is truly the
sacrament of the Church and not only one of the Church's sacraments, then of necessity to enter the Church is to enter into the Eucharist, then Eucharist is indeed the fulfilment of Baptism.104

With regard to the priestly task of the laity, Zizioulas is emphatically within the Orthodox tradition in asserting that it is not for the laity to preside at the Eucharistic synaxis. For a layman to do so would involve a fundamental breach of ecclesiastical order. This is not merely a matter of canon law but rather an essential position of his theology. It is precisely the place of the 'One' - the Bishop (or his delegate, the presbyter) - to officiate at the liturgy, in his role of icon Christi. However, the Eucharist may by no means be celebrated without the presence of the 'many', the laity.105 The presence of the laity is essential if the Eucharist is to be truly a catholic act and not merely the action of a hierarchal priestly caste. In the words of Areeplackal, 'through the participation of the multitude of the baptized the Eucharist becomes a leitourgia, an act of the people.'106

The priesthood of the laity is manifested in their essential role in constituting the Eucharistic community. If, following Romanides107 and Zizioulas,108 we are to view the Eucharist as being the gathering of all, epi to auto, which itself constitutes the local Church qua Church, then the laity must be seen to be indispensable. The laity affirm their priesthood through the liturgical 'Amen', which is their prerogative alone. Indeed Zizioulas, himself a layman for most of his life, is fond of defending this right of the laity as illustrating an essential theological truth.109 Just as the Trinitarian Persons act together, as a communion, so it is in the Church. The clergy and the laity are both indispensable to the Eucharistic celebration, but each in their different ways. This conciliarity is a primary characteristic of the Church and permeates its structural life, as well as being of the essence of the Church as Eucharistic event.

One should not forget that the priestly task of the laity extends far beyond the confines of the liturgical celebration itself, determinative
though that might be. In the New Testament itself, the work of the priesthood of the faithful is the offering of a holy life: prayer, love and compassion for others. Noting that Augustine, in his *De Civitate Dei*, works out the meaning of the priesthood of the laity, Nichols observes that:

> the priesthood of the faithful consists in self-offering to God - whence it is not surprising that the supreme self-offering made by the martyrs has often received special emphasis as a Christian priestly act.

Being essentially eucharistic, the Orthodox tradition takes what for many people in the West is a surprising step in viewing the laity's ministry within the liturgy as being more important than that outside it. This is perhaps because it is in the Eucharist that the ministry of the laity in the world receives its meaning and final purpose. This idea is reflected in work Zizioulas himself has undertaken on humanity's priestly role in creation, a task which he tentatively addressed in three lectures and to which he will, hopefully, return in greater depth.

The task of the laity is to bring the world into the Eucharistic liturgy, where it is transformed by the Spirit of God into redeemed matter. Liturgically, this is represented by the bringing of the gifts by the laity into the Eucharistic *synaxis*. Schmemann notes that in the very bringing of bread and wine to the altar, we are bringing the very principle of our life - food and drink. In so doing, we are using the elements of this world to bring about communion with and in Christ. Food, which was the symbol of man's first betrayal of God, becomes in Christ the means of our deification. That which we have made a symbol of our alienation, God makes a symbol of our restored communion with him and with each other.

**Laity and Authority**

Within the Catholic tradition, it has usually been the case that the
clergy have been the ones who have exercised leadership, or the
kingly aspect of ministry. Certainly, the Latin Church has stressed
the power of jurisdiction given to those, particularly the Bishop,
ordained to Holy Orders. Thus it is a commonplace that the bishops
'participate in a special manner in the threefold office of Christ as
teacher, priest and pastor.' Following in the tradition of Ignatius
of Antioch, the bishop is the centre of the unity of the local Church,
the expression of membership of the community in the unity and
love of Christ. He is the 'one' in whom the 'many' find their unity,
precisely because he is the *icon Christi*, the one who liturgically
represents Christ.

However, it is here that Zizioulas understanding of the nature of the
Church requires there to be a balance. The fraught problematic
concerning the priority of ordained and lay, of Amt and Geist, must
find its resolution in the application of Trinitarian theology to
ecclesiology, Here as elsewhere. Zizioulas is concerned that there be
a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology and it is here,
perhaps more than anywhere else, where this synthesis will have to
have a practical application if it is to have any relevance beyond the
merely academic.

At the heart of this problem lies the question of the nature of
authority in the Church and who is responsible for its exercise. The
New Testament appears to deliberately avoid use of terminology
which signify authority or power - at least in the sense of an external
authority. Thus, even the apostles were viewed as having authority,
not by reason of having been invested with an office but in virtue of
their being witnesses to the living and the risen Christ. Of the
ninety-five occasions where the New Testament text uses *exousia*,
only seven are of relevance. According to Congar, in five of these, the
text is referring to the authority Jesus gave to the disciples to drive
out devils.\(^{117}\) With greater relevance to our discussion, it is also
used in 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10. Here Paul refers to the authority given
him, as an Apostle, precisely for the work of the building up of the
Body of Christ. In other words, authority in the New Testament

265
sense is not an imposed, external power but is rather a service to
the Church. This is in line with the teaching ascribed to Jesus in
Lk. 22:24ff., where authority is equated with humble service or
diakonia, modelled on that of Christ himself, who viewed all
authority as being derived from the Father (cf. Jn. 5:19, 30).

By around the end of the first century, one observes a more developed
structure of authority within the Church communities. The first
reference to the term laikos in a Christian context (it had been used
in secular texts from the third century B.C.) occurs in 1 Clement.
This is of interest as it occurs precisely in a text whose ideas on
hierarchy and authority have been strongly influenced by the
example provided by the Old Testament Levitical hierarchy. Thus,
whilst it remains true that for Clement all Christians have ministries
which, though different, are complimentary, nevertheless we can see
the beginnings of a more formalized organizational structure. It
would not be unfair to assert that Clement has, to all intents and
purposes, a rather negative view of the 'layman'. Whilst his
comments on those who are responsible for the actual conduct of the
Liturgy are comparatively full, he is vague with reference to the laity,
seemingly viewing their part as being one of submission.118

Faivre119 points out that by the time of the Pastoral Epistles,
although the clergy had not as yet appeared, there was nevertheless a
certain tendency for some members of the priestly people of God to
acquire 'honourable rank' within the Church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:13). Thus
we can see that already 'certain specific functions, titles and
statuses'120 were appearing within the ecclesial communities. In the
ecclesiology of Ignatius we are able to observe the beginnings of
status within the Church being more openly matched with power or
authority. For Ignatius there 'is a structural hierarchy throughout
the great Church', with authority being exercised from the top (the
bishop) downwards.121 However, once more this must be qualified,
for in keeping with the New Testament understanding, he perceives
the purpose of this hierarchical structure not to be to set apart the
higher orders, but rather to link the 'lay' Christian with God,

266
through an iconological, liturgical typology. **Submission** to those in authority is, however, important:

What is unvarying in the midst of so much that is variable, is Ignatius' conviction that the approach to the structured ranks of the Church is by submission. Thus the laymen at various times are exhorted to submit to the bishop (Tral. 13.2, cf. Philad. 1.2) and to the deacons (Smyr. 8.1) as one might to the commandments, and ... to the presbyters as to the laws of Jesus Christ (Mag. 2.1).122

Zizioulas believes that, at least in the first three centuries, the principle of authority within the Church was generally governed by a eucharistic and conciliar understanding of the nature of the ecclesial body. However, with the rapid growth of the Church and the pressures it faced, not least with the Constantinian recognition of Christianity, the role of the laity in the authority structures of the Church became less pronounced. Indeed, with the growing distinction between clergy and laity,123 it was perhaps inevitable that the laity should come to be regarded a being of inferior status.

The development of the structure of the church into a lay/clerical divide is evidenced in the late second century through the writings of Tertullian, who consistently, even as a Catholic, displayed a very firm attitude to the dignity and rights of the laity.124 This may well indicate a dissatisfaction with a development away from the situation which had existed until recently, in which Justin could hold that all the baptized have equal dignity, there being at that time no divide between laity and clergy, there existing in the Church only 'children of election and knowledge.'125

For Tertullian there was no radical distinction between laity and clergy, although this must not be taken to deny the existence of different *charisms* of service within the Church. Because the laity were not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist or the other sacraments (except water-baptism, and then only in emergency), Faivre is only partially correct in claiming that:

267
Lay people claimed a priestly dignity equal to that of priests. Because they had the same dignity as priests, they also had identical duties. The hierarchy appeared only as an expression of the dignity and duties of the whole Christian people. 

Within a generation, we are able to see that the situation had become somewhat confused. Whilst in the Syrian *Didascalia* (c. 230) we encounter 'possibly the finest, most lyrical and most theologically accurate definitions of the laity of the period', in later times we can find an understanding of the laity as being inferior to the clergy and not merely having a different, though equally vital, function. Thus, we find in Cyprian the view that a bishop who has identified himself with an heretical or schismatic group may be received back into the communion of the Church as a layman. 

However, this should not be taken as implying that the Church had by any means arrived at the late mediaeval situation in which the laity were believed to be wholly subservient to the clergy. The laity, although in many respects beginning to be conceived as being an 'inferior' grade to the clergy nevertheless continued to exercise authority according to the rights of their own order, not least through their role in the election of the clergy.

Zizioulas is emphatic that, within the Body of Christ, 'in every respect the Church decides and acts in an authoritative way only through an event of communion.' This means that whilst the people can do nothing without the Bishop, yet neither may the hierarchy act without the people. Zizioulas holds that there is no exterior, objective 'authority' within the Church; rather, authority and structure within the Church 'must be a reflection of God's communion with man in Christ,' and consequently 'all ministries can only be authoritative in the sense that they realise that authority which stems from communion itself.' This means that our ecclesial structures must reflect and participate in the communal, Trinitarian, nature of the Church. It is thus crucial for Zizioulas that ministries are only authoritative in the sense, and to the degree, that they realize that authority which stems from the
event of communion itself.

It is Zizioulas' belief that the contemporary crisis of authority derives ultimately from our understanding of the nature of authority itself. This, he asserts, is precisely because:

All classical definitions of authority are based on the Latin idea of auctoritas and share a common characteristic: they presuppose authority as an external claim to submission. This claim is "external" in the sense that it is an objective reality imposing itself upon the subject, i.e. a claim coming from an objectified being or from a principle or value which may not be identical with a personal being but which represents, nevertheless, an objectified reality itself. This claim to submission may be a partial or a total one, depending upon the degree to which it imposes itself upon man. Its expression usually takes a juridical form consisting of a demand for obedience to certain orders which must be fulfilled, or of a demand for an attitude of total submission.132

Zizioulas believes that, in the patristic era, the 'authority' of the Church derived from, and was played out through, an event of communion, in which all orders of the Church participated.133 However, just how far is Zizioulas correct in this assessment?

One of the areas in which the laity have had, from the earliest days, a fundamental role in exercising their authority lies in the selection of candidates for the Church's ministry. The very first appointment to be filled in the Church, even before the day of Pentecost, was that of a replacement for Judas among 'the Twelve'. The choice of the two candidates seems to have been, from the context we are given (Acts 1:15, 23), by popular choice - the people put forward their choice.134 Again, with the appointment of the seven 'deacons' (Acts 6:1-6), common choice is clearly the case. All orders of the Church clearly have their role to play in the selection of the leadership. Raymond Brown can therefore state that although:

there were diverse ways in which the Church (or the communities) designated individuals to exercise those powers - the essential element always being church or
community consent (which was tantamount to ordination, whether or not that consent was signified by a special ceremony such as the laying on of hands).  

Yet there are clearly cases where the leadership of a local Church was appointed by the founding Apostle, rather than by the common choice of the people of that Church (e.g., Acts 14:23). This situation of Apostolic appointment derives solely from the fact that this was a newly founded missionary Church, with no history of a Christian people behind it. Thus, it is more likely that the founders of the Church would be in a better position to evaluate the Christian faith and leadership qualities of their converts than the others within the new Church. However, this cannot be used to support any notion of the right of provision of leadership of a local Church being made by a higher, external ecclesial authority, as is still the case, for example, in the Roman Catholic Church, some parts of the Anglican Communion and, somewhat disconcertingly for Zizioulas, within the Orthodox Churches.  

There exists a range of cases where bishops or presbyters were chosen, often forcefully and against the wishes and inclinations of those so selected, by popular acclamation. In the early Church, the call to ministry is seen as coming from the community itself: call and choice are one. The People of God, in the form of the local eucharistic community, express their choice by calling a man to office. Thus chosen, it was expected that the man so chosen would obey what was perceived to be the choice of God himself exercised through his people, even if this was contrary to his own will. However, not all episcopal elections were conducted in this manner - indeed, it may even have been comparatively rare. It would be naive to expect that no-one sought office from unworthy motives or that there was no competition for ecclesial office. On the contrary, this happened even in the first century, as 1 Clement readily testifies.

Cyprian alludes in a number of his letters to the process of selecting a new bishop. He requires that:
for the proper celebration of ordinations all the neighbouring bishops of the same province should assemble together with the flock ..., and the bishop should be chosen, in the presence of the people, and thereupon ordained.\textsuperscript{138}

The context here implies that the actual election fell to the bishops of the province. However, there can be no doubt that the laity's role was considered to be essential and not merely cosmetic:

The election of a bishop depends on the \textit{suffragium} of the people and the \textit{iudicium} of the bishops present. One should not think of a formal vote by the people but rather of an acclamation of a suitable candidate. The \textit{iudicium} of the bishops refers to the consensus of the bishops of the province which is required before a consecration can be performed. This method of election, involving both the people and the neighbouring bishops, is considered by Cyprian to be a divine tradition and an apostolic custom.\textsuperscript{139}

Underlying this is a belief in the people of God as being the Spirit-bearing Body of Christ who are hence guided by God in their choice. It is precisely in this custom that we see the working out of a synthesis between Christology, represented by the hierarchical manifestation of the Church's life, and the Pneumatic dimension, testified to in the role of the People. We are here in the presence of a very powerful expression of the 'One and the Many' in the ecclesiological consciousness of the early Church. What we have in this insistence upon an active role of the people in the election of the Bishop is not a mere administrative convenience or a sop to democracy but rather the conscious awareness and expression of the very nature of the Church as communion, as \textit{koinonia}.

Precisely because the act of ordination is a christic-pneumatic act, in that this rite unites the ordained not only with Christ but also with the community,\textsuperscript{140} it is essential that the community itself have some say in the choice of their ministers. Being an act of the Holy Spirit, ordination ties the ordained to the local community in a dynamic and creative way, in that 'it establishes a new
interrelational bond between the ordained and the community.\textsuperscript{141} Consequently, Zizioulas denies the possibility of ordination \textit{in absoluto}. Rather, he tethers this notion to the demand that ordination, as service to the eucharist, is service to the local eucharistic community.\textsuperscript{142}

In assigning an important role to the community in ordination, Zizioulas is not only being faithful to the patristic tradition and to the demands of his own theological vision, but is also making an important ecumenical link to the practices of non-Orthodox churches. Zizioulas is well aware that in a number of respects current Orthodox practice does not conform to ancient usage and theological insight.\textsuperscript{143} In contemporary Orthodox practice, the role of the People of God in the election of the clergy is strictly limited, being confined to the liturgical acclamation of 'axios' ('He is worthy!') in the ordination liturgy itself. Now, however venerable this custom may be, and we have already seen that at the time of Cyprian the laity were, at least on enough occasions for it to be considered normal, in the position of confirming an episcopal election by acclamation \textit{prior to} an ordination and without that consent the ordination could not proceed.\textsuperscript{144}

Whilst Zizioulas may well be \textit{theologically} correct in demanding that the laity have their due role in episcopal elections, we should not be tempted to see its loss as being merely another manifestation of a creeping clericalization of the Church. No doubt that played its part, but it is not the only story. Another motive in the reduction of the role of the laity may well have been, paradoxically, a desire to preserve the autonomy of the Church! From the fourth century on, where the laity did retain some say in the election of the bishop, it tended to be either by way of the local magnates or, on the contrary, by means of mob pressure. L'Huillier\textsuperscript{145} observes that Gregory Nazianzus lamented this state of affairs (\textit{Orat. 18;35}) and that Canon 13 of the Council of Laodicea (mid 4th Century) actually forbids 'the crowds' to intervene in the election of ecclesiastics. This is something to which Zizioulas could give fuller recognition.
Zizioulas performs the duty here of recalling the Church to the practical expression of its true nature through the active participation of the laity in the election of the clergy. In functioning in this way, the laity would be helping to restore the pneumatological dimension to the christic-pneumatological synthesis which is the Church. Whilst we must appreciate the motives of the early Councils in limiting lay participation here, nevertheless it is open to us to question its appropriateness as a model for the contemporary Church, not least because of the often baneful effects of the neglect of the dimension of the laity's role in the government of the Church.¹⁴⁶

In advocating the return to an earlier understanding of the role of the laity in the election of the clergy, Zizioulas is making an ecumenical move towards the position held by many non-Orthodox Churches. Moreover, in exercising this duty, the laity would not be merely reclaiming a 'power' long since lost to the hierarchical structure, but would, much more importantly, be exercising a function of their kingly role, which is inherent in their ordination to the royal priesthood of the People of God. In thus doing they would be helping to restore the proper pneumatological dimension to the body, thereby facilitating something of the synthesis which Zizioulas actively seeks.¹⁴⁷ For Zizioulas, the Church cannot even exist without the laity, for the One cannot even be the One without the Many. Just as Christ himself is defined *qua* Christ by his relationship with the Many, the Church, so too is the Bishop defined by his relationship to the laity; the One depends on the Many for his existence, just as they depend on him for theirs.

If the laity are seen to exercise their Kingly status in playing their part, however it may be interpreted, in the selection of the clergy, and thereby constituting them in a similar mode to that in which the Holy Spirit constitutes Christ, another important way is in their *teaching* role. Zizioulas, in common with other Orthodox writers, strongly denies any distinction between a 'teaching' Church and a 'taught' Church, between a magisterial hierarchy and a passive,
subservient and obedient laity. It is axiomatic for Zizioulas that teaching, just as much as worship, must involve the whole Body and not merely a section of it. Theologically, the root of this lies in the principle of communion and here we see a reflection of the mode of the authority of the Father within the Trinitarian relationships. Within the Trinity there is a form of hierarchy, of differentiation in which the Father is 'Principle of the other two Persons ... the Source of the relations whence the hypostases receive their distinctive characteristics.' The Father is the *principium*, 'the ultimate source and origin of being within the Godhead.' However, although there exists a 'monarchy of the Father' within the Trinity, nevertheless the principle of authority rests not upon an authoritarian, dictatorial rule by the Father but rather upon the principle of *perichoresis*.

If, as the common tradition of both East and West has classically held, God is perfect, mutual love and interpersonal community, then the 'authority' exercised by the Father, as the 'fountainhead' (*pegaia theotes*) will be radically conditioned. Authority ceases to be understood in terms of *auctoritas*, for, as Zizioulas has said in discussing the subject of authority in connection with the Scriptures:

> authority does not stem from a being or a principle objectively conceived but from a relationship in the deepest and existential sense of the word. It may be called the authority of love, if by love we do not imply a moral or sentimental category, but an *εκστασις* (cf. Heidegger's *ek-sistieren*), i.e. a going out of one's self in order to come to personal communion. The authoritative element in this situation lies in the fact that this communion affirms the other's presence as an existential necessity - the "I" can exist personally only because there is a 'Thou." This authority which is defined by the power of mere existential presence "imposes" itself *from within* as an affirmation of authentic existence; it is *authority as authenticity*. In this context all claims and structures and forms of expression have no authority themselves. Historical relativism is their fate and cannot be turned into objective claims for submission.
Within the Orthodox Church, as within the Roman Catholic Church, it has historically been the episcopate’s duty to teach the faith and define doctrine. It has, likewise, always been considered that it is the duty of the members of the Church to obey the bishop’s teaching, either when teaching alone as head of his local Church or together with the other bishops in Council. From the time of Ignatius, we find exhortations to be ‘submissive to the bishop’ in order that one may not be ‘living as ordinary men but according to Jesus Christ.’

For Zizioulas, precisely because authority resides within the ecclesial community as a whole, the laity must play an essential part within the Church’s authority structures. Underlying this belief is the conviction that:

The institution is not meant to create an objective auctoritas for security and obedience, but to provide the means for personal and free existence in communion. Here we must liberate ourselves from the idea of freedom as choice and understand it as the movement towards communion. ... The freedom of the Spirit means that the structure of the Church is not an objectified superimposed thing, but the fulfilment of each one’s personhood. Just as in Baptism, “Chrismation” or Confirmation makes each person a complete Christ, and in the Eucharist each communicant is transformed into the whole body of Christ, so in the same Spirit the very structure of the Church becomes the existential structure of each person.

It is axiomatic within the Orthodox tradition that in the hierarchy one can discover a reflection, or application, of the Trinitarian hierarchy of love and sacrifice, rather than a reflection of power and constraint. The bishop exists within a paradoxical situation, for:

the organ by which the apostolic message and power are transmitted, ... the charisma veritatis certum (St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 4.22.2) which is transmitted to him is manifested only in the local Church, and not above it. The bishop is not alone, but is inseparable from his community, acting teaching, and administering within this community.
In modern times, statements which give due weight to both the hierarchical responsibility for doctrinal teaching and, on the other hand, the duty and privilege of the laity, as part of the whole Body of Christ, to receiving, or refusing to receive, this teaching, have become normative in Orthodoxy. This, however, is a comparatively modern rediscovery. The loss of such a perspective accounts for much which differs from this approach in Orthodox ecclesiology up to and including the latter part of the nineteenth century.

**Truth and Communion**

For Zizioulas, the Church is not to be conceived of as a place in which 'truth' is deposited. Rather, it is the scriptural contention that it is Christ himself who is the Truth (John 14:6) and it is the task of the Holy Spirit to lead the Church to the Truth (John 16:13). It is evident that a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology is essential if we are to develop a fruitful understanding of the authoritative witness of the Church to the Truth which is Christ. What is important here is that:

The affirmation that Christ is the Truth ceases in the Spirit to point to an objectified and conceptualized truth (the *aletheia* of the Greeks) and makes Truth identical with life and communion, the very life and communion of God.\(^{159}\)

Now, the implication of this is that Truth becomes an inseparable part of the ecclesial mystery, precisely because truth can only break into the Church as an *eschatological reality*, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, just as, historically, Christ who is the Truth becomes incarnate in this world through the power and operation of the same Spirit, making of him a relational being. Thus, as a result of this:

truth becomes a sacramental thing in history; it becomes sanctification (John 17:17-19) and life (John 3:21; 8:44), because the Spirit of Truth is also that of sanctification and communion.\(^{160}\)
Truth thus conceived becomes a real presence in that the Church herself is made into 'a real presence of Truth through her very being a communion and a community.' Thus it is possible to see that the 'infallibility' of the Church is nothing other than an expression of the sacramental presence of Truth within her, existing as communion and community. On the other hand, the Latin Church has traditionally emphasized the teaching authority of the *magisterium* and the subsequent passivity of the laity. Theologically, this may be comprehended, albeit at the risk of a degree of oversimplification, as the exaltation of the Christological over the Pneumatological, of *Amt* over *Geist* within the ecclesial Body. Zizioulas therefore asks, 'Does the bishop have an authority intrinsic in his office or does he need in what he says and does the presence and perhaps the assent of the other orders in the Church?'

There can be no doubt that, for Zizioulas, this represents the crucial question regarding the authority, and not just the *teaching* authority, of the bishop. According to Zizioulas, authority is either domineering or liberating. Areeplasskal remarks that: 'in the former case, it is something that is imposed on the community, whereas in the latter case, it is something that springs up from the community itself.' If we have followed Zizioulas thus far, it becomes apparent that he requires a liberating authority to spring up from the community itself, through its experience and realization of the *koinonía* of the Trinity itself. This requires the essential ministry of the laity. Crucially, for Zizioulas:

the eschatological Christ of which the bishop is an εἰκόνα is not a mere individual but himself - and this is crucial - part of the community. This is the deeper implication of the presentation of Christ in the Bible as One and yet at the same time as Many. This implication relates fundamentally to the constitutive role played by the Holy Spirit in Christology, for it is the specific function of the Spirit to be χοιρόνωσία and to make Christ a corporate person - not a mere individual. Christ arrives in his Kingdom as the first of many brethren, as "many", as a community. The bishop in being *alter Christus* is also inconceivable as a separate individual, i.e. without the
community of which he is the head. The grace given to him in his ordination is not his individual possession, but it is the power given to him to bring the presence of the eschatological Christ into history in the form in which his presence will be realised in the last days, namely as a community.  

Because the bishop must always operate as part of the community, it becomes imperative that his power to teach authoritatively be conditioned by that very community. Thus, precisely because Christ himself is defined and conditioned pneumatologically, it becomes essential for us to affirm that Truth is conditioned epicletically and becomes an essential and organic part of the community itself. The Church, in order to be the 'Pillar of Truth' (1 Tim. 3:15), needs again and again to revitalize herself in the Pentecostal event, in the context of which event (which is exactly the meaning of the requirement that all ordinations be carried out in the Eucharist) she confers bishops with a charisma veritatis. However:

It is the objective form of episcopacy in apostolic succession that is used to embody this charisma, yet this does not objectify Truth: the infallibility that accompanies this is a charisma, and as such it is constantly subject to the epiclesis of the community. The bishop who exercises this "infallibility" is therefore subject not to the community as another objectified social structure - the Church is not a democracy - but to the community as a charismatic event of communion. Infallibility thus appears in the spirit to be a dynamic, circular movement. It does not repose statically on any structure or ministry, but it express itself through a certain ministry by a dynamic perichoresis in and through the whole body.

Although it pertains to the office of the bishop to teach with authority, it nevertheless falls to the layman to utter the 'Amen' to his teaching. Without this 'Amen' of the whole Church to the teaching of the Bishop, it remains valueless and empty.

Now, it pertains to the office of the bishop to teach authoritatively, with the other orders speaking through and in him. However, this does not mean that the bishop is a free agent, for he is bound to the
Tradition of the Church, which expresses itself in the life and witness of the local Eucharistic community of which he is head. Therefore, the bishop:

must speak not from himself, but in the name of the Church, *ex consensu ecclesiae*. This is just the contrary of the formula *ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*. It is not from his flock that a bishop receives full power to teach, but from Christ through the Apostolic Succession. But full power has been given to him to bear witness to the catholic experience to the body of the Church. He is limited by this experience, and therefore in questions of faith the people must judge concerning his teaching. The duty of obedience ceases when the bishop deviates from the catholic norm and the people have the right to accuse and even to depose him.167

Zizioulas concurs in his teacher’s opinion here, holding that a layman, ‘in his membership in the body, which is by definition charismatic, can point to the Truth by contesting the bishop’s deviation from it.’168 Theologically, this is possible because of a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology. If the Christological dimension is stressed too much, at the expense of the Pneumatological, then we would expect to find an undue emphasis on the hierarchy and its right to teach. On the other hand, to neglect the Christological dimension in order that the Pneumatological might be stressed may lead both to the denial of the right of the bishop to teach authoritatively and to the exaltation of the conscience of the individual Christian above that of the whole Church. If we accept Zizioulas’ own attempt at a theological synthesis, we can begin to see how he resolves the tension between laity and hierarchy within the teaching structures of the Church. It is for the bishop, as head of the community, to teach authoritatively. However, his teaching must be consonant with the received faith of the community, which itself is checked against the faith of the wider Christian community, that of the other local Churches.

Thus, in Zizioulas’ approach, it is the bishop who teaches authoritatively but it pertains to the people, precisely because they have been ordained, through the reception of the Holy Spirit in
Baptism/Chrismation, and have been installed into the ordo of the laity, in a charismatic event, to check his teaching and to receive it - or otherwise. 'Authority in the Church is a product of communion, for the Church herself is in her essence an event of communion.'

Conclusion

Zizioulas has managed to produce a dynamic and attractive theology of the laity and their authority within the Body of Christ. This he has achieved essentially by means of working out the theological and practical consequences of his twin doctrines of a Christic-Pneumatological synthesis on the one hand, and the 'One and the Many' on the other. Zizioulas locates authority within the Church in an event of koinonia, of a communion modelled on that of the Holy Trinity itself, where freedom and mutual indwelling love (perichoresis) are the keys.

On the one hand, Zizioulas locates the exercise of authority in the local Church within an event of communion in which all the faithful have their part to play. However, whilst so doing, he manages to preserve the ancient Catholic understanding of the bishop being the primary teacher of the Faith within his own local Church. Clearly, this is essential if he is to remain faithful to the witness of the Orthodox Church. At the same time, however, as preserving this Christological emphasis on the magisterial authority of the hierarchy, Zizioulas situates authority within the body of the faithful, within the Spirit-filled Body in its entirety.

In common with other contemporary Orthodox theologians, Zizioulas sees the laity as exercising its Kingly ministry through the 'reception' or otherwise of the teachings of the magisterium. Just as Christ is not Christ, a relational person, without the 'Many', neither can the Bishop exist as a relational, ecclesial person without the people, the 'Many'. Because of this, his ability to teach authoritatively must not be viewed as being independent of the people, but rather as being
exercised in synergy with them. Their role is not to proclaim teaching, but rather to receive it - or refuse to do so if it does not correspond to the Christian vision.

Yet, although in this view the people are fundamental to the decision-making processes of the Church, there are major problems. Zizioulas is emphatic that it is the function of the laity to 'receive' the teachings of the Bishop, or to reject them as being incompatible with the Catholic consciousness of the local Church. Yet there is no 'organ' of this reception in his thought. One is left with the feeling that there is no structure through which the laity can come to an awareness of the validity of the bishop's teaching, neither is there an institutional, structural means whereby they can accept or reject such teaching. Moreover, it is difficult to envisage how Zizioulas would see such reception as being articulated in practice, not least because, in reality, few Christians have the ability to reach an informed opinion on theological questions. He leaves unanswered the question as to how the laity can be sure, particularly with regard to complex theological problems, their own theological impressions are accurate. At the end of the day, one suspects that this could lead to replacing the magisterium of the hierarchy with a magisterium of (lay) theological 'experts'. Such would hardly fit Zizioulas' avowed position regarding the ministry of all Christians in the process of reception.

Within the Western Churches, outwith the Roman Catholic Church, there is always a means whereby the teachings of the ecclesiastical authorities are subject to testing. In the Scottish Episcopal Church, for example, there is a clear structure for this process. The bishops, without losing their teaching authority, are nevertheless subject to a formal balance in the existence and structure of the General Synod. In this, each part of the Church - bishops, clergy and laity - are represented, with democratic forms of election ensuring the participation, even if in a delegated form, of all members of the Church in the selection of legislators. When a major decision is to be made, each 'House' acts as a check on the others to ensure that
the concerns and needs of all members are met. 'Reception' in such a situation becomes the responsibility of all members of the Church, exercised through their representatives in Synod. Other Churches will have similar representative structures of their own, perhaps exercised along the lines of the Church of Scotland's General Assembly.

The closest to the Western Synodal model that the Orthodox Churches have ever come was in the projected constitution of the Russian Orthodox Church as debated in the Sobor of 1917-1918. In this scheme, still-born owing to the pressures brought to bear on the Church by the Bolshevik revolution, the laity would have been able to take full part in the Synodal decisions of the Church through its voting representatives.

Zizioulas, it must be said, has no theological objection to the inclusion of either laity or lower clergy in the formal decision-making structures of the Church, up to and including the Oecumenical Council. On the contrary, their expertise, particularly when a member of these orders is theologically equipped, may not only be desirable but essential. However, it is their voting rights which he would vigorously contest, on the grounds that the Bishop alone 'sums up' his local Church, the 'One' containing within himself the 'Many'. Should the other orders have voting rights then, not having this ministry, they would merely be representing themselves or, at most, the constituency which elected them. They would therefore fail to express the Catholic unity of the local Church.

Although Zizioulas is very far from that position formerly held by many Orthodox, particularly from the Greek Church, in which the hierarchy was conceived as being the directive, governing body over the Church, he nevertheless is also remote from some of the concerns expressed by Western theologians with regard to the presence of the laity in the authority structures of the ecclesial Body.
Zizioulas, as an Orthodox, believes that the theological guidelines for the Church were largely laid down in the highly creative Patristic era. However, whilst one form of ecclesial structure may be appropriate to one era, and indeed essentially express its theological self-awareness, the same decision-making structure may be inappropriate in a later age. We no longer live in an age in which comparatively few of the laity are educated, even theologically. What is needed is a way in which the Trinitarian model of the Church can be more effectively actualized, a way in which the laity are enabled to more effectively manifest their role, given in Baptism/Chrismation, as prophets, priests and kings.
Chapter Five

Notes


3. As was noted in Chapter Four, many of the major difficulties in ecumenical discussions centre on questions concerning the ordained Ministry in the Church. It is thus of little surprise that an ecclesiologist involved in ecumenical dialogue should have to devote much of his efforts to dealing with that area, rather than with the laity. If there is a fault in the focus of contemporary ecumenical dialogue, it has to be admitted that it may be identified with a comparative lack of attention to the laity. In part, I believe, this is due to a feeling that there are few real differences of a serious nature between the various major Churches concerning the laity and, additionally, reflects the fact that a considerable amount of work was done on the laity in the past, perhaps particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. However, a change of perspective within ecclesiology, such as that advocated by Zizioulas, necessarily demands that we at least review our thinking on the laity, as with other areas.


5. See, for example, his discussion of the subject in *Being As Communion*, pp.124 -126.


13. Y. Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, p.3. This is important to note when discussing Orthodox approaches to the theology of the laity, for it is precisely the Septuagint - and no other - version of the Old Testament which is accepted as canonical by the Orthodox.


15. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.27.


One should, however, beware of drawing too sharp a distinction between the conciliar theology and that which went before. This newly recovered theology of communion could only have been accepted by the Council because of the preparation which had already taken place in the life of the Catholic Church. Chief place in this process should, perhaps, go to Pius XII's encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*. The principal effect of this document:

'was to give a new and decisive orientation to ecclesiology. With the weight of authority, it revived the tradition idea of communion, the union of Christians with Christ and with each other, within a Church which is at once both mystery and society, linking the means of grace entrusted to the Apostles' successors indissolubly with the inner realities of faith, hope and charity.'


With such as this as preparation, the move to the central understanding of the Church as People of God in the thought
of Vatican II, only twenty years after *Mystici Corporis*, becomes more comprehensible.

   'In this image [the People of God] the Church is understood as a community dispersed throughout the world and therefore as a community “on the way”, that is, in constant movement and expectation. On the other hand, this scattered people of God is not abandoned to its diaspora. Its destiny is to find its ultimate completion in one place and in a single body that is now taking shape. Here the image of the “Body of Christ” enters on the scene and creates the paradox we mentioned.'


30. The vociferous arguments of the Reformation era over the nature of the priesthood - the general priesthood of all the baptized versus the sacerdotal priesthood of the ordained - are seen, in the light of a strict emphasis on the priestly character of the community as a whole, as having somewhat missed the mark. Luther, in his *The Babylonian Captivity* (1520) dealing with the sacraments, attacked the Catholic understanding of the nature of ordination on the grounds that it led, inevitably, to a denial of the 'priesthood of all believers' - which Luther took as meaning that all are, *individually through baptism* to be accounted as priests of the New Covenant. This is to attribute an individualistic understanding to the notion of priesthood, which was to prove every bit as misleading as the
late mediaeval individualization of the priesthood in the person of the ordained. As Luther said, 'All of us who have been baptized are priests without distinction.' (Martin Luther, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, cited in R. Bainton, Here I Stand (Tring: Lion, 1987). p.138. Zizioulas would certainly agree with Luther that all Christians are, by virtue of their Baptism, priests, but would see this priesthood as being something which belongs to the community in its entirety, rather than to individuals and, in addition, would contend very strongly that this priestly character of the whole community need in no way deny distinctions within that community.

31. Zizioulas is here consciously taking a line which is very different to that espoused by Afanasiev, in whose view all Christians are, by virtue of their baptismal incorporation into the Body of Christ, are priests individually. For Afanasiev, distinction between orders in the Church is solely that between he who presides over the community - and who is the principal liturgical celebrant or president precisely by virtue of this pastoral role - and the remainder of the People, who nevertheless are equally 'priestly.' Cf. N. Afanasiev, L'Eglise du Saint-Esprit. p.197. Cited in P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church p.229.

35. If we take the line advocated here by Zizioulas, in an article written as early as 1972, we might then be tempted to agree with Zizioulas' own estimation that predicking an anterior priestly authority and function in the community itself, which is then delegated to the ordained, is related to the traditional Protestant understanding of the concept of the Priesthood of all Believers (Being As Communion, p.215). Precisely because he is concerned to highlight the relational character of existence in the Church, whereby the very being of the Church itself is defined in terms of relationships, Zizioulas rejects such an understanding. It is his contention that any notion of causality in this realm is to be rejected. Characterizing the traditional options as being the 'Catholic' understanding of a transmission of ministerial potestas through the ordaining minister and, on the other hand, the 'Protestant' notion of an anterior authority residing in the community itself, Zizioulas regards each as missing the point, precisely because each is conceived in the 'questionable' terms of causality (Being As Communion, p.215). However, Zizioulas does observe that, in


37. This is of great importance. It is worth observing that Zizioulas, indebted to Yves Congar though he is, goes considerably beyond this pioneering writer's earlier thought. Although it was Congar's task to map out the importance of a balanced theology of the laity, principally in his acclaimed *Jalons pour une theologie du laicat* (1953), he himself admitted that, precisely because he did not adopt the concept of the Church as a community as his point of departure, he drew too sharp a distinction between clergy and laity. cf. Y. Congar, *My Path-findings in the Theology of Laity and Ministries* in *The Jurist*, Vol. 2 (1972), pp. 169-188.


39. J. Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*. This was originally published in French and appeared in English translation in 1964.


47. 'The essential link between the ministerial and the common modalities of Christian priesthood explain why the early Church applied the term *hieros* either to Christ or to the body of believers but not to the hierarchical ministers as such.'


288


50. J. Romanides, *Man and His True Life According to the Greek Orthodox Service Book* in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol.1 (1954), p.83. Although the form of expression used here by Romanides is somewhat different from that used by Zizioulas, there is nevertheless a strong congruence between their views on the matter.

Writing from a Russian Orthodox perspective, Vitaly Borovoy remarked that, despite the existence of a full, royal, 'general' priesthood, there is also a special *hierarchical* priesthood, whose members yet remain members of the People of God:

> because they received as laymen the highest grace of God which remains in them whatever their rank in the hierarchy may be. The priests do not stand above the people but in the people, not above the Church but in the Church. They belong to the flock and are not above it.'


52. Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio* II.1.

53. Although Areeplackal is anxious to claim that, prior to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th Century, the Church commonly held that 'the common priesthood of the baptized and the ministerial one of the ordained are the two dimensions of the one and the same ecclesial reality' (*Spirit and Ministries*, p.21), this would appear to be a highly dubious claim.

In his study of the thought of Zizioulas and Congar, Areeplackal is rightly concerned to highlight areas of agreement between the two traditions represented by these theologians in the area of the Pneumatological dimension of the ordained ministry. However, in his desire to stress what he perceives to be the high level of agreement implicit in the two approaches, he is perhaps stretching some of his evidence a little too far. If the pre-Reformation Church had indeed succeeded in sustaining a balance here, one truly must wonder what it was that the Reformers believed they were doing in condemning the
Roman Church for its loss of the theology of the priesthood of all believers! To claim, as Areeplackal does, that it was due to the excesses of the Reformers themselves that the Church over-reacted by ‘putting undue emphasis on the priestly power to celebrate the Eucharist and to remit sins’ (p.22), is to ignore historical evidence.

54. This is the approach adopted by E. Timiadis, The Orthodox Understanding of the Ministry, p.39, who is clear that distinction in function in the Church should not be interpreted as requiring or implying an ontological distinction.

55. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.231.


57. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.33.


61. For example, Cyprian, Epistle 69 (66), 10.

62. In the article under discussion [Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist], Zizioulas makes much of Cyprian’s belief that baptism without the Spirit is inconceivable. For the East, the Spirit is given in Chrismation, itself an intrinsic part of the baptismal rite. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, in the commentary on Baptism, para. 14, acknowledges that: ‘Within some traditions it is explained that as baptism conforms us to Christ crucified, buried and risen, so through Chrismation Christians receive the gift of the pentecostal spirit from the anointed Son.’ However, this raises questions about a serious problem within contemporary Orthodox baptismal practice, not least regarding the recognition of non-Orthodox baptism. Orthodox theology does not recognize non-Orthodox baptism per se. However, the majority of Orthodox Churches will accept Christians from other traditions without baptizing them. However, this should not be interpreted as being tantamount to a recognition of the validity of non-Orthodox baptisms. Rather, they are accepted under the theory of
economy, in which it is held that the Church can 'make good' the deficiencies of such a baptism. The Church can thus (to use Western terminology) make valid that which is in itself invalid. It should be noted that the exact status of the theory of economy is in dispute, and not all Orthodox accept that the Church has the authority to use it in this manner.

We should note that, even where economy is exercised in this way, Chrismation is always - save in very few instances - required. Yet not only does this raise the hindrance that such practice contradicts the underlying logic of the principles behind Cyprian's position, it also makes a radical division between the Christological and and the Pneumatological dimensions, between baptism in water and chrismation.

Theologically, this would prove undesirable in the eyes of a person who accepts Zizioulas' principle that Christology and Pneumatology belong together, that they condition each other in an essential manner. That being the case, it would seem that logically one should either adopt a 'closed' approach, in which neither baptism nor chrismation can be imparted outwith the canonical limits of the Orthodox Church (for, outwith these bounds, it is held by very conservative Orthodox, there is no Church) or one should be driven to accept that, if baptism may be given outwith the boundaries of the Orthodox Church then it follows that the limits of Orthodoxy cannot be co-terminous with those of the Church of God as a whole. Whilst there is considerable Patristic support for the former position, our experience of the workings of the Holy Spirit make it increasingly unattractive and, indeed, contrary to our spiritual and theological insights. However, if Zizioulas' understanding of the complementarity of the Christological and Pneumatological dimensions is to be taken seriously, then it appears that this calls into serious question some contemporary Orthodox positions. If baptism can be validly performed outwith the canonical bounds of Orthodoxy, and if Zizioulas is correct in his stress on the Spirit's association with this act, then full membership of the Church is imparted to non-Orthodox.

64. E.g., *Didascalia*, 16.
67. J. Zizioulas, *Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation*
and Eucharist, p.650.


70. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.176.


75. A. Schmemann, Of Water and the Spirit, pp.78-79.


77. A. Schmemann, Of Water and the Spirit, p.79.

78. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.234, with reference to Maximus Confessor, Mystagogy, 2; P.G. 91:669 A-D.

79. Cyril of Jerusalem, Procatechesis, 16.

80. Basil, Homily (on Baptism) 13,5.

81. J. Zizioulas, Being as Communion, p.236.

82. J. Zizioulas, Ordination et Communion, p.11.

83. J. Zizioulas, Ordination et Communion, p.11.

84. This is an important point, especially at a time when the position of women in the Church is a major focus of attention. The Orthodox tradition does not here discriminate on grounds of sex. Both men and women are full members of the laity and are equally able to hold offices open to the laity, particularly on the Parish Council, which is - with the priest - responsible for the smooth running of each parish. It would follow that
women are able to perform all the lay offices open to men. Thus, for example, it has long been the tradition in the Orthodox world that laywomen, just as much as laymen, are permitted to preach (with permission from the bishop. However, even a priest needs this and not all priests, by any means, are authorized to preach). If the laity are permitted to act in Synod or even in an Ecumenical Council, in an advisory role, then it follows that this opportunity is equally open to women.

With regard to the place of women within Orthodoxy, however, theology and praxis do not always appear to coincide. Whilst women certainly can and do preach and, in addition, exercise many functions of leadership, nevertheless one can be left with the impression that they are considered somewhat inferior to men. This is perhaps clearly manifested in the canonical provision which prohibits women from passing beyond the iconostasis in the church building into the Sanctuary. Although women are fully members of the royal priesthood of the Church, nevertheless Orthodox theologians, no less than their Western counterparts, have frequently held somewhat negative views concerning women and their role in the Church. For a sane, balanced view, together with an outline of a ‘theology-anthropology of men and women’, see Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, *Women in the Orthodox Church: Heavenly Vision and Historical Realities* in *Echoes*, 7 (1995), pp. 31-42.

It should also be noted that, as children and infants are baptized and chrismated, then they too have a ministry. However, this is a difficult area. Their age makes it difficult or impossible for them to exercise a ministry but the principle must remain. This challenges the Orthodox to give a greater say to young people within the Church - perhaps through a willingness for them to serve on Parish Councils, etc. The pan-Orthodox youth movement, *Syndesmos*, is well respected in hierarchical circles and is able to make a contribution to the well-being of the Church as a whole as well as acting as a focus for young Orthodox people in the Church. Theologically and socially aware, it is well situated to act as a vehicle for the wider ministry of younger members of the Church. For an interesting discussion of the role of youth in the Church see A. Belopolsky, *Youth as Part of the People of God* in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 45 (1993), pp. 421-425.

85. One of the best expositions of Orthodox baptismal theology, which is fortunately available in English, is A. Schmemann, *Of Water and the Spirit* (Crestwood, New York: SVS Press, 1974/ London: SPCK, 1976). Schmemann reaches the heart of the matter in treating the twin actions of baptism and chrismation as interdependent realities. Thus, whilst baptism is primarily Christological and chrismation primarily Pneumatological, neither is devoid of the other dimension nor
can be treated in isolation. Thus, in line with Zizioulas' own thinking, Christology is constituted by Pneumatology, whilst Pneumatology is itself determined by Christology. A careful examination of Chapters II and III of Schmemann's work confirms this fundamental insight.


88. It is important that grace is not seen to rival our freedom in such a way that we are unable to actively refuse this grace. Whilst God may continually seek to present us with ways in which we may discern his love and freely chose to cooperate with him, nevertheless he respects our freedom to reject this love. Because of this, 'God's free initiative demands *man's free response*, for God has created man in his image by conferring on him, along with freedom, the power to know and love him' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para. 2002).


91. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.112


97. Cardinal Ratzinger has shown a strong similarity to some of Zizioulas' ideas in his own discussion of the purpose of the various *charisms* and ministries in the Church. For Ratzinger, all ministries are designed for the building up of the Body of Christ. Service is the measure of Office. As Ratzinger remarks in connection with his own linkage between Christology and Pneumatology in regard to the structures of the Church: 'out of this pneumatic, dynamic idea of building the body, the thought of order and service emerges; the many single services which are required are to be
integrated in the authority of the overarching apostolic service.'

The Ministerial Office and the Unity of the Church in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Vol.1 (1964), p.48. Ratzinger is clear that Office in the Church exists to provide service to Word and Sacrament, not to exercise dominion over them.

98. J. Zizioulas, The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church, p.150.
100. J. Zizioulas, The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church, p.150.
101. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.245.
102. J. Zizioulas, Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, p.646.
111. Cf. V. Lossky, The Ministry of the Laity in the Church, p.255.
114. A. Schmemann, *For the Life of the World*, p.34.

115. It has been oft noted that, in the early Church, the gifts of the faithful served two interconnected purposes. First, the people brought gifts - such as wine, bread, oil and wax - which were to be used in the Eucharist and other sacramental rites of the Church. At the same time, they also presented other gifts such as poultry, cheese and other gifts in kind, as well as money, to be used for the upkeep of the clergy and the charitable work of the congregation. Commenting on this situation, one scholar has remarked that: ‘All of these gifts ... were looked upon as being a contribution to the sacrifice; and in the offering of these gifts one could see how each member of the congregation expressed concretely his intention of taking an active part in the sacrifice, and of making an offering of his very self. The fact that most of the oblations, in an age which was accustomed to trade in kind, were products of the labours of people’s own hands served to enhance the symbolism of the offertory gift in the mind of the individual worshipper. For in his gift at the offertory, he gave something of his own substance, something fundamental to his very existence and by doing this represented the giving of himself.’ (T. Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy* [ET Oxford: OUP, 19792], p.109). Thus, the self-offering of one’s life, which lies at the heart of Christian priesthood, was reflected in the liturgical offertory of the laity, who thus exercised their common priesthood at the worshipping heart of the Church.


117. Y. Congar, *The Historical Development of Authority* in J.M. Todd (ed.), *Problems of Authority* (London: DLT, 1962), p.120. However, Congar gives references to only four of these, viz. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 9:1, 10:19. The other lacks a reference here.

118. However, we should be careful about making overly rigid statements here. With reference to 1 Clement 41.2, Faivre remarks that the author appears anxious to mention the layman as being among those who make offerings and perform liturgical functions ‘when the Old Testament context does not lend itself at all well to this because in it no function, place or special ministry is attributed to the layman, shows clearly that, for Clement, each Christian has a leitourgia or a function in the liturgical offering. He is not able to subscribe to a theology that aims to make offerings and liturgical functions a monopoly of certain Christians to the detriment of the whole of the people of God.’ (A. Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity*
in the Early Church, p.20).


123. This distinction was becoming stronger as the early centuries progressed. It is reflected in the writings of Origen who, however, differed from the increasingly hierarchical approach adopted by the Church in that he believed that authority in the Church was not *automatically* the prerogative of the hierarchy, but rather depended upon a form of *charismatic* commission from God. On this understanding, cf. J.W. Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-century Church* (London: SCM, 1985), especially pp.140-146. Zizioulas, it should be noted, observes this contrast between 'charisma' and 'ministry' and remarks that 'the tendency to stress the "charismatic" at the expense of the "institutional" continuity of the Church reappeared in Orthodoxy through various pietistic movements and tendencies in modern times' (*Being As Communion*, p.181, n.35).


127. A. Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*, p.88, with reference to *Didascalia* II, 26: 'Listen, then, all of you, the holy multitude, the people [adopted] as an inheritance, the great Church, the bride adorned for the Lord God.'

It is noteworthy that this same document also contains a very high theology of the episcopate. This would seem to support the idea that the early Church was able to hold in balance a creative tension between hierarchical authority in the person of the bishop and an exalted understanding of the crucial importance of the laity.


133. Zizioulas clearly distinguishes between two historical periods in this matter. In the first, lasting until approximately the end of the third century, ecclesial authority is communion-centred. Thereafter, he sees a change having taken place, with greater emphasis being laid on authority as 'power'.

134. We should, however, note that the Western text here uses the singular verb, supposing that Peter himself selected the two candidates. The context makes this decidedly unlikely, especially when compared with 6:5. Among modern translations, NEB is neutral, but tends towards common choice ('Two names were put forward'); JB ('Having nominated two candidates ... they prayed') clearly implies common choice; whilst RSV ('And they put forward two') is the most unambiguously in favour of choice by the whole Church.


136. It would be somewhat incautious to make firm statements as to the way in which Church leaders were selected in this period and, indeed, it is more than likely that the infant Church knew a variety of means, according to the local situation. Thus, with reference to *Didache* 15:1, Brown holds that this 'indicates that the community itself could select leaders; but in other areas and times it may well have been that the leaders of sister-Churches intervened, or that the presbyter-bishops sought to have their own children succeed them' (R.E. Brown, *Episkopé and Episkopos: The New Testament Evidence in Theological Studies*, p.332). However, the Church did not arise in a vacuum and, whilst by no means wishing to deny the influence of Greek ideas and practices upon the early Christian community, one cannot deny its Jewish origins. Moreover, as we are increasingly aware, Judaism of the first century was by no means monolithic in either belief or practice. Whilst it might be tenuous to posit close links between the organization of the embryonic Church and that of the community at Qumran, there are nevertheless certain similarities. Qumran, for example, appeared to have had:

'a form of community government remarkably like...
what Luke describes in Acts 6 and 15. At Qumran the Assembly of all the mature members of the community, called the “Session of the Many” (rabbim), was called together to exercise judicial and executive authority over the sectarians. In addition, there was a permanent community council, consisting of twelve men and three priests, which served as a higher and authoritative body within the general Assembly.' 


Given this similarity in general organization, it would make sense that the Christian community had a similar situation in which the general membership of the body had a role to play in the decisions of the leadership.

137. The cases of Augustine, Ambrose and Martin of Tours can be cited as examples of this practice.

138. Cyprian, Epistle 67.5. Note that here Cyprian is discussing the election and ordination of a bishop, not a presbyter. This latter was not (except in the case of supposed irregularity, as with Origen) a matter for bishops outwith the ‘diocese'.


142. Cf. J. Zizioulas, *Ordination: A Sacrament?*, p.35, where Zizioulas is at pains to point out that ordination ‘does nothing but realize the ministry of Christ here and now and within a concrete existential situation.'

143. See, for example, *Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement*, p.19.

144. In early times, at least up until the Peace of Constantine, it was sometimes the role of the laity to propose a candidate who was then subject to ratification by the bishops of the ecclesiastical province. Arguably, it was that Peace itself which was, at least in part, responsible for the decline in the role of the laity in selecting their clergy. Due to a general, if largely slow, decline in spirituality and to the much larger numbers of people entering the Church, it may well have been felt impolitic to continue to allow the laity such an influential voice in the choice of clergy, and notably bishops. Be that as
it may, it is certainly the case that Canon 18 of the local Council of Ancyra (314) and Canon 18 of the Council of Antioch (c.330) attempted to deal with this situation, permitting lay election to be dispensed with. This tendency was further reinforced by the Council of Nicaea, which in its treatment of episcopal elections (Canons 4 and 6) has nothing at all to say about the role of the laity, a silence which 'was later to be interpreted as excluding all lay intervention' (P. L’Huillier, Episcopal Elections in the Byzantine East: A Few Comments in Eastern Churches Review, Vol.2, No.1 (1968), p.5.

145. P. L’Huillier, Episcopal elections in the Byzantine East, p.5.

146. Whilst contemporary Orthodoxy, in common with Roman Catholicism, has no real place for the laity in clerical elections, this stands in sharp contrast not only to the practice of the early Church but also to that of many of the Anglican and Protestant Churches. Within Anglicanism, the example of the Scottish Episcopal Church, may serve to illustrate this point. There, episcopal elections are by the votes of the diocesan clergy and a representative of each parish and are subject only to confirmation by the other bishops of the province. In the election of the parish clergy, there is an even greater role played by the laity, depending upon the canonical position of the individual parish, with it being the custom in many parishes for the laity to select their own priest, either through the Vestry or by direct election. In the Church of Scotland this tradition is perhaps even more pronounced, with the Call being initiated by the congregation.

147. Unfortunately, there is a strain in contemporary Orthodox theology which, following Vladimir Lossky, holds that the West, precisely through its subordination of the Holy Spirit in its doctrine of the Filioque, subordinates the charismatic to the institution, '... inner freedom to imposed authority, prophetism to jurisprudence, mysticism to scholasticism, the laity to the clergy, the universal priesthood to the ministerial hierarchy, and finally the college of bishops to the primacy of the Pope....The Orthodox Church, on the other hand, has preserved the mutual subordination and the fertile tension between the economy of the incarnation and that of Pentecost.' V. Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, pp.156-157, 164, 166-167, 184-185; quotation is from A. de Halleux, Orthodoxie Catholicisme; du personnalisme en pneumatologie in Revue théologique du Louvain, Vol.6 (1975), pp.13-14; cited by Y. Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol.3, p.208. It is of great interest to note that, pace Lossky, Protestants have long been accustomed to holding to the Filioque without
the baneful consequences outlined by Lossky and his school. Protestants manage to maintain this doctrine firmly whilst at the same time affording the Holy Spirit and the pneumatological dimension a high degree of importance in both Church life and structures on the one hand, and spirituality on the other. In all due fairness, it must be observed that, for all his strictures about the Western neglect of pneumatology, Zizioulas himself does not follow Lossky here, rather being closer to the line taken earlier this century by Bulgakov and Evdokimov.


150. K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.9.

151. K. Ware, *The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity*, p.9.


156. J. Zizioulas, *The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church*, p.152. It is interesting to observe that in a footnote to this paragraph, Zizioulas remarks that 'This profound thought underlies the idea of Maximus the Confessor that the catholicity of the Church is to be found in each member personally. ([Myst. 4 [P.G.91, 672]]).'


158. Although this principle is fully in accord with Patristic ecclesiological praxis, it became obscured over the centuries, particularly during and after the Middle Ages in the West. The engagement by the Orthodox in the Western theological debates has been blamed, not least by Zizioulas' own teacher, Florovsky, for placing Orthodox theology and ecclesial life in a 'Babylonian Captivity,' in which Orthodox theology has responded to *Western* theological agendas. Be that as it may - and it is open to question just as to the extent this situation was due to specifically *Western* influence, as to the *shared* dynamic of both traditions (see, for example,
For much of the time, especially under the influence of Latin thinkers such as Aquinas, mediated through, for example, Peter Mogila and his school, Orthodoxy has manifested a rigidly hierarchical face, with more or less absolute control being in the hands of the hierarchy, especially in their conciliar function, even if a nodding recognition has been paid to the idea of participation, through the reception or otherwise, of conciliar decisions.

Now, whilst the domination of the laity by the hierarchy might be anticipated during a time when the Christological, hierarchical and institutional aspect of the Church was being emphasized, not least against encroaching Protestant influences manifested in the thought even of an Ecumenical Patriarch, Cyril Lukaris, in the 17th century, it is remarkable that it was no less strong, even if expressed in a different way, during the neo-Protestant ascendancy from the end of the 17th century until the latter half of the 19th century.

Alexei Khomiakov (1804-1860) has, perhaps, the greatest responsibility for the re-assertion of the pneumatic principle within Orthodox ecclesiology. However, although Khomiakov's thought, particularly his stress on the communitarian principle of Sobornost', has been vastly influential in and beyond Orthodoxy, it nevertheless proves ultimately unsatisfactory as it stands, for the very reason that its stress on the pneumatological dimension of the Church is at the expense of the Christological, thereby resulting in the failure to achieve the necessary synthesis.

163. J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, p.81.
164. J. Zizioulas, The Bishop in the Theological doctrine of the Orthodox Church, p.29.

166. Zizioulas may here be seen, at least at first glance, to echo Khomiakov’s teaching. According to the principles outlined by the Father of the theology of *Sobornost*, the function of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in teaching is strictly conditioned by the laity. For Khomiakov, who was here stating a principle which had been upheld by theologians of both East and West in earlier ages, it is the faith of the whole Church which is expressed in the Creeds. Consequently, it is the whole Church which is infallible, precisely because it is the Body of Christ, as a contemporary Roman Catholic commentator on Khomiakov has observed:

> The individual must measure his faith against that of the whole Church, must learn from the Church and seek the truth, not within himself, but within the Body of Christ. This applies as much to the Pope as it does to the simplest of the faithful. The Pope and the bishops must measure their faith against the faith of the whole Church, against the Tradition carried by the people of God.


169. J. Zizioulas, *The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church*, p.35.


171. On this, see, for example, the articles in *Concilium*, No.197 on *Power in the Church* (1988) and also S. Mac Réamoinn (ed.), *Authority in the Church* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1995), especially Part II.
Chapter Six

Conciliarity: The Way of the Church

Introduction

In the Orthodox tradition the only true model of the Church is the Trinity. We have seen, throughout the course of this study of the thought of John Zizioulas, that this is the vision to which he strives to remain faithful. For Zizioulas, the Trinity is nothing less than the source and foundation of all theology. As such, it cannot but have profound existential consequences.

Having, in the first two chapters, examined Zizioulas' account of the existential dilemma facing humanity and the release offered in baptismal entry into the new life characterized as the ecclesial hypostasis, I moved on to consider the determinative role played by the Eucharist - not only in the transformation of the individual believer but primarily in defining the very existence of the Church. In the following two chapters, we saw how the Eucharist, in Zizioulas' thought, becomes the paradigmatic principle and pattern of the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, by means of a discussion of his treatment of the roles of the laity and the hierarchy - chiefly the bishop - within the structures of the Church. I have suggested that the controlling feature of Zizioulas' ecclesiology is his handling of the concept of 'the “One” and the “Many”', noting my critical agreement with McPartlan and Baillargeon on this point.

In this chapter I deal with theological underpinning of the respective roles of laity and hierarchy in the Church, which is, at precisely the same moment, both the life-blood of the Church and the most perfect expression of its being - the concept of conciliarity. Starting from the concrete exercise of conciliarity within the local Eucharistic community, I will suggest that conciliarity, at least as understood in the first four centuries was firmly rooted in a eucharistic
understanding of the Church. I will examine Zizioulas' account of how the Church, in its efforts to be true to its conciliar nature, set up *structures of communion* between the local Churches. With regard to the conciliar institution itself, my first concern will be with local synods as the earliest formalized expression of conciliarity between the Churches before moving on to what many understand to be the heart of conciliarity, the Ecumenical Councils themselves. I will not dwell in depth on the multitudinous historical problems of the conciliar events but will rather focus attention on the theological import assigned to them by Zizioulas, in an effort to establish how he sees their role and, in particular, their authority, in the power structures of the Church.

**Conciliarity in the Local Church**

The starting point for a study of conciliarity in the Church is within the local Eucharistic community itself, understood as Zizioulas sees it; that is, the community centred on the bishop as *icon Christi*. It is paramount for Zizioulas that Christ is not an individual but must be seen in union with his Body, the Church - a union brought about by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Zizioulas believes that by being constituted *as Christ* through the operation of the Spirit, Jesus is inextricably linked to the community, for it is the very nature of the Spirit to create *koinonia*. Thus conceived, Jesus Christ can only be understood as being in communion.

For Zizioulas, the authority exercised by the bishop is that of Christ himself and must therefore be employed after the manner of Christ. Here, Ignatius is of importance once more in Zizioulas' reflections. Zizioulas is convinced that, although the bishop is indeed the image of Christ for Ignatius\(^3\) it is an image or icon qualified by the community. This means that the Ignatian bishop is not a 'monarchical bishop' in the absolute sense.\(^4\) Thus Zizioulas insists that:
There are many passages in his writings which show that the bishop is inconceivable apart from the presbyters who are united with him “as the strings are to the musical instrument” (Eph. 4:1) (cf. Philad. 4: episkopos hama to presbyterio), and above all apart from the community (Magis. 6:1; Eph. 1:3; Tral. 1:1; Sm. 8, etc.). There is nothing “monarchical” about an office which can function only on the condition that it exists in harmony with the other ministries.5

Here, it is the structure of the Eucharist itself which is determinative. The Eucharist reflects the heavenly liturgy itself and is constructed to visibly demonstrate this.6 It is the Eucharist itself upon which conciliarity is based. Ecumenically, contemporary documents today acknowledge this Eucharistic dimension:

Conciliarity belongs to the very nature of the Church, which is a conciliar gathering par excellence .... It is in this “gathering together” in Christ that the Church becomes truly Church, namely the living people of God. Thus the Church, in its very essence, is a concilium of the faithful convoked by the Father through Christ, in the Spirit. This concilium is continually convoked, built up and sustained through the celebration of the eucharist, the proclamation of the gospel message and the confession of the common faith.7

This ‘gathering together’ epi to auto is at the heart of the eucharistic reality, as Zizioulas makes clear:

It is indeed in the event of gathering the scattered people of God that the eschatological nature of the Church is revealed, for the characteristic of the expectation of the last days by the people of Israel was precisely the hope that the scattered people of God would assemble again in Jerusalem around the Messiah. The Church as the New Israel applied to herself this expectation and saw her eschatological destiny marked by the event of coming together. She experienced this particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist which was her eschatological act par excellence, and saw in this event the gathering of the Church homothymadon the greatest gift of the coming of the Spirit, of Pentecost.8

How, then, does Ignatius (and Zizioulas after him) envisage authority
being exercised in a conciliar manner? In the Ignatian scheme of things, it was the bishop and not the presbyter who celebrated the Eucharist - a point strongly emphasised by Zizioulas.9 A question therefore remains regarding the role of the presbyters, if it was not normally that of eucharistic celebrant.

The presbyters act as a college. They are a corporate body, representing the Apostles in the eschatological liturgy.10 Zizioulas remarks that ‘apostolic continuity is realized through the bishop, not as an individual, but in his being surrounded by the college of the presbyterium.’11 Furthermore, this is always in the context of the whole community. It is communion which is ontologically constitutive.12 If the presbyterate and the people can do nothing without the bishop, then likewise he can do nothing without them. Thus we are driven back to Zizioulas’ understanding of the constitutive nature of what, with Areeplackal, we may term the Christic-Pneumatic synthesis, in which pneumatology conditions Christology and the pneumatic the institutional, whilst at the same time being conditioned by them in turn.

Zizioulas, having examined the evidence - not only in Ignatius but also in the (Syriac) Didascalia Apostolorum - in some depth, concludes that in this period the synedrion or Council of the bishop is the collegium of the presbyters, gathered not just for liturgical purposes but also to act as counsellors of the bishop, not least in disciplinary matters.13 Zizioulas believes that this advisory council was an ‘institution in the hands of the bishop, who could convocate it whenever it was necessary.’14 In reaching this conclusion, Zizioulas draws on the Didascalia Apostolorum, which, despite its having been written some hundred years later, he affirms as being remarkably faithful to the situation of Ignatius. Thus:

The purpose of this council was to hear and pass judgment in all cases of suit or quarrel that might divide the faithful of the Church. This council consisted of the bishop and the presbyters with the presence of the deacons, and acted as a court. The Didascalia advises the bishop to hold this council on the second day of the
week, so that "if perchance anyone should contest the sentence of your words, you may have space until the Sabbath to compose the matter and may make peace between them that are at odds and reconcile them on Sunday." The motive in convoking these councils was to avoid bringing the quarrels of the faithful "to the tribunals of the heathen" while their ultimate purpose was to reconcile those who "are at odds" with each other and with the Church during the eucharistic meeting of Sunday.15

It is important to observe the eucharistic context of the council. It is thus clear that the primary purpose of the council is to secure the maintenance - or restoration - of eucharistic communion within the community. This, given the iconic nature of the Eucharist, is itself a profoundly eschatological service. As Zizioulas goes on to express it:

As is evident already in the Gospel of St. Matthew (18:18-20), the assembly of the local Church seems to possess the same juridical power we encountered in 1 Cor. 5 and as we may infer from chapter 5:23-24 of the same Gospel, in which reconciliation among the faithful is required before the gifts are offered to God, all this can only be understood as part of a liturgical context.16

We are thus faced with two primary facts. Firstly, the local Church is conciliar in its very nature. This would appear to be the early patristic pattern, even if in later times it was an understanding which increasingly dropped out of focus. Even in the third century, we find Hippolytus echoing Ignatius' approach, albeit in his own distinctive manner, with the presbyters forming a council around the bishop, exercising their proper functions (which Zizioulas believes explicitly did not include the celebration of the Eucharist) in connection with the bishop.17 This pattern, however, did not survive the changes brought about by the advent of the parochial system after the end of the third century. The presbyter lost his collegial character, becoming a 'mini-bishop', whose primary function was to celebrate the Eucharist. Rather than the bishop being seated in the place of Christ, surrounded by his presbytery as the image of the Apostolic college, we have a single priest presiding over a Eucharist which increasingly lost its original iconic, eschatological character.
In the second place, we note that conciliarity was intimately connected with eucharistic communion within the local church. This was of decisive importance for later conciliar developments in that it dictated that the earliest councils were primarily concerned with issues directly relating to the Eucharist.

The local Church becomes an event of communion in the Eucharist, which is centred on the bishop as *alter Christus*. Yet, despite the centrality of the bishop, he can function only with the cooperation of the other orders within the Church. This is a constant refrain of the patristic era, finding expression even in a seemingly autocratic prelate such as Cyprian, who yet never saw episcopal power as a personal possession of the bishop:

> The bishop ought always to act with his people.... for the Church is a visible, concrete body and outside the Church the bishop, like everyone else, is nothing....The bishop must stand within the reality of the corporate Church and therefore within the reality of the power of the Holy Spirit.18

Although the Church has all too often neglected conciliarity there are clear indications that a recovery of this concept is underway. Already in the decrees of Vatican II *Lumen Gentium* 30 stipulated that:

> pastors also know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary, they understand that it is their noble duty so to shepherd the faithful and recognize their services and charisms ...19

**Eucharist and Conciliarity**

It is Zizioulas' understanding that 'The eucharistic experience implies that life is imparted and actualized only in an event of communion, and thus creation and existence in general can be founded only upon this living God of communion.'20 Zizioulas is
emphatic in his belief that the eucharist as *an event of communion* which is decisive in creating catholicity, rather than it being viewed as an objectified ‘thing’ in itself:

This has to be emphasized in connection with Ignatius and Irenaeus. Both these Fathers have been presented, especially by Biblical scholars, as having introduced more or less pagan notions into the eucharist. One such case, for example, would be Ignatius' famous expression “medicine of immortality.” A careful study of Ignatius' thought as a whole, however, reveals that the eucharist for him is not *φάρμακον ἀθανασίας* by virtue of possessing in its “nature” a potential for life or a possibility of life, in the sense suggested by the Greek idea of *φόσις*. The eucharist as defined by Ignatius is above all a communion expressed by the assembly of the community around the bishop. The “immortality” of the eucharist is to be sought in this communion-event and not in the “nature” of the eucharist as such.21

It was because admission to the Eucharist was decisive for membership of the Church, both for the individual and for each specific local community that we should not be surprised that the earliest ‘Councils’ or synods were convened specifically to deal with matters of eucharistic communion, nor that the bishops were the ones who were the members of such councils. Because, for the Fathers of the Church, eucharistic communion was the conclusive sign of participation in the whole Church,22 it was natural that this became a central preoccupation. Indeed, Zizioulas would go so far as to say that:

There seems to have been an intrinsic relationship between conciliarity and liturgical life in the Early Church. Conciliar action was originally to be found in many cases within the context of the Eucharist, while its purpose appears to have always been to lead the Church to the sacramental unity.23

Within the local community, the bishop’s council was to assist the bishop in governing the local Church. Eucharistic participation and full membership of the Church were intrinsically linked. One could not participate in the Eucharist unless one were in good standing.
with the Church. It was this regulatory function of admitting to, or refusing, communion which was the special responsibility of the local bishop’s council. Discipline was exercised, not as an end in itself, but in regard to Eucharistic communion. The bishop, as the one who, with his council, controlled admission to the Eucharist and hence to fullness of membership of the Church, occupied the central place within his local community, yet always in communion with the other orders of the Church. This function with regard to Eucharistic communion was fundamental to the development of the conciliar structures between the local Churches. Eucharistic communion presupposed unity in faith, which was expressed through this Eucharistic communion. Indeed, as a symbol of this unity, it was customary for visiting bishops to be invited to concelebrate the Eucharist with the host bishop.

For Zizioulas it is not merely enough that a local community celebrate the Eucharist in order for it to be ‘Church’:

For a local community to be a “Church” it must be identical with and in communion with the other Church-communities of the world. ... no local Church can be considered a “Church” unless it is “acknowledged” by and in communion with the other local Churches.

The conciliar nature of the Church is further revealed within the actual liturgical texts themselves. Even in the idiosyncratic Anaphora of Addai and Mara from East Syria, there is acknowledgement that catholicity stretches through time as well as space, in that there is explicit commemoration of the ‘fathers, who have been well pleasing in your sight in the commemoration of the Body and Blood of your Christ.’ This characterizes both the current Orthodox Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom as well as the ancient Canon of the Roman Rite.

Should there be a breach of communion between the Churches, the name of the bishop of the Church which was held to have offended or departed from the Apostolic faith was removed from the Diptychs. This lends credence to Zizioulas’ view that eucharistic communion
was of the essence of the Church and that if one were no longer in communion with the whole Church then one could no longer be counted as a member of the Church - and this applies to individuals and communities alike. Also, it is further verification of Zizioulas’ key concept of ‘the “One” and the “Many”’ - a point of the very highest importance for an understanding of Zizioulas’ theology. The bishop’s name is removed from the Diptychs, from the central part of the Eucharistic prayer itself, not for a purely personal fault but because, by virtue of being the bishop, he bears in his person the whole of that local Church which has been deemed as having parted from the truth. Where there is no participation in truth there can be no eucharistic communion. In Zizioulas’ own terms, and with specific allusion to 1 Cor. 5 - 6:

An oclusion [sic] from the company of the saints by means of crossing out certain names from the Diptychs is thus to be understood ecclesiologically and not as a mere disciplinary act. The gravity which the ancient Church attached to anathema lies precisely in the view that in each Eucharistic celebration the entire communion of the saints participates in God’s Kingdom and an exclusion from this communion means a break of deep ecclesiological, soteriological and even eschatological significance.

For the ancient Church, then, Eucharistic communion was the highest form of conciliarity. Its being the central expression of the unity which existed among the various local Churches throughout the world was bound to lead to the development of a system to regulate the difficulties which arose concerning admission to the eucharistic fellowship. This was essential owing to the fact that:

Communio in the early Church consisted concretely in the unity of faith and sacraments and in certain regulations flowing from them. . . . Since the faith, the sacraments and the juridic rules are the essential elements of the koinonia, they are the criteria which determine the granting or the refusal of communion to an individual believer or to an entire church.
It was because the Eucharist and the communion which stemmed from it was deemed to be so fundamental to the Church that ways had to be found, initially perhaps on an *ad hoc* and informal basis, to regulate the relationships of communion, the conciliar relationships, between the Churches. Thus, Zizioulas is emphatic that it was no accident that the motives of the first councils were directly related to issues of eucharistic communion.33

Because the early Church was centred around the proclamation of the Gospel, which reached its culmination in the eucharistic celebration, it was essential that each Church could see its own faith, the faith of the entire Catholic Church, mirrored in the faith of its neighbouring Churches. Thus, synods which were seemingly concerned with a complex theological issue were not concerned with theological speculation in and for its own sake, but ultimately rather that eucharistic communion might be preserved. Thus, 'Eusebius states clearly that in the case of Montanism and of the Paschal controversy the councils were aiming at the restoration of eucharistic communion.'34

The development of conciliar structures *beyond* the local bishop's council, or presbytery, is a move of fundamental ecclesiological importance, because it created a structure which is 'above' the local Church and which effectively qualified the bishop's authority within his own Church. For Ignatius, the bishop was supreme within his 'diocese', although the pattern of Christian authority is such that he did not rule *over* the other orders of the Church but *with* them. That having been said, his authority was, within these boundaries, absolute. His sentence in judgment was final and excommunication by the bishop was total. Theologically, as icon of Christ, the bishop's role and authority is clear. He sits on his throne in the place of God, surrounded by the presbyterial council whose function, like that of the apostles in whose place they sit, is that of judging (Matt. 19:28).

With the first councils or synods this situation changed. Zizioulas
points out that in making the earlier, somewhat informal arrangements for the holding of provincial synods obligatory, the Council of Nicaea stipulated that they must meet twice-yearly, with the principal aim of dealing with excommunications from the Eucharist. This practice may be understood to derive from the necessity of creating greater uniformity in practice in the face of an increasingly complex situation. Whatever Zizioulas may have to say about the seriousness of excommunication in the earliest communities - and there can be no real doubt that it was seen as being serious indeed - the fact remains that matters were by no means clear-cut. Indeed, in one regard the actual practices of the Church would seem to indicate a lack of concerted conciliar action!

Viewing Tertullian (regarded also by Zizioulas as 'a trustworthy historical source,' as a major authority, for our information on excommunication in the African Church of his day is somewhat better than for earlier periods, Lynch depicts his sources as presenting a picture of the Church as being uniform in its administration of the discipline, with the decisions of one local Church being recognized by the others. For Tertullian, the various churches throughout the world 'are all proved to be one in /unbroken/ unity, by their peaceful communion and title of brotherhood and bond of hospitality.' However, Lynch noted that:

Each church, Tertullian gives the impression, respects the disciplinary decisions of the others. He is apparently the first to indicate that notices of formal excommunication were sent to the neighbouring congregations.... Yet the evidence is slim for any enforcement beyond the local church. The fact that
Marcion, for example, was refused recognition by Polycarp of Smyrna did not hinder his welcome at Rome. At best, excommunication would have no more than a regional significance.40

Thus, because uniformity of recognition of ecclesiastical censure did not, in spite of Zizioulas' affirmations to the contrary, really exist and also because, as in the case of Origen at least, personal animosity could influence an episcopal decision with regard to excommunication, it was necessary to have a check on the practice. This would ensure that, in the first place, those who felt they had been unjustly censured by their bishop could have a court of appeal and secondly, this practice would ensure that such excommunications as were imposed by the Church would be applied throughout the Church and not merely locally.

With the rise of such an institution (and the institutional character is important, for the very reason that the fact that the Church felt impelled towards an institutional form for the exercise of its conciliar nature implies a dissatisfaction with existing, informal expressions - a fact which might cause strict adherents of Khomiakov some unease), the Church was in a new situation, which whilst it may have served as an admirable vehicle for expressing the conciliar nature of the Church, nevertheless contained within itself the seeds of future tensions. With the sporadic inauguration, from the second century, of a local conciliar system we find ourselves in a situation in which it becomes easier to see clearly the truth in the statement that:

Communion (koinonia) and its synonyms agape and eirene were frequently used as designations of the visible reality of the Church in patristic writings. It was at once a sacramental and a juridical reality; sacramental because centred on eucharistic communion, juridical since the granting or denying of communion was in the power of the bishops to decide in accordance with the norms of unity of faith and ecclesiastical government.41
The Council: Ecclesiological Necessity

In his 1968 contribution to an influential Faith and Order document, Zizioulas posed the question, 'Why Councils?' He pointed out that, although the Church is by nature conciliar, it can exist without there being any councils. The Apostolic Church spread the Gospel effectively without, save for the one instance recorded in Acts 15, having felt the necessity of convoking councils, either of an extraordinary or a regular nature. Zizioulas states categorically that:

> the dialogue or communication among the local Churches could have taken forms other than that of a council. In fact, communication between local Churches was always possible through correspondence, exchange of visits, etc. The fact that towards the end of the second century it took the particular form of a bishop's meeting must be attributed to other reasons.\(^42\)

The threat posed by heretical movements such as Gnosticism and Marcionism 'resulted in the formation of the Canon of the Scriptures and in the stress on the concept of the *successio apostolica* as guarantees of orthodoxy.'\(^43\) Yet precisely because something beyond the local community with its traditions was now being appealed to as an authority, 'something common to all the local Churches, and, therefore something that could serve as a basis for dialogue,'\(^44\) there arose the possibility of disagreements between the local Churches breaching that unity which was deemed so essential.

Zizioulas roots the conciliar institution, as a manifestation of the conciliar nature of the Church, firmly within the context of Trinitarian theology. Because the conciliar institution exists primarily as event it cannot take the Christological function which belongs properly to a bishop as head of his local Church, that of *icon Christi*. Rather, our understanding of the council depends on the ecclesiologically *constitutive* role of Pneumatology. It is axiomatic with Zizioulas that Pneumatology implies communion and this has the implication that the Church, as Body of Christ, is by this very fact a conciliar body. More specifically, Zizioulas holds that, The
theological *raison d’être* of conciliarity - or of the institution of the synod - is to be found in the idea that communion ... is an *ontological* category in ecclesiology.'45 This is an insight which has been gaining ground in ecumenical thought in the second half of this century. Aram Keshishian, whose own thought is explicitly indebted to that of Zizioulas, observes that Leslie Newbigin has defined conciliarity on a Trinitarian basis and **within an eschatological perspective**: 

True conciliarity ... seeks to make the universal Church an image of the divine Trinity ... it is a model for our journey ... a pattern of common life ... to which the Church looks forward and towards which it strives in its mission to the world.46

Despite differences of understanding regarding the eschatological nature of the Church (Zizioulas, as an Orthodox, would be more inclined than Newbigin to regard conciliarity as a given and realized reality **within the Church**, though of course entirely dependent upon God), there is a clear affinity here. Zizioulas, too, believes that conciliarity is ‘the form and structure of church unity, and it points at the same time to the final goal of unity as well as the way to this goal.’47

Zizioulas reflects on the Cappadocian understanding of Trinitarian relationships in developing his theological understanding of the expression and exercise of conciliarity. Zizioulas is, here as elsewhere, particularly exercised by their attachment to relational terms, rather than the language of substance. Zizioulas finds this language particularly congenial when applied ecclesiologically. An emphasis on the unity of substance in God, when applied to the Church, tends to a 'universalist ecclesiology' in which unity - all too often interpreted as uniformity - is prized above all. In such an understanding, the local Churches are but parts of the whole and conciliarity is likely to be reduced to an exercise whereby the various parts are kept in adherence to a (centrally determined) specific theological path.48 In contrast, a theology which relies on an emphasis on the conciliar relationships between the Persons,49 when
applied to ecclesiology, will produce a markedly different understanding of the Church.

John Meyendorff reminded us that councils were summoned to settle doctrinal matters in accordance with the common mind of the Church, for ‘nothing in the Church is individual, and everything is done in common; nothing is purely natural and human, but everything is sacramental.’ The unity of the Church lies, it has been said, in doctrinal agreement, although that agreement should also be shown, through love, in a practical manner. Without unity of faith, there can be no true unity at all:

The fullness of the local Church, its very nature as the Church of Christ in a particular place depends primarily on her unity in faith, tradition and life, with the Church everywhere; on her being ultimately the same Church.

For Zizioulas, a synod is ‘an occasion on which the unity among the local churches is discussed, expressed and maintained and it constitutes a basic element in ecclesiology.’ This, Zizioulas states, is an essential act, not an optional one, for the Church, be the councils in the form of local synods or of imperially-convened Ecumenical Councils. Zizioulas believes that there was no compelling external reason for the Church to convene councils. Any compulsion must be internal, that is, reside in the very essence of the Church. In this period of the Church’s history, ‘no local Church could be a Church unless it was open to communion with the rest of the Churches.’

It would be inaccurate to suggest that all Orthodox hold precisely the same views regarding the conciliar institution, despite the fact that all would see it as an essential part of the life of the Church - or, to be more precise, would see the possibility of such conciliar activity as being essential. There have been long periods of the Church’s history when no council actually took place. Even today, conciliar activity does not include the Ecumenical Council, which many would regard as the definitive form of conciliar activity within the life of the Church.
Church. What is affirmed by virtually all Orthodox writers is that the conciliar institution/event is something which is more than an organizational expedient in the life of the Church. It is not merely a form of "government" which is especially suited to a democratically-minded society such as our own. Rather, the council is primarily a church event, and only as such can it possess significance and validity. The councils grew, not from a sense of the need for a democratic framework in which to debate ecclesiastical problems, but from the early Christians' understanding of the very nature of their faith. Ware points out that "In Orthodox ecclesiology a Church council is a renewal of the mystery of Pentecost and a means of grace" - an insight which has important implications.

Councills and Communion

Theologically, if a council is perceived as being a sphere of operations of the Holy Spirit, this indicates that it must, at the same time, be held to be an event which brings about communion, for this is precisely the Pneumatological function. Therefore, the purpose of a council in bringing about or reinforcing communion between the local Churches finds its summit in eucharistic communion. Zizioulas believes that, in examining the pattern of the early Councils, we must look to the example afforded the Church by the model of the local bishop's council. It is this pattern, he believes, which was to have a decisive influence on future developments:

If we study carefully the way conciliarity developed in the first centuries, we realize that the early councils were extensions and even replicas of the way conciliarity was practised in the local church. It was the Ignatian "synedrion episkopou" which was copied and used as a model, not, for example, the Apostolic Council of Acts.

For Zizioulas it is essential that the synodal system should not "imply a tendency towards a pyramidal ecclesial structure but only towards a structure of communion." This can only be avoided, it would appear, if the participants - or at least the voting members - of
the council are representatives or, better, *personifications* of their local Churches. Councils should be seen strictly within the context of the communion of local Churches.60

As conciliarity is the very mode of being of the Church,61 the conciliar institution itself must strive to reflect as perfectly as possible the Trinitarian life upon which conciliarity is founded:

The unity of communion is the sole unity which conforms to the dignity of the persons involved in the union. It is the sole unity which does not subordinate one person to another, or in which the institution is not conceived as something external to or superior to and repressive of the persons involved in it. In the unity of communion persons are united in equality and the institution is the expression of their communion. In the unity of communion structures are communities of persons with identical ministries.62

If, then, the councils are ‘realities grounded theologically and ecclesiologically in the life of the Church’63 and if the nature of the Church, precisely because it is the Pneumatically-constituted Body of Christ, is one of communion, then it would seem to follow that:

The Church is a *life in koinonia* in its full reality and richness of the expression, a participation in Trinitarian communion which constitutes that unity of the body of the incarnate Logos by the empowering force and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.64

Synods or councils were an obvious expression of this sense of the nature of the Church. This was true throughout the age of the Fathers, although the actual *understanding* of the purpose of the synod might differ between Churches and in different ages. Commenting on the ninth century situation, Johan Meijer wrote that:

For the Byzantine bishops the synod was a self-evident reality. A synod, for them, is more than a meeting to *do* something, it is the expression of the Church which meets to express its continuity with the Tradition, with the other great synods.65

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Seeing synods or councils as expressing and safeguarding the communion of all the local Churches, we can appreciate Bulgakov's belief that councils are the external form of the interior unity of spirit which is known as sobornost'. However, that itself serves to pose the question as to the form of the council and the question of its authority. These are questions to which Zizioulas has devoted considerable attention, for they press heavily on the whole issue of the relationships between the various orders within the Church and are hence related to the entire structure of the Church as it is founded upon the Eucharist.

**Members of the Council**

In his understanding of the conciliar institution, be it local synods or an ecumenical Council, Zizioulas is emphatic that its membership must be comprised of bishops and only bishops. There can be no acceptance of any other possibility for him, precisely because this understanding relates directly to his belief in the Eucharistic nature of the Church as Body of Christ. For Zizioulas, 'the main source of Orthodox ecclesiology is basically the Eucharist.' Because of this, 'it is important for the Orthodox not to introduce any structure in the Church which would suppress or damage the integrity of the local Church.' It is due to this necessity that Zizioulas feels warranted in holding that the 'relation between the local and universal church constitutes one of the most fundamental problems in ecclesiology today.'

**Collegiality** has become, particularly since Vatican II, an important concept when considering the conciliar institution, although it is, confusingly, employed in more than one sense. Gillian Evans, drawing on Luke 6.13 and Vatican II's primary ecclesiological text, *Lumen Gentium*, describes it as being 'derived from the brotherhood instituted by Christ among his apostles, and visibly continued among the bishops of the Church in their “college” or brotherhood.' What, then, is the relationship between **conciliarity** and
collegiality? Their intimate relationship can be highlighted and explained as follows:

the first refers to the exercise of consultation in the Church on particular occasions and the second to a continuous common reflection and action, as of those who share their lives in Christ. Thus conciliarity can never be separated from collegiality. All "councils" are episodes in a continuing collegial life. They are meetings in person of those who live in perpetual brotherly fellowship, or of bishops as their representatives. Collegiality has its own dynamics and within them there operate the special dynamics of conciliarity.72

This understanding of the terminology is by no means strictly adhered to by theologians. Thus, whilst Keshishian can state that he uses 'conciliarity' in the sense of conciliar practice and gatherings of the one united Church, he nevertheless refers to the Bristol Meeting of the Faith and Order Commission (1967), which defined conciliarity as 'a constant structure of the Church, a dimension which belongs to its nature.'73 Zizioulas, who was himself a participant in these discussions, has also a strong tendency to use 'conciliarity' in this sense, for we must remember that the Church remains conciliar even at a time when councils are not being held. Furthermore, Keshishian points out that the 1973 Salamanca Consultation of the Faith and Order Commission tried to be more specific in its terminology, stating that it 'does not refer to the councils of divided churches but to the mutual relationships of local Churches within the one Church.'74 Keshishian regards Salamanca's description of conciliarity as largely covering both Protestant and Orthodox views. 'Hence it can rightly be regarded as a first serious attempt at an ecumenical definition of the concept.'75

Given that Zizioulas believes that synods or councils express concretely the communion of all the local Churches in the one Church,76 we must enquire why, for him, it is essential that synods be synods of bishops.77 For Zizioulas, it is a primary datum that synods express the unity of the various local Churches in and through their bishops. The fact that the early Church convened
synods at all, at a time when ecclesiology was still dominated by a sense of the independence of the local Church, is itself an indication that it was considered to be of prime importance. The person of the bishop was decisive:

For in their bishop they had not only an authentic witness to the revelation of Christ, a high-priest to make present and available to them the new life given to the ... but also a guide for the conduct of their lives to hear whom was to hear Christ. The local Church, therefore, was not conceived as an administrative division of a larger whole, but as a whole in itself, a living cell containing the living mystery of the whole Church.78

However, although a whole Church and not a mere part, no local Church was of itself self-sufficient.79 Likewise, the bishops are not isolated individuals but are rather to be seen collegially, for:

Attachment to the apostolic communion binds all the bishops together, linking the episkope of the local Churches to the college of the Apostles. The bishops, too, form a college, rooted by the Spirit in the "once for all" of the apostolic group, the unique witness to the faith. This not only means that they should be united among themselves by faith, charity, mission and reconciliation, but that they have in common the same responsibility and the same service to the Church. Because the one and only Church is made present in his local Church, each bishop cannot separate his care for his own Church from his care for the universal Church. When by the sacrament of ordination he receives the charism of the Spirit for the episkope of one local Church, his own, by that very fact he receives the charism of the Spirit for the episkopé of the entire Church. In the people of God he exercises it in communion with all the bishops who are here and now in charge of Churches and in communion with the living tradition which the bishops of the past have handed on.80

This concern is reflected naturally through the conciliar practice of the Church. It is just because each local Church is a full expression of the whole Church that it is inconceivable that there could be an organization which is superior to the local Eucharistic community. Because of this principle, it is theologically important that synods
are correctly viewed as being 'an expression of the authority of all, not a Highest Authority over all.' The fact that the conciliar institution is exclusively *episcopal* is, affirms Zizioulas, entirely due to the **eucharistic** role of the bishop within his local Church. It was exactly because:

the eucharistic assembly was nothing less than "the ecclesia of God," and the *koinonia* of it the realization of the Church’s unity in each place, [then] the head of this assembly was automatically understood as the centre of all unity in that particular Church.

Zizioulas points out that The first such "assemblies of bishops" appeared about A.D. 190 because of the paschal controversy and of Pope Victor’s insistence on excommunicating the Christians of Asia Minor for their celebration of Easter on a different day.

At around the same time similar councils of bishops were being held in Palestine, Pontus, Corinth and elsewhere. Because these councils do not appear until the end of the second century there is no way of assessing what might have been the composition had they taken place two or three generations earlier. By this time it was the case that the pattern of monepiscopacy had spread throughout the Church. However, this does not mean that there was no alternative possibility regarding conciliar composition. The very fact that the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II, in a letter summoning bishops to a council in order to define the faith in the face of the teachings of Nestorius, argued that only bishops have the right to speak and vote in a council is in itself a telling fact. Had this been an accepted, self-evident fact, there would have been little need to make such a statement at all.

As the bishop is head of the local Church, which is a **complete** Church and not a mere sub-division, only bishops may be full participants in the council. This is because they participate, not as sacred individuals, but precisely as **heads of their local eucharistic communities**:
The fact that in this case again it was the bishop that became essentially the sole participant in the councils should be seen in the light of his position in the community and not in terms of individual authority.85

The council, as event of communion, is to be understood primarily as communion between Churches rather than between bishops in and for their own sake. The bishops are the participants because they bear within themselves their own Churches. We are once more in the midst of Zizioulas' key concept, the mystery of 'the "One" and the "Many"'. Herein lies the very reason why it is not possible for bishops other than diocesan bishops to vote in synod. Zizioulas forcefully observes that:

"This condition speaks loudly for the fact that a bishop is not a member of a council in himself but as the head of a community. To deprive someone who is in all respects a "bishop" except in not heading a community, would be absurd had it not been for the interpretation we are giving here, namely that a bishop participates in a council only as the head of his community.86"

Underlying this view is an acceptance of opinions to the effect that the bishops are 'a collective body uniting the various eucharistic communities.'87 It thus becomes essential that these bishops be the heads of actual communities.

We see here a synthesis between the Christological and the Pneumatological understandings of ministry. The bishop is only alter Christus insofar as he is a pneumatological, and hence relational, person. He is made a bishop, a successor of the apostles and the living icon of Christ precisely through an act of the Holy Spirit, in ordination. At one and the same time he is incorporated into a Christological body, the episcopal college and also brought into a living relationship with the People of God in a specific place. He therefore can only exist as a member of the collegial body insofar as he exists in relationship to his ecclesial, eucharistic community, which is the fullness of the Body of Christ.
It is this Pneumatological dimension, alive within the Orthodox Churches if not always properly understood or applied, which makes it essential that the bishop is comprehended only in relationship to his community. For Zizioulas, 'the chartisma vertitatis of the bishop is not an individual possession transmitted through ordination but is tied up with the entire community.'

Zizioulas' belief that only bishops who are heads of eucharistic communities should have voting participation in council is shared by Afanasiev. Unlike Zizioulas, Afanasiev was, despite being initially a canonist, deeply suspicious of the conciliar institution. Aidan Nichols aptly summarizes Afanasiev's position with regard to the conciliar institution:

he felt obliged to downplay those elements in the patristic doctrine of the Church which drew attention at once to her universal, or unitary, and organizationally (and not only sacramentally) ordered nature - a reference to, above all, the conciliar institution. In order to present the Church as fundamentally a local, and Eucharistic reality, Afanas'ev counterpoised an Ignatian (sound) to a Cyprianic (unsound) tradition of ecclesiological thinking among the fathers, thus abandoning in practice the traditional Orthodox (and Catholic) appeal to a consensus patrum.

Despite his reservations about the conciliar institution per se, Afanasiev could not but help dealing with it. He is at one with Zizioulas in his belief that only diocesan bishops are eligible to vote, and that for the same reasons:

he asserts that the bishops were never considered as representatives of their Churches. Rather, they are present at the Councils as the ones who preside in their local Church. The bishops are present as the presidents of the eucharistic assembly and in them the Church is present.

The bishops therefore participate in council as being bearers of the responsibility for Church unity. Zizioulas believes that, in opting for episcopal synods the Church was expressing a fundamental
principle:

The importance of this lies in the fact that in experiencing conciliarity through the bishops the Church reinforced the link between conciliarity and eucharistic communion and at the same time underlined the fact that conciliarity does not exhaust itself with certain *ipso jure* appointed participants of a council, but reaches the very depths of the ecclesial event, i.e. the community of the Church herself.92

However, does this principle necessarily imply a purely episcopal system? Despite Zizioulas' powerfully stated argument, I would suggest that, in contemporary ecclesial practice, it need - and ought - not. Rather, the collegial responsibility of all members of the Church in a democratic age surely demands that on all levels there be a degree of common decision-making, expressed through elected representatives, having considerable rights of participation in the government of the Church93

The experience of many Western Churches with synodical forms of government may indicate a way ahead for both Orthodox and Roman Churches. As early as the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, when the question of conciliarity in the Anglican Church came under discussion, it was argued, in relation to diocesan synods (which the reporting committee held to be the primary, as well as the simplest, form of council), that there should be representatives of the laity in attendance:

> It is not at variance with the ancient principles of the Church, that both Clergy and Laity should attend the diocesan Synod ... it is expedient that the Synod should consist of the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese, with Representatives of the Laity.94

In itself, this is of no great import, for an 'attending' but non-voting laity has ample precedent. In Cyprian's day, for example, both laity and lower clergy were present at synods, presumably in a non-voting capacity.95 However, it has been argued that, contrary to much received opinion - including Zizioulas' own conclusions:
Historical studies on the participation of lay persons at general and regional councils or synods in the Church have shown that, contrary to popular understanding, often lay consultants not only were present but enjoyed voting rights. It is hard to see how, on the one hand, one can argue that the local bishop should be selected by the laity and clergy of the diocese (local eucharistic community), whilst at the same time arguing for an exclusively episcopal composition of a synod, be it regional or ecumenical in nature. Moreover, given that Zizioulas makes much of the local bishop’s council, there would seem to be few arguments against, at the least, the lower clergy participating in synod. In truth, given the fact that there has, as Zizioulas readily admits, been a fundamental change in the structure of the local Church through the development of a parochial structure, there could be said to be a real theological demand that this occurs.

The parish priest now finds himself in much the same position as the early bishop. It is he who is the normal celebrant of the eucharist and hence leader of the community, the one in whom the unity of the local Church finds its expression. True, he cannot ordain (and in contemporary Roman Catholic and Orthodox practice this is the only sacramental difference between priest and bishop), and relies on the bishop for his permission to function as a priest, but nevertheless remains, for the parish, the centre of local eucharistic and sacramental life. This being so, it would seem appropriate that the parish clergy be admitted as full voting members of a council. This is especially the case in an age when actual dioceses are frequently vast, with many people rarely if ever even meeting their bishop.

A like argument may be made for voting rights being given as of right to suffragan bishops. These have come into existence as a practical necessity, owing to the pressures brought about by large dioceses. Ideally, of course, there would be smaller dioceses and no suffragans, but reality is, at least for the present, otherwise. The fact is a
suffragan does have responsibility for a eucharistic community, even if it is under the diocesan’s responsibility. An analogy may perhaps be suggested between this situation and that of a metropolitan and his diocesans. This insight, that there is, after all, an existential relationship between the local eucharistic community and a suffragan bishop, who receives in his ordination the ‘title’ of an area within the bounds of his senior colleague’s diocese, means that it is perfectly possible that a council could permit voting prerogatives to suffragans as of right. In this way it would still be true to say, with Zizioulas, that the synod, ‘can avoid being an institution imposed on the local church, but will rather be an expression of the unity of the local churches, not simply of bishops.’

Returning to the concept of a Christic-Pneumatological synthesis, we can detect the possibility of a serious imbalance in the application of this insight with regard to conciliar practice. The ordained ministry, as Christological, institutional element in the Church’s composition, remains in a dominant position in Zizioulas’ schema. This is in spite of what he has to say regarding the laity’s role in the reception of conciliar decisions. The only way in which a true complimentarity can occur between hierarchy and laity, between the Christological and the Pneumatological, is for the Church to construct a conciliar system in which the Christological is conditioned by the Pneumatological at the very moment of its conception. Failure to do this will inevitably lead, in spite of protestations to the contrary, to a system in which the laity are subjected to the hierarchy, and put in the invidious position of having to ‘receive’ conciliar decisions in which they had no part in producing.

The weak point in Zizioulas’ approach is that whilst it secures for the bishop his rightful place as head of the local Church, it fails to ensure an adequate degree of true collegiality between all orders of the Church. Certainly the bishops should have the leadership within the Church, both on the local level and in the wider context, for that is their function, derived from their eucharistic leadership. However, precisely because ‘the liturgical acts are performed by the
head of the Church with the con-celebration of the laity, it is essential that they have their proper role in the government of the Church. Afanasiev succinctly expresses a common Orthodox position in teaching that:

The people does not govern itself nor instruct itself; it is governed and instructed by its pastor, in accordance with the will of God who gave the work of the ministry. Since they do not possess the gifts of government or of teaching, the faithful cannot be co-ministers of the bishop in the sphere of government and teaching.

This is, of course, not to say that the laity are entirely passive in these fields, just as they are not passive in the eucharistic liturgy. Their participation is, however, expressed in an altogether different way. The teaching role of the bishops-in-council is specifically directed at the preservation of the Apostolic Tradition in the face of actual or potential deviations, thereby preserving unity of faith and communion in the eucharistic mysteries. Yet this need not necessarily demand that the laity’s role be that of those who ‘receive’ episcopal teaching, for:

this tradition might be preserved equally well if not better through an organisation of Christian community where each member shares in the joy of witnessing to the presence of God’s Spirit in their midst by being actively involved in the ... praxis of the community .... Centralism as a principle of organisation does not guarantee the integrity of the gospel any better than a truly community based form of organisation; in fact it may well be that the latter form will bring ... congregations to a new life, as can be witnessed already in South America and elsewhere, where Christian communities have successfully retrieved their own spiritual and organisational dignity.

Orthodox Churches are not necessarily opposed to the laity having full voting rights in council. This is particularly true of the Russian Church. At the start of the century, in 1905-1906, during consultations on possible reforms in the Russian Church, proposals were put forth to give voting rights to representatives of both lower clergy and laity in a renewed Synod - a suggestion seemingly favoured
by the majority of bishops. Although non-theological factors, not least of which was the brief but refreshing waft of openness and liberalism which was felt, like the coming of spring throughout Russia in that year, cannot be dismissed as having no influence on this change of direction, nevertheless it was the first stirrings of a deep theological quickening which was chiefly responsible.

The Orthodox Church in America has made a move in this field which would be warmly applauded by Zizioulas but which may elsewhere be viewed as a retrograde step with regard to the attainment of a synthesis between the Christological and the Pneumatological in the government of the People of God. The American Metropolitinate of the Russian Orthodox Church, which was the precursor of the present Orthodox Church of America, had, at the 1924 Detroit Sobor (Convention), opted for ‘temporary autonomy’ in the light of the post-1917 political situation in Russia. In 1955 it adopted a statute for its government - which had been in preparation since the Detroit resolution. This statute reflected faithfully the principles laid down for the 1917-18 Moscow Council, insofar as it provides for representation of all levels of the Church, hierarchy, lower clergy and laity. However, this approach has been criticized because ‘the Council’s peculiar way of combining the idea of sobornost, an infatuation with schemes for representative democracy, and an ecclesiology of the Highest Authority makes its ecclesiology ambiguous.’ Despite this criticism, I would suggest that, far from being a fault in the application of ecclesiological principles, such an approach could be interpreted as being a bold attempt at integrating, and making mutually constitutive the Christological and the Pneumatological, even if the attempt was not entirely successful.

Orthodox eucharistic ecclesiologists from Afanasiev on, including John Zizioulas, would stress the episcopal nature of the conciliar institution, whether on a local or an ecumenical basis. Meyendorff has contended that episcopal composition of councils is demanded in a sound ecclesiology, whilst acknowledging the fact that, where
local conciliarity does not properly exist, another, albeit temporary, expedient is possible:

But were the principles of democratic "representation" of the episcopate, the clergy, and the laity, as distinct "classes" of Christians, truly adequate from the ecclesiological point of view? Does not the early Christian church structure - small dioceses, local eucharistic conciliarity of the bishop and the presbyterium, full lay responsibility in the life of the local eucharistic community - imply that provincial and "ecumenical" councils are councils of bishops alone? However, since "local conciliarity" does not exist, is not sobornost at the higher level - provincial or ecumenical - a valid (though possibly temporary) substitute?105

In 1971, on gaining autocephaly, the Church, now known as the Orthodox Church of America, redrafted its statutes, retaining its representational character, although in a modified form in which conciliarity at the diocesan level is emphasised. Effectively, this has reduced the voice of the laity, at least their direct voice, whilst enhancing that of the diocesan bishops.

My own position would be that it would be desirable, both practically and theologically, to give permanent expression to this form of conciliarity through a synodal structure in which the laity play their full part, perhaps as in contemporary Anglican practice. This is not to argue that the laity have an intrinsic right to teach authoritatively. Teaching offices:

are part of the structure of the people; within the people all do not have the same function. In the Church functions are ministries; and ministries are services designed to make the people act effectively in accordance with the Gospel. It is the witness it bears to Christ which makes the people specifically the people of God .... All do not have the same ministry: it would be an abuse of language to say that the people has the office of teacher, pastor and so on. There are believers among the people to perform these functions with greater or lesser authority according to the legal definition of their task.106
Ultimately, whatever one believes about the essential role of the laity in receiving the teachings of the Church, one is hard pressed to see how any valid reception can occur without the presence of all Orders of the Church in the concrete decision-making process. Far from being a denial of the Eucharistic basis of the Church, this may most satisfactorily be attained in precisely the Eucharistic context advocated by those such as Zizioulas and have the merit of combining, in a visible and tangible manner, the Christological and Pneumatological elements of the Body of Christ. Zizioulas is, however, correct to assert that a synod should comprise, as full members, all the bishops of the region, with the proviso that:

When this is impossible for practical reasons, ... either a system of rotation or some form of authorization on the part of the bishops that cannot take part should be applied. In no case other than external force of circumstances should a particular diocesan bishop be excluded from such a synod or conference.¹⁰⁷

This allowance for circumstances is historically very important. In no case did a Roman Pope ever attend an Ecumenical Council, but would customarily be represented through his legates, who would, in the absence of their bishop, preside over the Council's deliberations. Moreover, no Council ever included all the bishops of the Church.¹⁰⁸

Whilst accepting the force of Zizioulas' view that bishops attend councils not in a personal capacity but as heads of their local Churches,¹⁰⁹ I am not persuaded by his opinion that this eucharistic vision of the Church precludes those other than diocesan bishops from full membership of the Council. On the contrary, I suggest that lower clergy and laity can and should represent their local eucharistic communities in addition to, although not instead of, their bishop. Only in such a way is it ultimately possible to combine all the elements of the Church within a viable Christic-Pneumatological synthesis.
Collegiality and Council

Eucharistic ecclesiology performs an invaluable service in restoring an emphasis to the local Church, the local eucharistic community, as being the local manifestation of the whole Church. Collegiality is basic to such a body, for although each local community is fully Church, none can exist in isolation, without the others. Yet it is this very status of each local Church as being fully Church which prevents, or should prevent, the Church basing its structures of communion on pyramidal concepts of power and authority. How, then, may the collegial nature of the Churches and their episcopal leadership be best expressed?

The 'communion' between local Churches, be they large or small, 'in the person of their bishop preceded the appearance of Councils and was one of the basic reasons for their inauguration.' However, precisely because of the eucharistic nature of the Church, 'Neither the New Testament, nor the early Christian tradition and practice knew any formally defined organization of the Church above the level of the local eucharistic community.' The unity of the Church had, of course, long been expressed in a variety of ways before formal synods or councils appeared on the scene, but once the Church resorted to councils they became, in a very short time, to be seen as the preeminent way in which the collegiality of the Church was manifested.

Although local synods predated the time of Cyprian, it was nevertheless he who had an important role in their development. Probably it was the controversy over the treatment of those who had lapsed under persecution which impelled Cyprian to see in the council a means whereby questions which affected a number of the local Churches could be settled on a basis which could be applied to all the local communities, thereby ensuring consistency of approach. In commenting on this situation, Hinchliff remarks that:

Constitutional and canonical authority was probably not thought out at that early date. Each bishop was a
person of weight, and possessed authority in his own church. If they met together they could hope to arrive at a common mind. This could be expressed in a written document as the decision of the gathering. It would possess the moral authority of the collective assent of the bishops. Much of what Cyprian said later about the nature of the bishops as the bond of unity of the Church is really quite simply giving expression to some de facto natural process such as this.\textsuperscript{112}

Zizioulas himself acknowledges the influence of Cyprian in the appearance of a theology:

not singly of the bishop, as it had happened earlier, but of the corpus episcoporum understood as a college representing the unity of the Church in the way perhaps the senate represented the one Roman Empire. As this theology gradually dominated the entire Western Church and with the help of Constantine’s ascent to the imperial throne, this parallelism of the unity of the Church with the unity of the Empire - a parallelism which in the east took the form of an identification of the two by some circles at least - found expression in the convocation of Ecumenical Councils. Thus the ecumenical vision of the Early Church was for the first time expressed through a special conciliar structure.\textsuperscript{113}

At the same time as the Ecumenical Councils became a reality, that is, at the start of the fourth century, the Church, believes Zizioulas, was going through a dramatic change in its character, via the creation of the parochial system. In this change, the Church moved from a conciliar understanding of the eucharistic celebration, in which the bishop was surrounded by the presbyterial college, to one in which a solitary presbyter presided. Zizioulas notes that:

in this situation it became necessary to seek the catholicity of the Church outside the eucharistic gathering (e.g. in a universal structure or in non-eucharistic activities) and thus to deprive the eucharist of its eschatological and ecclesiological dimensions and reduce it to a “means of grace”, one sacrament among many. Whether the changes ... in the understanding and practice of episcopacy brought about these theological developments or the other way around, it is difficult to say.\textsuperscript{114}
Zizioulas, then, sees a correlation between the rise in the importance of conciliar institutions and the gradual demise of the old Ignatian understanding of the ecclesiological, collegial, dimensions of the Eucharist.

**Regional Conciliarity**

Beyond the purely local 'bishop's council' of the presbyterate, the first forms of conciliar activity were, as one would expect, regional. The definition of 'regional' might vary: sometimes, the 'council' would involve just a few bishops from a small area, perhaps gathered for the consecration of a new bishop, who would meet to discuss mutual problems. At other times, the council might be a more formal affair, numbering many bishops from the civil province, with a predetermined agenda. Indeed, it was only a matter of time before these initially irregular, somewhat *ad hoc* arrangements became more formalized.

Theologically, the synods or councils express the interdependence of formally independent local eucharistic communities on each other. The bishop, particularly when sitting in synod with his brother bishops, is the bond of communion uniting the concrete local Church with all the other Churches. For Zizioulas, these local conciliar events are not an optional extra in the life of the Church. The Church cannot merely rely on Ecumenical Councils, by-passing the necessity for these smaller, multitudinous gatherings, for:

> The pneumatological dimension of ecclesiology necessitates a church structure combining unity and diversity at the same time. A universalist or pyramidal ecclesiology risks sacrificing diversity for the sake of unity. In a pneumatic ecclesiology the "one and the many" exist independently, and this is impossible outside a canonical system in which synods at all levels complete and correct one another.

Zizioulas also notes that it would appear to be a requirement of a
truly incarnational Christology that the various peoples which make up the Church should have the opportunity to formulate and express the Faith in ways which are culturally appropriate and meaningful to them. Of necessity, this must mean that the conciliar structures which exist to serve these ends must be local in character.\textsuperscript{117}

As a means of checking the Tradition in the Churches, local councils were of decisive importance, especially as allied to what Zizioulas understands as their original purpose of regulating eucharistic communion between the various local Churches. Meyendorff suggests that, with regard to the consensus of the local Churches in the Faith, 'The most logical and immediate way of checking such a consensus, at least partially, was the provincial council.'\textsuperscript{118}

Such was the perceived importance of the regional council that, at Nicaea (Canon 5), the Fathers decreed that these local or regional councils, hitherto held on an informal basis, were now to be convened twice, or by later decision (III Constantinople, Canon 8; II Nicaea, Canon 6), once a year.\textsuperscript{119} These were to be convened for the precise purpose of regulating excommunications in the Church:

The main object of these synods would be to examine the excommunications pronounced by the bishops of the province, and to ascertain that this ecclesiastical censure was not launched "by narrowness of mind, by pertinacity, or any other vice of a bishop." The assembly of provincial bishops, after examination, was to make the sentence of excommunication definitive, provided the assembly, or the bishop who had originally pronounced the sentence, had not decided to impose a milder sentence.\textsuperscript{120}

This canonical provision has a fundamental ecclesiological importance. For the first time, it institutionalizes an authority over or beyond the local eucharistic community, thereby externally limiting the power of the bishop within his own Church. Zizioulas believes that this transition from the purely local 'bishop's council' to the regional episcopal synod, which developed via the meeting of the local bishops for the purpose of ordaining a fellow bishop, was
carried through at the expense of the former. Zizioulas is adamant that this clearly implies that:

the authority of the single bishop was no longer ultimate with respect to the ecclesiastical status of a member of his own Church. The catholicity and fulness of the local Church was no longer the background of the councils. The establishment of permanent provincial councils held twice a year and acting as higher courts of appeal for excommunicated Christians, did not simply mean another type of council. It represented at the same time a new ecclesiological concept, leading directly to a “universal” Church organization in which the particular Churches were understood as mutually completed parts.

Despite the hostility to this conciliar form from the likes of Afanasiev, it is unlikely that the Church could have escaped going down this avenue, especially at a time when it was not only growing rapidly but also facing renewed theological troubles. It is no accident that these procedures were given canonical expression at precisely the time of the Arian controversy, when the necessity for structural forms of communion was becoming acute. Zizioulas makes no real mention of this possibility. Whilst he does allow some scope for the influence of non-theological factors, not least with regard to the actual structure and procedures of the conciliar institutions, it is my belief that he could give more regard to the influence of such factors on the development of ecclesial structures.

However, although these conciliar institutions, and they are institutions, proved to be of great value to the Church, not only in providing means to combat deviant teaching within the Church and a court of appeal for individuals and local Churches alike, but also in giving visible expression to the essential, collegial nature of the Church, there were, nevertheless, dangers to the basic eucharistic and eschatological understanding of the Church. Meyendorff, whilst agreeing with Zizioulas’ thesis that, ‘The koinonia of the eucharistic gathering constituted the ground on which conciliarity found its “raison d’être,”’ nevertheless points out that the very prominence of these regional synods meant that:
Once “institutionalized” this regular episcopal conciliarity ran the danger of obliterating the very principle of ecclesiology on which it was based. ... This was inevitable since the provincial council tended to act as an authority over the local churches and over individual bishops.125

Allied to this was the fact that Roman legal procedures started being used. Canon 6 of Nicaea, for example, sanctions the principle of majority vote. This was not, according to Zizioulas, strictly a new thing. With reference to the Sententiae episcoporum of the Council of Carthage of 256, he notes that the procedure followed closely resembles that of the Roman Senate.126 Whilst not denying secular influence here, the fact remains that this was in no way seen as being inimical to the collegial and theological expression of the nature of the Church. Had it been so, we might reasonably have expected to find some opposition to it. It is therefore instructive to note that the Persian Church, which in no way formed a part of the Church of the Roman Empire, and which existed in a very different political atmosphere, was happy to adopt the conciliar system. The organization of this owed much to Marutha, the bishop of Maferkat in Asia Minor, who went as ambassador of Theodosius III to Persia in 410. However, even there, the expression of episcopal collegiality predated Marutha’s arrival.127

As manifestations of the renewed understanding of the collegial, conciliar nature of the Church, the emergence of national and regional councils of Churches, as exemplified in the revival of pan-Orthodox conferences, Roman Catholic episcopal conferences and so on, they point to the renewal of conciliar life in the Church.128 Zizioulas believes, however, that, These regional synods should have authority on all matters, including doctrine, for it is mainly in matters of doctrine that expression of cultural diversity is evident and necessary.129 It is noteworthy that, for the Orthodox as indeed for the Roman Church, local councils, even if they be numerically very small, can nevertheless be as much vehicles of the operation of the Holy Spirit as large ‘Ecumenical’ councils. The example of the Council of Orange of 529 is pertinent. There, only fourteen bishops
were in attendance, yet their doctrinal decisions were accepted, or 'received,' by the Church as a whole.

The Ecumenical Council

In the first part of the fourth century the Church, under the direct influence of Constantine the Great, saw the first of the Ecumenical Councils. In convoking the Council of Nicaea, Constantine is seen by Zizioulas as drawing on an image of the Church as Christ's empire on earth. Yet in spite of the obvious secular influence, Zizioulas affirms that:

such a parallelism was ... implied in the conciliar structures of St. Cyprian's time. Constantine did nothing but accept this idea and apply it to his relations with the Church. Whenever there was an appeal to him by the Christians, as it happened in the case of the Donatist party, he saw a way out through asking the bishops to form a court - something parallel to the Roman tribunals - which actually took the form of a concilium to judge in persona Christi.

Zizioulas notes that, although political considerations certainly influenced the appearance of the Ecumenical Council, nevertheless there was an explicit theological dimension present; for the Catholic Church having always had an ecumenical perspective, for:

behind her growing concern for conciliar life in the first centuries we should not fail to recognize the feeling that through the differences and the disagreements of her members totum orbem paene vastatum, because those differences were considered to belong "not to a small number or to a single Church or to a single province, but to the entire world." It is with this ecumenical vision that even decisions of provincial councils were taken and announced . . . . But this ecumenical vision was never expressed in concrete forms before the fourth century. It is with the appearance of the Ecumenical Council that this vision was expressed through a special conciliar action.
For Zizioulas, as for Orthodox in general, the Ecumenical Council is not an 'institution' but an 'event'. It is, he believes, a later Western approach which sees in them a dimension of an institutional 'machinery,' whereas the Orthodox view them as being ad hoc events. Precisely because the Council did not possess an institutional character, Zizioulas feels impelled to seek its ecumenicity in 'the eucharistically conditioned episcopate' and on its recognition a posteriori.

This points to a crucial question: by what criteria may a council be called truly ecumenical? This is a question to which Zizioulas and other writers in this field are very much alive. Zizioulas would see two basic preconditions: first, that of the convocation of the bishops as bearing within their persons their local eucharistic communities in their faithfulness to the gospel; secondly, the Council must be acknowledged as such by the Church at large, in what is known as a process of reception.

Classically, in order for a council to be considered ecumenical, it had to be convoked by order of the Emperor. However, this was not in itself sufficient to ensure ecumenicity, nor was the attendance of a great number of bishops, although it was characteristic of the councils to try to ensure as great an attendance as possible. More theologically, most Orthodox would traditionally require that only a Council which had formulated a dogmatic decision can be considered as being ecumenical.

As the organ of episcopal sobornost', the Council cannot be considered as an institution above the Church but rather is the 'highest form' of conciliarity of the Church. This is important for Zizioulas, for the reason that there is nothing higher in the Church than the local eucharistic Body of Christ, which is fully Church. Although the Orthodox traditionally place great stress on the Ecumenical Councils, they are nevertheless not to be conceived of as being 'parliaments of bishops.' On the contrary, they are very rare events, with most Orthodox counting only seven in the history of the
Church The Councils are to be considered, rather, as charismatic events. As such, the council is to be seen as a renewal of Pentecost and is thus, definitively, an event of communion, both between God and humanity and between man and his fellows. A council, as manifestation of the eschatological gathering of the whole Church of God, can be described as being nothing less than:

the Christian communion . . . present in the local and universal church as the divine communion is present in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and as the theandric communion is present in the God-man, Jesus.140

However, although this is in accordance with Zizioulas’ own key concept of ‘the “One” and the “many,’” it fails to give us a complete understanding of the nature of an ecumenical, or indeed a local, council.

Zizioulas believes that the relationship between Christ and the Church may be described in terms of the mystery of ‘the “One” and the “many.”’ This leads him to posit a close relationship, in fact, virtually a coincidence of identity, between Christ and his Body. The one becomes inconceivable without the other. Likewise, within the local Church, it is impossible to understand the head of the community, the bishop, as an individual. Rather, he is only to be seen, precisely because through the eucharist, he is alter Christus - the living icon of the incarnate Son of God himself, as existing in relationship with his community. Relationship is here an - one might say the - ontological category. In council, the bishops, again only as heads of their eucharistic communities and not as sacred individuals, express the unity and collegiality of the Church. As Cyprian put it, ‘Episcopatus unus est, cutus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur’ - ‘The episcopate is one, of which each bishop holds his part in its totality.’141 ‘Each bishop exercises his ministry with the other bishops because his ministry is identical to that of the others and the Church is one.’142

A difficulty with conciliarity as conceived by Zizioulas lies in the use
of his concept of corporate personality applied to the Church in its bishops. For Zizioulas, conciliarity is 'born out of the Church's belief that eucharistic communion in a certain community is a matter that concerns all communities in the world.' It is essential to Zizioulas' conception of corporate personality that what affects one member affects all the others. This lies at the very root of the means whereby the salvation which Christ brings is appropriated by us in baptism. With regard to the conciliar institution, we are impelled to ask whether we are dealing with a form of corporate personality at all, as might initially appear.

Zizioulas stated, in 1969, that episcopal collegiality 'does not represent a collective unity, but a unity in identity.' However, McPartlan succinctly notes that, with regard to 'the "One" and the "many":'

\[
\text{this "one" must be present in the same manner as the many, such that, for instance, the central presence of Christ, the "one", in the eucharistic gathering is not the eucharistic elements, but the bishop, who stands as a human being among human beings.}
\]

Our problem, therefore, is that if the 'one' which holds together in a corporate personality is to be thought of as the conciliar institution/event itself, be it local or ecumenical, then we are in the situation where Zizioulas' scheme of 'the "One" and the "many"' must ultimately fail. This is so precisely because, in this case, the 'one' is not present in the same way as the bishops, the 'many' are present. Thus, this difficulty must point towards a solution which may be found in a personal 'one' - a solution which will lead us to the very cutting edge of Zizioulas' thinking and which places him ahead of many other Orthodox thinkers.

**Council and Authority**

the bishops assembled in council, representing the whole Church, and engaged on matters within the province of
infallibility, in their own right and by virtue of their office and position, constitute the organ for the infallible formulation of the Church's Faith. Their decisions are irrefromable and of themselves infallible, and not from the acceptance of these enactments by the Church.\textsuperscript{146} 

Until very recently, this was the position taken by very many Orthodox theologians, particularly in Greece and those other Churches not already heavily influenced by the Russian theology of\textit{sobornost'}. It has a beguiling simplicity and attractiveness. As councils are events of the Holy Spirit, it is he who works in them, bringing the bishops to a consensus in the Faith which, being the expression of Truth itself, is irrefromable and infallible. The fact that sections of the Church, even if they be quite substantial, may fail to accept these decisions does not in the least affect their authenticity and infallibility. This is closely in accord with Roman Catholic teaching on conciliar infallibility:

\begin{quote}
“... The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium”, above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through her supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine “for belief as being divinely revealed”, and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions “must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.” This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.\textsuperscript{147}
\end{quote}

However, Orthodox ecclesiological thinking has changed considerably over the last three or four decades. John Zizioulas has departed considerably from this 'older' approach, believing it to be at variance with a eucharistically-based patristic comprehension of ecclesial authority. The quotations above imply that the Council is a structure which is both exterior and superior to the local Church. We have already noted how the early regional synods tended to acquire an authority over the local Church, beginning with its ability to confirm or abrogate sentences of excommunication imposed by one of its episcopal members. Not unnaturally, particularly with the post-Constantinian accommodation to the imperial legislative
system, the conciliar institutions, both regional and ecumenical, tended to increasingly acquire greater importance and authority.

The question of the authority of councils has had a long history in both East and West. Today, with the contemporary ecumenical movement making increasing efforts at reconciliation and reunification between the various separated Christian bodies, it continues to be of major importance. Allied to this is the problem of the relative powers of hierarchy and laity in the definition of Christian truth.

Zizioulas is fully cognizant with the fact that, for many Orthodox, the Council remains the highest authority. Yet for Zizioulas it is a theological requirement that all authority in the Church is the product of the event of communion: 'Authority in the Church is a product of communion, for the Church herself is in her essence an event of communion.' This is therefore as relevant to conciliar authority as it is to strictly episcopal authority. According to Zizioulas, the early councils, whether regional or ecumenical, were not conceived of as being an institution or superstructure over the local eucharistic communities:

The synods never became in the early Church a superstructure over and above the local communities, and for this reason they never acquired authority in themselves: they always had to be received by the communities in order to be fully valid.

Zizioulas, of course, is by no means original in stating this. Fundamental to the whole approach taken by Khomiakov in his theology of sobornost' is the belief that truth in the Church is not the product of a de jure infallible organ. Although, strangely enough, Khomiakov did not discuss the synodal form of government with regard to the contemporary Russian situation, he is emphatic, in his treatment of ecclesiastical authority, that there is no other criterion of Christian teaching than the mutual love of Christians. As, for Zizioulas, it is essential that 'in every respect the Church decides and acts in an authoritative way only through an event of
we should consider carefully how the conciliar event is viewed as facilitating this exercise of authority in such a manner.

Afanasiev viewed Cyprian of Carthage as being, in a very real sense, the harbinger of a ‘universalist’ ecclesiology which he deplored. Afanasiev based his views on an interpretation a crucial passage in Letter 55: ‘The one Church throughout the whole world is divided into many members.’ Nichols informs us that, ‘For Cyprian this means, according to Afanas’ev, that the single Christian Church, Christ’s body, exists, in its empirical aspect, by being parcelled out into distinct “church communities”, tserkownie obschiny.’ It was a logical step from such an approach to one in which the bishops of the oikoumene were seen as being greater than the individual bishop and thus the ‘council of the bishops’ as possessing authority over its members.

Zizioulas, however, points out that Cyprian himself did not believe that the council possessed legal authority over its members. Zizioulas insists that ‘For him the authority of a council was moral and each bishop remained always directly responsible to God for his own community.’ This is precisely because, for the early Church, of which Cyprian was very much a part, it was inconceivable that there should be a structure outside or above the local eucharistic community. Today, however, things are not quite so simple. Zizioulas poses the problem thus:

The synodical institution is one of the most complex ecclesiological and canonical problems of Orthodox theology. For it is not yet clear to what extent synods constitute a structure and an authority above the local bishops and Churches. To what extent, for example, can a synod order a bishop how to govern his diocese? Many Orthodox synods tend to issue encyclicals and directives touching upon internal affairs of a bishop’s diocese as if these synods formed a “higher” authority within the Church. Some Orthodox theologians even speak of the Synod as the highest authority in the Church, thus creating a hierarchy which has the diocese at the bottom and on top of it the regional synod culminating with the Ecumenical Council. Does a council or synod constitute
In delivering a resounding 'no' to this question, Zizioulas is consciously appealing to an understanding of the Church which is expressly eucharistic and local. There can be nothing over the local Church because the local Church is itself the fullness of the Body of Christ, and how can there be any structure over Christ's Body? Zizioulas actually, and this is important with regard to his position vis-a-vis that of Afanasiev, incarnates this in the person of the bishop himself. It is the person of the bishop and not merely the fact of the eucharistic celebration which ensures the authenticity and ecclesiological reality of the local community's existence as Church:

Ecclesiologically there is nothing higher than a bishop in the Church; he is . . . alter Christus and alter apostolus. Communions at a universal level can neither bypass nor subject the bishop; they can only take place through him.

This approach need not be placed in any jeopardy by the inclusion of representative parish clergy and laity, provided this be in conjunction with the bishops. Be that as it may, Zizioulas is here being thoroughly consistent in that it is not merely an event which is made the focus of communion but a relationship. Here, the relationship is that which exists between bishop and local community which enables the bishop to do more than merely represent this community in Council, but rather personify it.

Zizioulas stands in the tradition of eucharistic ecclesiology which has had some practical influence on the structural organization of the Orthodox Churches. It is no coincidence that this approach which is exemplified in Zizioulas' thought, i.e., the independence of the local Church from control by a supra-local synod, has influenced the structural reorganization of the OCA in the last few decades.

Zizioulas suggests that the fact that a council or synod should - and indeed does - have the right to regulate the affairs of a diocese
insofar as they affect the other Churches, in no way infringes the ecclesiological independence of the local Church. He cites Canon 5 of Nicaea, which justifies the practice of synodal control of excommunications.\textsuperscript{161} Zizioulas regards this as being of great importance, for:

The individual faithful can relate to the regional or universal Church only as a member of the body of his church and not as an individual. This is the deeper reason why the synod should not intervene directly in the lives of the faithful as individuals.\textsuperscript{162}

For Zizioulas, the synod or council exists, not as a structure over the local Church, having power to intervene and direct its internal affairs; rather, it exists as a means of facilitating communion, of expressing the essentially conciliar nature of the Church. As such, it is a vital dimension of the life of the Church. Specifically, it relates to the central aim of eucharistic communion, of providing a means for the Churches to check that they stand within the tradition of the one Church.

\section*{Authority and Reception}

Truth in the Church is always concerned with the revelation of Christ himself, who is the Truth. Zizioulas believes that it is precisely in the Eucharist that Christ is most perfectly revealed.\textsuperscript{163} This has important implications:

For this reason, the Word of God does not dwell in the human mind as rational knowledge or in the human soul as a mystical inner experience, but as communion within a community. And it is most important to note that in this way of understanding Christ as truth, Christ Himself becomes revealed as truth not in a community, but as a community. So truth is not just something "expressed" or "heard," a propositional or a logical truth; but something which is, i.e. an ontological truth: the community itself becomes the truth.\textsuperscript{164}
This belief that truth is accessible only within the context of communion leads Zizioulas to an important conclusion with regard to the authority of a council, as of a bishop or any other organ of authority within the Church. If truth is found only in the communion-event, then all members of the Church must have their part to play in the discovery of this truth. Thus:

Because the Christ-truth is not only revealed but also realized, in our existence, as communion within a community, truth is not imposed upon us but springs up from our midst. It is not authority in the sense of auctoritas but is grace and love, embracing us in its being which is bound to us existentially. Yet this truth is not the product of a sociological or group experience; it comes clearly from another world, and as such is not produced by ourselves.\textsuperscript{165}

This resonates with an important element in the thinking of Khomiakov and a great many Orthodox thinkers who have followed him. It is argued that, precisely because the Church exists as an icon of the Trinitarian communion, authority cannot be equated with the coercion of the less powerful members by the more powerful. Truth is arrived at by the whole body, acting together in its various appropriate ways. This is expressed, in practical terms, through the reception of conciliar decisions by the entire Church.

On 6th May 1848, the leading members of the Orthodox hierarchy issued an encyclical letter as a reply to the Papal Encyclical \textit{In Suprema Petri}, which had taken the form of an appeal to the Eastern Churches to return to the ‘unity of the Holy See’. Khomiakov, who had already arrived at an understanding of authority as residing only in the Church as a whole and not apart from it, seized upon this reply, which was for him a crucial document for his teaching on ecclesiastical authority. In their reply to Pius IX, the Eastern Patriarchs, making this explicit for the first time, observe that:

The Pope is greatly mistaken in supposing that we consider the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy to be the guardian of the dogma [of the Church]. The case is quite
different. The unvarying constancy and unerring truth of Christian dogma does not depend upon any Hierarchical Order: it is guarded by the totality of the whole people of the Church, which is the Body of Christ.166

Khomiakov’s assertion that conciliar decrees need to be accepted, or ‘received,’ by the whole Church, has had a profound affect on Orthodox thinking. In this theory, once a conciliar decision has been made, it is for the whole membership of the Church to check its validity in terms of the Tradition. This is not done in any legal or formal manner. Rather, the people either, in the course of time, take it to themselves, seeing in it the authentic Christian Tradition, or else reject it as being inconsistent with that Tradition. It is, however, an act of the whole people, and not merely of the hierarchy.

The somewhat confused history of the Councils certainly would seem to argue in favour of some sort of theory of reception. History is littered with examples of councils of bishops which convened with every intention of being ecumenical, yet were to be later rejected by the Church, or at best accepted only as regional councils. Among such gatherings can be counted those convoked at Sardica (343), Rimini (359) and Ephesus (449). Although, legally speaking, ‘ecumenicity’ was conferred by the Emperor, who was also responsible for the convocation of a council, even within the Roman oikoumene acceptance of these councils was by no means guaranteed, despite having legal force given them by the civil power.

Although great weight was attached to the number of bishops present,167 both at ecumenical and regional councils, this was in itself no guarantee of the reception of a given council. Indeed, at the Council of 381 there were no Western representatives whatsoever, yet the Council was fully received. However, if a council has to undergo a process of reception in order to be recognized, a number of important theological problems are encountered.

In the first place, who or what is the organ of this reception? There
has been substantial disagreement on this point. Generally speaking, modern Orthodox theologians would argue, with reference to examples of such 'councils' as those cited above, that:

it is presumptuous to assert beforehand, “This council will undoubtedly be œcumenical, equal to the seven œcumenical councils of the past”. It is only in the continuing life of the Church that it becomes apparent whether a particular council has been truly œcumenical, whether the Spirit of God has spoken through the assembled bishops or not. The story of the Arian controversy shows this with the utmost clarity.¹⁶⁸

For Zizioulas, the concept of reception is an intrinsic part of his ecclesiological approach. However, he does not fall into the trap of positing a radical divide between Council and Church, such as Khomiakov did. Rather, because he explicitly ties the two together through his understanding of the eucharistic nature of the Church, he is able to offer something of a synthesis between the hierarchy, which constitutes the Council, and the rest of the Church, which, with the hierarchy, is responsible for the reception of the Council. Zizioulas argues that:

The fact that the Ecumenical Council did not possess an institutional character of its own but depended for its “œcumenicity” on the eucharistically conditioned episcopate and - not unrelated to that - on its recognition as œcumenical a posteriori, points to the deeper meaning that conciliarity had also on the universal level. The deeper significance of “reception” in conciliarity lies in what we may call in theological language a pneumatological conditioning of history, i.e. relying upon the Spirit - and not upon institutions alone - for the revelation of Truth. . . . The authority of a council does not lie in its juridical correctness, but in the event of communion which the Spirit creates and which brings conciliarity back to its original community basis.¹⁶⁹

This bears the implication that, because the Church is at all levels a communion-event, the laity and lower clergy must be involved with the bishops in the formulation of Christian truth. This does not, for Zizioulas, imply that the laity must be present in council, actually
formulating the wording of this expression of the truth. Zizioulas believes it to be essential that councils are exclusively *episcopal* in voting composition. Zizioulas would envisage that the laity’s role is in the checking of this conciliar teaching against the Tradition of the Church in the time after the conclusion of the conciliar event itself. This is not a juridical right but rather the deeper expression of communion. Just as, in the local eucharistic community, the bishop can do nothing without the presence and assent of the other orders within the ecclesial community, so too here. The Christological component, i.e., the hierarchy, cannot function without the Pneumatological, i.e., the whole People of God. Indeed, it is this pneumatological conditioning which makes the Christological exist at all. Thus, with regard to conciliar decisions, it is the assent of the whole body of Christ which makes them live, for ‘the notion of communion must be made to apply to the very ontology of the ecclesial institutions, not to their dynamism and efficacy alone.’

In such an understanding, we see a real synergy between hierarchy and laity, in which the divisions which may otherwise polarize them into *ecclesia discens* and *ecclesia docens*, with all of the problems of anticlericalism and subjection of the laity, along with the virtual denial of their charisms, which have for so much of its history plagued the Church. The laity are thus as essential to the being of the Church as is the hierarchy and neither may function without the other, in an event of communion which reflects the Trinitarian mode of existence.

Because the bishop is never present in council by virtue of his own individual right, but rather as head of a eucharistic community, the community is intimately involved with the council. This ensured, says Zizioulas, that the councils were never, at least in the early Church, a structure *over* the local communities:

and for this reason they never acquired authority in themselves: they always had to be *received* by the communities in order to be fully valid. The conclusion.
... may sound strange but it seems inevitable: episcopacy, as it developed in the first three centuries, also with regard to councils, meant anything but the subjection of the laymen to the higher authority; it meant, on the contrary, that a ministry existed through which the Church remained in the final analysis a concrete community.171

However, whilst this is appealing in theory, there are difficulties which must be faced. In the first place, Zizioulas himself is aware that Councils ended their decrees with a series of anathemas against those who hold to the condemned positions. The effect of these was to deprive their holders of eucharistic communion in the Church; effectively to withdraw recognition of them as being members in the Body of Christ. As Zizioulas pointedly observes, 'Membership in the Church is in the last analysis communion not only with Christ but also with the “saints”, i.e. with the community of the Church as a whole.'172 Yet the implication of this is important for Zizioulas’ understanding of reception. In effect, it implies that the Councils themselves believed they had an immediate authority, without awaiting recognition from the Church as a whole or from any part of it:

Therefore, a synod, as far as it desires to be obedient to the Word of God, has its own value. Within this desire of obedience, it judges and makes its decisions, and it does not wait for acceptance later on by the Pope or by any other authority. The synod is itself the authoritative voice of the unity of the Church.173

Although there are problems here, such as the fact that some Councils were rejected by the Church, such an approach has the advantage of providing a clear standard of reference as to the validity of a Council. Closely linked to this is the issue of the representativeness of a council - i.e. the number of bishops present and, in the West, the necessity for Papal approval.

The position taken by most modern Orthodox theologians, including Zizioulas, which demands a synthesis between hierarchy and laity which is expressed in the doctrine of reception, is not inconsistent.
It is fully in continuity with the emphasis on the Church as a communion of love, of God's shared life with the whole of humanity in the Church. The doctrine of reception, in its modern form, originates with Khomiakov. However, a weakness in his approach lies in his divorce of the sacramental from the teaching dimensions. With regard to the sacramental aspect, it has been said that:

In this area of the Church’s life he admits an essential function for the hierarchy, without which the Church would cease to exist. It follows that when he treats of the sacraments the visible Church ceases to be simply the manifestation of the inner life of grace. It becomes, in addition, the means by which the inner life of the Church is realised. The element of the Church’s sacramental life, and in particular, the function of the hierarchy in this area, is not deduced from the Church as a communion of love and grace. To be strictly logical, either this second principle should be excluded altogether, or its consequences should be extended into all areas of the Church’s life.174

Zizioulas, precisely because of the Eucharistic basis of his ecclesiology, avoids this pitfall. It is because of his eucharistic role as head of the local community that the bishop has a teaching role. Without this eucharistic basis, bishops would meet in council as individuals and, in such a situation, a good case could be made for councils of theologians, rather than of bishops who frequently have little real expertise in theology. The Christian faith is nothing less than a receiving event. As Nissiotis has put the matter:

It is centred either around the revelatory event in Christ, as God giving himself to man in order to be received by him (as is evident in the sacramental life, especially in the Eucharist, which is an act of God’s offering his communion and man receiving it), or around the Word of God, which is to be “heard” and accepted by the believer. Faith is, in its nature, a receiving act, denoting a dependence of man upon the grace of God.175

According to this theological understanding, then, ‘reception’ is to be seen as being a communal event which is both ‘giving’ and ‘receiving’. It is through reception that one belongs both to the
divine communion and to the human community of faith. 'Reception' thus presupposes a communal act and leads to community. Local Churches must 'receive' decisions on the basis of love and freedom and not of power and domination of their higher authoritative bodies.

The doctrine of reception has the difficulty that it, in the final analysis, depends on power and majorities, despite the denials of its advocates. An attractive theory, which promises freedom from hierarchical control, it cannot, in the last analysis, free itself from coercion. This is precisely because there has never been a Council which ended in complete unanimity and concord. Zizioulas had early noted that the principle of majority voting 'represents undoubtedly one of the most important stages in the history of the councils.' Matters were henceforth to be decided, not necessarily through reaching unanimity, but on the basis of majority voting, with all the scope this left for rigging of councils and intimidation of opponents. Despite this, matters were not quite so simple:

Of course, a council did have a majority and a minority. But the members faced the challenge of discerning at what point the exchange of opinions and arguments amounted to a verdict on some thesis. The elements of truth in the minority position were supposed to be combined with those found in the majority, even though once the die was cast the minority could not cling to their original view. Orthodoxy so formulated was deemed to be divine truth and hence mandatory for the entire Church.

What, then, if a minority - perhaps even a large one - were to refuse to accept the conciliar decisions? At one level, the matter is clear. The rest of the local Churches would withdraw from communion with them and henceforth consider them to be no longer part of the Catholic Church, the Body of Christ. At a disciplinary level that much is clear and straightforward.

Yet there is another, more complex level, for which a concrete example will help illuminate matters more clearly. This regards the
non-reception, by a large number of Eastern local Churches, of the Council of Chalcedon. This non-reception led directly to a schism which has endured until this day. If a council has to be received by the faithful before it can be recognized, is it not fair to argue that Chalcedon is itself still undergoing a process of reception and the final decision with respect to its dogmatic status cannot be assumed to have been reached yet? If the contrary line is taken, as it has consistently been by the Orthodox, then it would seem that a majority of the Church is imposing its own theological vision upon a minority. That being the case, we are in a realm where, as in a secular parliament, the majority is deemed to be right. Colin Gunton pertinently asks:

Has the historical Church made the mistake of claiming a premature universality for her works and words instead of praying for the Spirit and leaving the outcome to God? Certainly, as James Whyte has argued, untenable and circular claims have been made for the operation of the Spirit in relation to the Church. He summarises the logic of the statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on authority.

"The decisions of councils or pope on fundamental matters of faith are not true because they are authoritative. They are authoritative because they are true. They are true because they are authentic interpretations of apostolic faith and witness. They are authentic interpretations of apostolic faith and witness because the Holy Spirit guards from error those who have been given the authority to make such pronouncements."

He points out that such arguments are not only circular and self-justifying, but are dogmatically flawed, in making too much of the divinity of the Church, too little of its humanity.178

It would appear somewhat arbitrary to assume that, whilst a particular council may err, the consensus fidelium in any given age cannot so err. The contemporary Roman Catholic position, owing not a little to the insights of Cardinal Newman (which, it should be remembered, earned him the personal displeasure of the Pope and a formal accusation of heresy from the Bishop of Newport!) is that:

356
The whole body of the faithful... cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (sensus fidei) on the part of the whole people, when, "from the bishops to the last of the faithful", they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals.179

Yet Zizioulas himself appears aware of the need for a creative 're-reception' of the conciliar decisions of past ages:

the decisions of the councils, past, present, or future, need to be constantly received and re-received in the event of communion created by the Spirit. Truth is not a petrified entity, but a living reality. Each generation must receive it in its own way and make sense of it for its own existential conditions. In this respect no council can acquire authority simply on the ground of its significance for past generations.180

This seems to be going considerably in advance of many other Orthodox, for whom conciliar decisions, once made are irrevocable and irreformable, albeit capable of interpretation to meet the conceptual demands of a fresh generation or cultural context. Yet the problem remains. If re-reception merely means that on each occasion the Church must reflect on and place into a fresh historical context those conciliar decisions of the past, whilst accepting the substance of the decisions themselves as being irreformable and dogmatically correct, then we are in a difficult position.

Fortunately, Zizioulas offers the possibility that re-reception may mean the creative dialogue with the past Tradition of the Church, enabling us to arrive at a renewed understanding of past dogmatic decisions. Zizioulas asserts that the authority of the Ecumenical Councils does not lie in their supposed institutional status, for it is his contention that there was no institution per se. Rather:

It lies in the fact - for those of course who are prepared to admit it - that their decisions can make existential sense for all generations. But this is something that cannot be stated as axiomatic: it must be the conclusion of a re-reception of these councils by the Church at all
The criterion of the authenticity of a conciliar decision would appear not to be its final expression of an absolute truth, but rather its existential meaning within the context of a given historical situation. Implicit in this understanding is the full recognition of the historicity of the features affecting the life of the various Churches. Perhaps most excitingly, Congar has suggested that this process of the re-reception of old and hallowed doctrinal positions is:

not a matter of abandoning them but of giving them a new context and the equilibrium of scriptural witness, what T. Sartory calls, "a repatriation of dogmas in the light of the overall witness of the Holy Spirit"; it is a matter of thinking them and living them out, taking account of the knowledge we have acquired of the historical, cultural and sociological conditioning of the decision in question, of the current needs of the cause of the gospel which we seek to serve, of the connotations which have accrued since the first reception of the decision or doctrine, and finally of the criticisms and valuable contributions received from others.182

If a constructive re-reception of some doctrinal positions is a position which makes itself felt in the Church today, we need not only think of doctrines concerning the nature of God but also, and perhaps flowing from this, the whole question of primacy in the Church, particularly where it concerns the ministry of the Bishop of Rome.


7. A. Keshishian, *Conciliar Fellowship: A Common Goal* (Geneva: WCC, 1992), p.23. The author is referring particularly to the WCC Assembly in Nairobi (1975), which placed strong emphasis on the local Church as basis of conciliar fellowship.


9. However, I would wish to qualify Zizioulas' approach. Ignatius stipulates that a valid Eucharist is one which is 'under the bishop or one whom he has delegated' (Smyrn. 8; my emphasis). Zizioulas is strangely silent about the possibility of a non-episcopal, and hence presumably presbyteral, celebration in this era. Yet this has serious implications for his own approach, making matters much less clear-cut than he would seem to suggest.

A. Nichols, in his *Holy Order*, pp.18-19, identifies the 'seven' chosen by the Apostles to 'serve at table' not, as is traditional, with the diaconate but rather with the presbyterate:
The first local application of the apostolic ministry to be set in place was the presbyterate - the prototypes of which are, it seems, described by Luke in Acts 6:1-6. Although what Luke calls “the Seven” were instituted as a way of resolving the tension between the Hebrew and Hellenistic sections of the Jerusalem church, and provided the Greek-speaking element in the church with its apostolically-approved leadership, it is difficult to suppose that, for Luke, their office is simply an ad hoc arrangement. This is so, not simply because of the symbolism of the number seven, designed . . . to parallel that of twelve, the number of the founding fathers themselves. Additionally, without the prototypical Seven, the group of presbyters which Acts will describe or refer to so often in its pages appear without explanation, unconscionably springing up in their full ministerial armour.

Nichols sees their duties primarily in terms of preaching or evangelizing (Stephen, Philip), although in their ‘table service’, he does acknowledge a link to the post-apostolic diaconate. Now, given the accuracy of Nichols’ assertion that the Seven are ‘the apostles’ presbyteral local auxiliaries’ (p.19), we are able to accept his belief that with regard to Churches with resident apostolic leaders, ‘apostles needed assistants of some kind in their duties of cultic celebration, proclamation of the Word and governance.’ These assistants are the presbyters. It thus seems logical that, in the sub-apostolic situation, the bishop or president of the community might, from time to time, according to circumstances, delegate the eucharistic celebration to a presbyter.

10. Ignatius, Trallians 2; Magnesians 6.

11. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.196.


17. J. Zizioulas, Episkopé and Episkopos, p.35. For Zizioulas, working as he does from a eucharistic frame of reference, it is crucial that the bishop is not 'monarchical' in the strict sense.


Today perhaps more than in many centuries there is an awareness of the need for practical expression of conciliarity within the concrete local community. This must take the form of a mutuality between clergy and laity which is fully informed by a theological understanding of the nature of the Church itself. If we are to take this seriously, we cannot assume that conciliarity on the local level means a simple transfer of power from the clergy to the laity, for that would merely exchange one misunderstanding for another. In a vision such as that presented by Zizioulas there is ample scope for the talents and charisms of the laity to be exercised, yet without denying the authority of the ordained clergy. A stress on the biblical notion of the 'priesthood of all believers' by no means contradicts the demand for a body of official office-bearers within the Church, for St. Paul himself was not averse to appointing such officials (Acts 14:23) and dealing with them (Acts 20:17-38). Thus:

'This is of great value in confronting those who would maintain that communio excludes authoritative, official differentiation within the Church as a whole. These and similar texts indicate that differentiation and office do not fracture the communio. The office-holder is there not in opposition to, but in support of the community.'


20. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.82.

21. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.82, n.55.

22. J. Hamer, The Church is a Communion, p.165.


25. However, it was not only bishops who travelled: other Christians would wish to be welcomed at the synaxts of a
Church they were visiting and would naturally receive communion. It therefore became imperative that those who were refused communion by their own bishop could not receive communion elsewhere. Precisely for this reason, letters (which Fahey identifies as litterae communicatoriae, also known as tesseræ, symbola, or letærae pactis) came to be issued to travellers in good standing. Likewise letters were sent between bishops regarding persons who had been excommunicated by the local bishop’s council. It is noteworthy that these letters would enable their bearers to claim free board and lodging from the host Church, a further concrete expression of koinonia. Cf. M.A. Fahey, Ecclesial Community as Communion in J.H. Provost (ed.), The Church as Communion, pp.15-16.


28. In the Canon, or Eucharistic Prayer, the celebrant prays ‘for all those who in faith have gone before us to their rest: forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics and every righteous spirit which has completed this life in faith.’ He likewise prays for ‘every bishop of the Orthodox ... of all the presbytery, the diaconate in Christ and every priestly and monastic order.’ Moreover, as an absolute requirement the bishop of the diocese must be mentioned by name in the appropriate place within the Canon, even if the celebrant is a visitor in the diocese. Although I have specifically referred to the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, as the rite most commonly used, all other Orthodox liturgies have this requirement too. This applies equally to the ‘Liturgy of St. Gregory’, authorized for use in Western Rite parishes of the Antiochene Patriarchate, which liturgy is none other than the ancient Roman Liturgy!

29. The ancient Roman Canon likewise offers prayers in the very heart of the Eucharistic Canon, specifically naming those for whom the mass is offered:

   ‘In primitis, quae tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica: quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere dignerts toto orbe terrarum: una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N. et Antistite nostro N., et omnibus orthodoxis atque catholicae et apostolicae fidel cultoribus.’

In contrast to the practice of making such commemorations within the actual Canon itself, modern liturgies tend to have a separate Prayer of Intercession, before the Offertory. Given that the ancient custom specifically links conciliarity with the
Eucharistic elements in this way, this contemporary practice may not be the most suited to the expression of the catholic nature of the Eucharist. Indeed, it has been said that this trend owes 'more to liturgical archaeologizing (and that on a rather slender basis) than to serious theological and pastoral consideration.' W.J. Grisbrooke, in J.G. Davies (ed.), A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship (London: SCM, 1972), p.17.

Zizioulas, as a thinker who has been deeply engaged in the ecumenical movement for many years, deserves to be taken seriously here. The fact that he makes these remarks in the context of a paper originally given at an important ecumenical meeting between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox is itself noteworthy. If there is one breach of communion which the Orthodox have the opportunity of surmounting in the near future, it is this one. Already, although it must be acknowledged that it is not without its critics, much has been achieved towards the restoration of full communion in the very near future. Yet here is a theologian, fully committed to the ecumenical enterprise, who is claiming that removal from the eucharistic Diptychs implies not merely a censure or a lapse of communion within the one Body, but something of far greater import.


34. J. Zizioulas, Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, p.22, with reference to Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History V, 16,10; 24,9.; 28,9.

35. J. Zizioulas, Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, p.22, referring to Canon 5 of 1 Nicaca. In a footnote (n.8), Zizioulas also alludes to Canons 2 and 7 of Antioch and 10 and 11 of the Apostolic Canons.


40. J.E. Lynch, *The Limits of Communio in the Pre-Constantinian Church*, pp.177-178. Further evidence in support of this much more nuanced situation occurs with regard to the case of Origen in the third century. Origen, as is well known, was excommunicated by the Egyptian bishops at the behest of Demetrius of Alexandria in 233, with the backing of Pope Pontian. Rather than bow to the notice of excommunication, Bishops Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Caesarea (the latter of whom had already ordained Origen presbyter, in contravention of strict canonical procedure), having enquired into the charges, lent Origen their support. If one were to take the witness of Tertullian and others at face value, this simply would not happen, for a basic principle of conciliarity is the mutual recognition of disciplinary actions. This being so, it would appear that we are very far from a situation in which excommunication, or removal from the Diptychs, has the deep-rooted eschatological implications which Zizioulas tries to suggest.


Historically, this had indeed tended to be the path of a Western Christianity highly influenced by an Augustinian tendency to stress the unity of the Godhead. However, given the changes in much Roman Catholic theological understanding, although not to the same degree regarding actual practice, one may well question whether this is inevitable. Moreover, much Anglican and Protestant ecclesiological practice would seem to indicate that the transference of Trinitarian categories and emphases into ecclesiology may not be as clear-cut as one might initially suspect. Commentators would do well to note that Lossky applied certain consequences of the Filioque to Western ecclesiology, only to be shown to have considerably exaggerated the impact of such an approach.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as it comes to us from the Cappadocian theologians, teaches us that the first thing to be said about the being of God is that it consists in personal communion.' C. Gunton, The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community in C. Gunton & D. Hardy (eds.), On Being the Church, p.66

It is instructive to note that Gunton then goes on to warn us of the care needed in applying insights from Trinitarian theology directly to ecclesiology:

'Great care must be taken in drawing out the implications of such a claim, and in particular the temptation must be resisted to draw conclusions of a logicising kind; appealing directly to the unity of the three as one God as a model for a unified Church; or, conversely (and, I believe, more creatively, though still inadequately) arguing from the distinctions of the persons for an ecclesiology of diversity, along the lines of the expression currently popular in ecumenical circles of 'reconciled diversity'. That would be to move too quickly, playing with abstract and mathematically determined concepts and exercising no theological control over their employment.'

C. Gunton, The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community, p.66.

J. Meyendorff, The Orthodox Concept of the Church, p.65.


57. J. Zizioulas, *The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition*, p.43:

   'The most important characteristic of the way in which God deals with human beings is that he creates communion which leads to communities by bringing people together in the Holy Spirit. Whenever and where-ever the Holy Spirit blows he does not create good individual Christians but an event of communion, *koinonia* and therefore a community . . .'

   This is as important in the relations between the various local Churches as it is within each. Precisely because the Holy Spirit works to bring about a perichoretic *koinonia*, the local Churches are impelled by the Spirit to act out this perichoretic impetus in their mutual relationships. This, again, draws us back to our theology of the Trinity - and particularly Pneumatology, for 'The Church is primarily a *communion*, i.e. a set of relationships making up a mode of being, exactly as is the case in the Trinitarian God. We cannot have an Ecclesiology until we have a proper Trinitarian doctrine, for we cannot expect of the Church anything less than a sign and a reflection of God's way of being in creation.' Zizioulas, *The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today*, pp. 27-28.


63. C. Konstantinidis, *Authority in the Orthodox Church* in


71. G.R. Evans, *Authority in the Church: a Challenge for Anglicans*, p.41. *Collegium*, in classical usage, argues Evans, has the connotation of an enduring bond among equals - a point which has implications with regard to the whole question of primacy in the Church. Furthermore, collegiality has to be seen in the context of the universal bonds which draw all the faithful into the one Body.


76. J. Zizioulas, *The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church*, p.33.
77. J. Zizioulas, *The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church*, p.33.


79. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.257: ‘Just as a eucharist which is not a transcendence of divisions within a certain locality is a false eucharist, equally a eucharist which takes place in conscious and intentional isolation and separation from other local communities in the world is not a true eucharist. From that it follows inevitably that a local Church, in order to be not just local but also Church, must be in full communion with the rest of the local Churches in the world.’

80. The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity: A Document prepared by the Joint international Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church III.4, in Sourozh, No.11 (Feb. 1983), p.37. It is of interest to note that the whole tenor of this crucially important bilateral ecumenical document reflects many of the concerns of Zizioulas, who was himself a member of the Commission responsible for its preparation.

81. J.H. Erickson, *Concrete Structural Organization of the Local Church: The 1971 Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*, p.13.


86. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.241. Zizioulas adds a caveat in a footnote (n. 103): ‘The case of bishops who have been deprived of their communities by force, being in a certain sense under persecution, could not apply to this rule, which refers only to the “retired” and the so-called “titular” and “assistant” bishops.’ However, he leaves unanswered the question as to the criteria for the recognition of such a bishop. This is of considerable importance in contemporary Orthodox praxis, for it has
become customary to appoint 'titular' bishops, often with the titles of once-great sees which now, precisely because they are 'in a certain sense under persecution,' to all practical intents and purposes, are defunct.

87. G.R. Evans, Authority in the Church: a Challenge for Anglicans, p.42.

88. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.198.


92. J. Zizioulas, Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, p.22.


95. Cyprian, Epistle 23, cited in P. Hinchcliffe, Cyprian of Carthage and the Unity of the Christian Church, p.76.


103. The situation of the Orthodox Churches in America is, in many ways, the perfect exemplar of the disarray and ecclesiological distortion which the Orthodox face throughout the Western world. In the 19th century, a Russian mission was established in California, a natural development, given the presence of Russian shipping in the Pacific region and hence along the Californian coast. This followed an earlier successful mission in Alaska, then under Russian control, which remained after the United States purchased Alaska. In the years following the establishment of a Californian mission, East European immigrants arriving on America’s Atlantic seaboard brought with them clergy to establish new churches for the immigrants, who frequently formed close-knit, often ethnically defined, communities in their new homeland. This resulted in the establishment of parishes owing allegiance to the whole range of European and Near East ‘mother Churches’. It was only a matter of time before each of these ‘mother Churches’ appointed hierarchy to oversee their new parishes on the American continent, so that a city such as New York might have bishops belonging to the Russian, Greek, Antiochene and other ‘jurisdictions’. This is in clear contravention of canonical norms. Specifically, Canon 8 of 1 Nicaea, in dealing with the reconciliation of Novatians, where their orders were held to be valid, stated that the episcopal dignity was to be granted to their bishops, but only in places where no orthodox hierarchy already existed. ‘But wherever there is a bishop of the Catholic Church, it is obvious that, as the bishops of the Church will keep the dignity of a bishop, the one called a bishop among the so-called puritans shall have the honour of a presbyter . . . . There may not be two bishops in the city.’

Meyendorff comments:

‘It would have obviously been easier to solve this
Novatian problem by giving the schismatic bishops some honorary title, or else by transferring them to some empty episcopal see, or by keeping them as heads of their churches, thus establishing two parallel, mutually recognized “jurisdictions” in the same place. But the council decided otherwise and solemnly proclaimed the principle of territorial unity of the Church.

J. Meyendorff, Catholicity and the Church, p.113.

Further canons of the Ecumenical Councils, notably Canon 2 of Constantinople (381), Canon of the Third Council and Canon 20 of the Sixth Council (692), which as Meyendorff observes (Catholicity and the Church, pp.115-116), is particularly important with regard to the contemporary situation.

In 1971, the Russian Metropolitinate was granted autocephaly by the Russian Orthodox Church, and became known as the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). However, the other Churches have failed to accept the autocephaly and continue to operate their theologically dubious system of ethnic jurisdictions.

104. J.H. Erickson, Concrete Structural Organization of the Local Church, p.15.


106. C. Duquoc, An Active Role for the People of God in Defining the Church’s Faith in Concilium, 180 (1985), p.76.


112. P. Hinchliff, Cyprian of Carthage and the Unity of the Christian Church, p.69.


121. J. Zizioulas, *The Development of Conciliar Structures*, p.44.


126. J. Zizioulas, *The Development of Conciliar Structures*, p.43. Zizioulas states that:

"From the same *Sententiae episcoporum* we can get interesting information concerning the manner in which discussions were conducted in these councils. The impression we get from reading this text is that of a meeting of the Roman Senate. The bishops sat in the form of a Senate and their debate was conducted after the senatorial pattern. The presiding bishop (in this case Cyprian, but it could have been the oldest of the bishops according to the conciliar tradition of Africa) opened the discussion. Then the bishops passed their sentences, the president of the council being the last one to speak. All this means something more than another form of procedure. Behind this lies a concept of the episcopate shaped after political patterns, and, what is even more significant, a conception of the Church as being something parallel"
to the Roman Empire. The council is for St. Cyprian the expression of the unity of the episcopate, of a unity founded on the idea that all the bishops possess the one *cathedra Petri*. And although each bishop was understood by Cyprian as the successor of all the apostles, each episcopal throne being the *cathedra Petri*, and each local Church being fully apostolic, the fact that each bishop had to express his unity with the other bishops by participating in a council shaped after the idea of the unity of the Empire, represents one more serious step towards the idea of an Ecumenical Council.


128. We should carefully distinguish these forms of conciliar life, in which conciliarity is expressed between local Churches in full communion with each other from such bodies as the WCC or the various national/regional ecumenical instruments. Precisely because of the eucharistic basis of conciliar life, conciliarity proper can be expressed only among Churches in full communion. Thus, whilst the conciliar process can lead to the maintenance or restoration of full eucharistic communion, it necessarily presupposes unity in the faith. In order for full *eucharistic* conciliarity to exist, each local Church must accept the others' ontological status as full Churches, local expressions of the one Church of God. This is equally true of both Orthodox and Roman Catholic positions. With regard to the Roman Catholic position, elaborated in Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*, it is:

'Of . . . significance for the structure and life of the Church [that] the attention which the Council wishes to draw to the real and primary meaning of collegiality - the reality of the many in the one, the plurality of the many local churches within the one Church . . . The college of bishops represents their various Churches all over the world and thereby gives expression to the variety and universality of the people of God.'


Ryan points out that the bishops are always to be understood as being together with the Roman Pontiff and never without this head, thereby making it impossible for real collegiality to be exercised when in schism from Rome.

From the Orthodox standpoint, a similar position is necessary, for:

'It is quite clear, at least in the first millennium, that
an “ecumenical” council was not conceived as a “union council” between separated churches. It presupposed doctrinal unity and eucharistic communion between the participants. . . . In this respect it is easy to recall the attitude of St. Cyril of Alexandria towards Nestorius in 431, and that of Dioscorius towards Flavian in 449, and that of the Roman legates at Chalcedon towards Dioscorus in 451. In each of these cases doctrinal difference required the “Orthodox” bishops to sit as council, and the suspected heretics to occupy seats “in the middle,” i.e. as defendants. Also, at the great Photian council of 879-880 the recognition and solemn proclamation of Photius as legitimate patriarch and “concelebrant” by Pope John VIII necessarily preceded their council together.'


However, although for Zizioulas the eucharistic celebration is the basis of the communion of the faithful (see his The Development of Conciliar Structures, p.41), his approach is more complex. He observes that:

'The borders of the liturgical community were, to be sure, never left unguarded, being in the spirit of the practical and to a great extent eucharistic ecclesiology of the early centuries identical with the very borders of the Church of God. But as the liturgy itself was never entirely divorced from conciliarity - it is, I think, quite significant that at a time when the term "synod" had become a terminus technicus for the formal councils people should use it for the liturgy - conciliar action was at once the way to exclusion from and the gate to acceptance into the fellowship of the Lord’s Table. The point at which the modern liturgies of the East call for attention to “the doors” represents the crucial moments of exclusion at which we may imagine the Early Church declaring the termination of all efforts at conciliation. But the efforts were to be made again and again and conciliarity, either within or without the liturgical context, represents the stage of preparation for the success of these efforts.'

The Development of Conciliar Structures, p.48.

This would seem to imply that conciliarity, as well as being the product of eucharistic communion, may also have a role in preparing the way for full eucharistic communion. This places Zizioulas very much at the forefront of Orthodox ecumenical endeavours.


136. F. Dvornik, Which Councils are Ecumenical?, p.327.

137. K. Ware, Primacy, Collegiality, and the People of God, p.125.


139. Archbishop Basil [Krivoschene], The Authority and Infallibility of the Ecumenical Councils, p.5.

Note, however, that it is precisely as 'legislative parliament of bishops' that some Orthodox scholars view them. This is precisely the line taken by C. Konstantinidis, Authority in the Orthodox Church, pp. 197-209. This approach, considerably less common than it once was, characterizes the Church and its structures in legal terminology, borrowed from a now past approach in both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology. For a description and critique of the effects of this theological style, see C. Yannaras, Theology in Present-Day Greece, pp.195-214.

140. R. Kress, The Church as Communio: Trinity and Incarnation as the Foundation of Ecclesiology, p.143.

141. Cyprian, The Unity of the Catholic Church, 5.


143. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.156, n.62.

144. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.168.


147. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 891, with reference to Lumen Gentium 25, para 2 and Dei Verbum, para.2.

148. J. Zizioulas, Ecclesiological Issues Inherent in the Relations Between Eastern Chalcedonian and Oriental non-Chalcedonian Churches, p.148. The author is here dealing with the problem of reunion between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox and is therefore writing in a context in which one party refuses to accept an ‘Ecumenical council’ accepted by the other party.

149. J. Zizioulas, The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church, p.35.


151. P. O’Leary, The Triune Church, p.105. Khomiakov’s position has been influential, although these days it is less common to find it in pure form. Bulgakov, in the first half of this century, followed Khomiakov in splitting the sacramental and teaching functions. O’Leary, in his fine study of Khomiakov’s ecclesiology, with which Zizioulas himself is familiar, comments with regard to Bulgakov:

‘He sees the administration of the sacraments as the prerogative of the Apostles and the hierarchy as their successors, but the preaching of the Gospel belongs to the whole body of believers. He makes his position very precise when he is speaking of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, given to the Church at the time of Pentecost and descending by the Apostles to their followers, extends to the whole Church. The “apostolic succession”, special, restricted, exists only for the sacramental ministry, for the priesthood and not for teaching and dogmatic consciousness.’

P. O’Leary, The Triune Church, pp.114-115, with reference to S. Bulgakov, The Orthodox Church, pp. 65 and 73. It is worth noting, however, that although Bulgakov refuses to view apostolic succession as being related to doctrinal matters, his position is somewhat different from Khomiakov’s in that he is concerned to situate teaching within the Church, but nevertheless does accept a role for the bishops in teaching. Cf. O’Leary, p.115, n.43.

Theologically, the imbalance in the position of Khomiakov and his followers can be attributed to an undue stress on the pneumatological at the expense of the christological.

152. J. Zizioulas, The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition, p.47.


158. Afanasiev locates the existential reality of a local ecclesial community in the fact that it celebrates the eucharist. It is the eucharist which makes it a Church. Zizioulas is critical of this approach unless it is suitably clarified and safe-guarded against improper interpretations. He believes that, in its raw form, it does little justice to the early Church’s understanding of the need for doctrinal unity, communion between the local churches or the importance of the bishop. However, Zizioulas’ criticisms of Afanasiev’s thought on this point need to be accepted with some caution. It is not true to say that Afanasiev is totally opposed to external bonds between the Churches or to the necessity for unity in the faith.

As one commentator has observed:

'Afanasiev sees that all the churches must be united in concord and love, for there can be no discord in the one Church of Christ. Each local Church is a full manifestation of the one Church, but this manifestation is in a mode peculiar to its needs, its time, its culture. In its own way it witnesses the life and work of the Church. By rejecting or accepting what is being done in one church, other churches witness that those works conform or do not conform to the will of God . . . . Afanasiev insists that the early local churches were not joined by law, but by concord and love. If one church would not accept the consensus of other churches, no one could force it to. it would then gradually draw away and be considered heretical or schismatic by the others because it had refused their witness.'


Thus, although Zizioulas’ strictures regarding Afanasiev’s lack
of emphasis on the episcopal structure of the Church are closer to the mark, it is inaccurate to characterize his ecclesiology as being akin to congregationalism - cf. Being As Communion, pp.24-25, where Zizioulas is expressly setting out a programme of eucharistic ecclesiology which specifically sets out to avoid both the 'localism' to which he sees Afanasiev as being prone and the opposite, 'universalist' approach.

159. J. Zizioulas, The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church, p.33.

160. J.H. Erickson, Concrete Structural Organization of the Local Church (p.10), notes a substantial change in this regard. The 1917-18 Moscow Sobor held that the particular (i.e. national) church was the fundamental ecclesial organism - 'The diocese is part of the Russian Church' - of which all lesser bodies are subdivisions.

With regard to America, it must be recalled that the genesis of the OCA lies in the Russian Metropolitinate. The 1955 Statute effectively reduced the diocesan bishop to an agent of the Synod of Bishops and the All American Sobor. as Article I, section 2 of the 1955 Statute states: 'Supreme Authority. The supreme legislative, administrative and judicial authority within the Church is the All American Sobor. The Metropolitan and the organs of Church administration report to the All American Sobor.' (Erickson, p.16).

Actual control of the individual diocese may have been theoretically invested in the bishop, but it was effectively the Sobor and the Metropolitan who had the power. Theologically, we see here the traditional Latin distinction between the power of Orders and the power of jurisdiction, something which Zizioulas is particularly keen to avoid.

However, in the 1971 Statutes, promulgated for the new OCA, this is reversed. The Council (formerly Sobor) and Metropolitan now no longer have the power to control the internal affairs of a diocese. Article VI, sec. 4 states that 'By virtue of his episcopal consecration and canonical appointment to his Diocese, the Diocesan Bishop possesses full hierarchical authority within his diocese.' Erickson comments that; 'by restoring the bishop to his place in the diocese, the 1971 Statute has helped to restore the diocese to something more closely approximating the Ignatian vision of the local Church, to make it at least “the basic Church body” and not just a “part.”' (Erickson, p.17).


166. Quoted in W.J. Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church During the Last Fifty Years* (London, 1895), Vol. 1, p.94.


177. A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, p.70.


379
Chapter Seven

Primacy and Primate

Introduction

The greatest stumbling-block to ecumenism is the existence of the Roman Catholic Papacy. That this is so was openly recognized by Pope Paul VI, who in 1967 admitted that 'the pope - as we all know - is undoubtedly the gravest obstacle in the path of ecumenism.'¹ It is precisely because of this that any theologian who seriously attempts to posit an ecclesiology which professes to be a contribution to the ecumenical endeavour² must deal with the question of the Papacy. John Zizioulas has himself had to face this question. Indeed, it is situated at the logical pinnacle of his own ecclesiology of communion. Yet none of his writings are devoted entirely to the topic - a fact which, in part at least, is due to the fact that here we are dealing with the very cutting-edge of Zizioulas' thought.

Roman Catholic theology has traditionally asserted that the Papacy is a divinely-instituted institution for the governance of the Church, acceptance of which is part of the faith of the Church. The fullest expression of this claim, arguably, is to be found in a Bull of Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam* (1302), which declared:

> Therefore this one and only Church does not have two heads, like some monstrous birth, but rather only one body and one head, Christ and his representative, Peter, and Peter's successor. It is necessary for salvation for all men unconditionally, to be subject to the Roman Pontiff; this we declare, define, and proclaim.³

This was merely the logical conclusion of developments in the Roman claim to primacy which had been a feature for nearly a thousand
years. Matters were not to rest there; the definition of Papal Infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870 marks not only the claim that the Pope’s primacy of jurisdiction must be accepted de fide, but also that, when, speaking ex cathedra, he is preserved from error by the Holy Spirit himself.

As is generally well known, the Orthodox Churches do not accept this understanding of the Church. For Orthodoxy:

authority over the Church is not made up of the bishop but the bishops in the plural. With this rendering, there is no room for misunderstanding the authority wielded by the bishop as an entity. The episcopus universalis, who would concentrate all ecclesiastical authority in his person, does not exist in Orthodox theology, and is not even conceivable. On the other hand, authority as expressed through councils is, for the Orthodox, a leitourgia (function) essential to the Church, inasmuch as it is grounded on the collegiality of the Church’s pastors in matters of faith and truth.4

Thus, at least in popular understanding, Orthodoxy opposes a conciliar model of authority, based on a system of autocephalous local Churches governed by both local and ecumenical councils of bishops, to the centralist, monarchical papal autocracy of the Roman Church. Yet the matter is by no means as simple as that. Although a considerable number of Orthodox thinkers, including some who are still highly respected,5 have adopted this line, it is not without difficulties, depending as it does upon a search for a ‘highest Authority’ in the Church. It is a moot point as to whether or not the autocephalous and conciliar nature of Orthodoxy rules out primacy at all, as is often assumed to be the case. Zizioulas believes that this approach simply will not do, precisely because it ultimately fails to take proper account of underlying theological principles. The nature of the Church stipulates that fullest regard be paid to the demands of the theological principles upon which our vision of the Church is constructed.
In this chapter I shall be concerned with the nature of primacy in the Church. I shall commence by undertaking a survey of the historical basis for the existence of a primacy, particularly a Roman primacy, in the Church. I outline some of the objections to the idea of primacy within the Church, focussing especially - although not exclusively - on objections stated by Orthodox thinkers. My next task is to suggest the theological principles, or general lines, which might be taken to advocate primacy within the Church. Although I will allude to traditional Roman Catholic arguments, the focus of attention will be modern ecumenical, primarily Orthodox, attempts at elucidating a theology of primacy. Because 'primacy' is an existential fact within the autocephalous jurisdictions of contemporary Orthodoxy and because Zizioulas himself locates the origins of primacy not in a universal office but in a more restricted, local institution, I shall then consider the question of regional primacy, in the hope that I will be able to deduce certain principles which are applicable to a universal primacy, to which I shall then turn. Given that much contemporary ecumenical discussion on primacy concentrates on the issue of the relationship between primacy and the unity of the Church, I shall consider this next, along with the closely related topic of collegiality. Given that most Orthodox would afford the Pope, in a reunited Church, a bare 'primacy of honour', I will have to consider the powers and prerogatives of the primacy in Zizioulas' understanding of the ecclesiological issues inherent in any consideration of the nature of primacy in the Church.

The Historical Basis of Primacy

Primacy is a fact of Church history which cannot be glossed over. It is not a mediaeval Latin departure from a pristine era in the Early Church where there existed, if not parity of ministers, at least absolute equality of bishops. Zizioulas observes that, as early as the second century, Churches which could claim to be of apostolic
foundation could claim 'special authority with regard to apostolic continuity,' and hence authority. Yet, although we are concerned with primacy among the various local Churches, it is of the first importance that we should not forget that such primacy is itself derived from the interior primacy to be found within the local eucharistic community.

It is the bishop who is the Primus, the 'first', within the local community. The bishop is the centre of the unity of the community, the eucharistic celebrant, the 'one' upon whom the 'many' depend. Yet, at the same time, he depends upon the 'many' for his very identity as bishop, reflecting the Christic-Pneumatological conviction that Christ, who is the Head of the Body, is nevertheless constituted as such by the Holy Spirit and hence is, in his very constitution, a relational being.

Just as the so-called 'monarchical' bishop emerged in a short space of time as the normal eucharistic celebrant and head of the community, so it was only natural that a certain 'priority' began to be accorded to specific local Churches within geographically defined regions. By the first few years of the second century, Ignatius of Antioch can view one local Church, that of the city of Rome, as:

the one that has "the chief place in the country of the Romans," a memory of the church of comparable preeminence in Syria. Rome as the first city of the empire would inevitably have lent importance to the Christian Church there, but Ignatius greets it not as the head of all but as the outstanding church in its region.7

The practice of bishops coming together for the consecration of a new bishop in their region, whilst being a symbol of, and a means towards, conciliarity between the local Churches, was at the same time a powerful impetus in the development of regional primacies. The bishops coming together for a consecration would also discuss their common problems. In such a meeting the voice of the bishop of the largest, most numerous and influential Church in the region,
would naturally come very quickly to hold a place of influence, particularly if it also enjoyed the privilege of apostolic foundation. Such a pattern is discernible by the end of the first century. The first ‘Church with priority’ was undoubtedly Jerusalem. In this context a very important point emerges. It is the Church, and not any specific leader of the Church, which appears to have priority! This is very clearly evidenced in Acts and indeed provides the only really satisfactory solution to the question of the respective leadership roles of Peter and James in the first Christian community.  

Corwin argued for a *de facto* primacy for Antioch within Syria by the time of Ignatius. However, there is no suggestion of a *juridical primacy of jurisdiction* here. Rather, the leadership exercised here by Antioch, as elsewhere, is to be understood as being of a purely moral character. This is so even in the case of Peter among the Apostles. Peter, in the New Testament, is certainly accorded a primacy - he is the leader of the Twelve, yet is not above them.

The evidence for regional primacy, where the Church of Rome ‘presides in the region of the Romans’ (προκαθῆται ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ χωρίου Ῥωμαίων), would seem to indicate a system of primacies among the various local Churches from a very early date. A few years earlier, we find a similar indication that some Churches enjoyed a ‘priority’ over others in the (first) *Letter of Clement*. Yet this ‘priority’ was by no means conceived of in terms of ‘power’ and ‘authority’ but was of a purely moral, though nonetheless real, character.

Neither the New Testament itself nor our earliest non-canonical sources know of any *formal* organization of the local Churches above or beyond the level of the local eucharistic community itself. Yet the community was not, in the strict sense, *congregationalist*. Although independent in that it owed submission to no other Church, the community was nevertheless, through the person of its bishop, inextricably linked to all other local eucharistic
communities. In such a context, it is little surprise that the local communities which could claim apostolic foundation quickly came to be seen as having a 'particular respect in their role in preserving the common "apostolic tradition."'

The development of primacy remains unclear in its details. By the third century, however, we have a situation in which 'each region had a kind of patriarch: Polycrates in Ephesus, Victor in Rome, Serapion in Jerusalem, Palmas in Pontus, who could act outside their ecclesiastical boundaries.' This must be carefully interpreted, however. The regional primate was a sort of expression of the collegiality of his fellow-bishops: 'The function of primacy is to express the unity of all, to be its organ and mouthpiece.' As such, this is very far from either the Patriarchal system of present day Orthodoxy or the Papal system of the Latin West.

In 325, the bishops meeting in council at Nicea decreed in Canon Six:

Let the ancient customs (ἀρχαῖα ἔθη) be preserved in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, so that the bishop of Alexandria may have power over all these areas, because the same custom exists with the bishop of Rome.

This canon is, in other words, formalizing a regional primacy in North Africa and justifying it by reference to a similar practice with regard to the Roman Church. Needless to say, this refers to a regional primacy and is irrelevant so far as Rome's later claims to universal primacy are concerned. The canon then goes on to say that 'Also in Antioch and in other provinces (ἐπαρχίαι) the honorary privileges (πρεσβεία) must be preserved for the churches.' This πρεσβεία, whilst being a moral, traditional authority without connotations of 'power', now begins to be the subject of binding canonical legislation; something which would increase in future years.
We are compelled to think about primacy within the early Church in two ways. In the first, which despite Roman Catholic claims to the contrary is the earlier, we find a system of regional primacies which began to spring up from an early date. Without denying the truth in the insight that Roman civil organization influenced the growing organization of the Church, I believe it would be going too far to assert that 'The emergence of patriarchal sees in the East resulted from the expansion of Byzantine civil authority, not from any ecclesiological or canonical teachings.' I would suggest that not only was the patriarchal system the direct result and logical conclusion of earlier regional (provincial, in the Roman political sense) primacies, defended and extended by the Ecumenical Councils, but is also a necessary part of a balanced Eucharistic ecclesiology. This is a position advocated by Zizioulas and by other Orthodox ecclesiologists, and is one which has important ecumenical implications.

The second form of primacy encountered in the early Church is a universal primacy. From early days this has been claimed by Rome and is urged by the great majority of Roman Catholic scholars today, although often in increasingly nuanced ways. Whilst Roman Catholic claims are based on the undoubted 'primacy' or leadership role of Peter, the New Testament evidence clearly indicates the preeminence of the Church of Jerusalem and her leaders, that is, of a community, rather than the primacy of any individual.

Roman primacy was asserted as early as the end of the second century, 'when Pope Victor (c. 190) during a dispute over the celebration of Easter threatened to excommunicate the dioceses of Asia.' Yet this was, in the context of the pre-Nicaean Church, an isolated incident, there being little opportunity for an early Pope to press specific claims. Yet although, in this period, it is safe to say that Rome enjoyed a certain primacy of honour within the universal Church, this primacy was not a juridical position of power over the local Churches. On the contrary, the Church of Rome was
considered as 'first among equals', equality being guaranteed by the full identity of each Church in the Eucharist. The ontological equality of bishops, established on their presidency of the Eucharist within their own community, ensured that this primacy could not be one of a superior over inferiors. Rooted as it was in the collegiality of the bishops, the one who was 'first' could do nothing without the others, we find a situation reflecting Zizioulas' concern for the "One" and the "Many".

Although, for Irenaeus, the preeminence of Rome among the local Churches is acknowledged, his witness by no means necessarily implies the sort of universal jurisdiction which Roman Catholic ecclesiology traditionally proposes. In a difficult passage, which has come down to us only in a Latin translation, rather than in the original Greek, Irenaeus says:

This Church [of Rome], by reason of being founded with more powerful authority, must command the concordance of every church with herself: that is, of the faithful who come from everywhere: she is in whom the tradition coming from the Apostles, has always been preserved, by those who come from everywhere.24

There is no suggestion here of a monarchical primacy. Rather, we should see Irenaeus as viewing Rome as being the Church which most fully exemplifies the apostolic faith and against which faith all other Churches should compare their own faith. In such an understanding as this it is the Church which is viewed as having priority and not its bishop per se.

Regarding itself as having Peter as its founder and first bishop,25 the Roman Church, through the persons of its bishops, increasingly claimed that it enjoyed special privileges, so that:

By the fourth century, the claim is made that the Bishop of Rome, as the successor to Peter, that is, the successor to his apostolic power and authority, enjoys particular privilege. If Peter was above all others, so the Bishop of Rome, as his successor, is above all other church
bishops and leaders.26

In the West it was understandable that Rome, as the only apostolic see, should claim a position of primacy which extended beyond the locality of the city and its suburbs. In so doing, the Popes were doing no more than was happening within other parts of the Church, a process which led directly to the system known as the Pentarchy.

However, in claiming universal primacy, coupled with the jurisdictional claims made by many popes from Damasus (366-384) onwards, the Roman Church was laying claim to an entirely different form of primacy. The Council of Constantinople (381) explicitly affirmed Rome's primacy of *honour* within the Church in its Canon 3 on order of primacy: 'The bishop of Constantinople must receive privileges of honor (τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς) after the bishop of Rome, because that city is a New Rome.'27 Three items of importance emerge from this canon:

a) **Order of Primacies.**

There was, within the Church, a clear hierarchy of primacy. Already there was an understanding that certain 'privileges of honour' were to be accorded to some Churches and not to others. This was not, however, to introduce the idea of ontological differences between the Churches. There were regional primacies, as Canon 6 of Nicaea (325) had affirmed and regularized.28 There were also supra-regional primacies, with the Church of Rome holding the position of greatest privilege.

Just as each province had its primate, so too Constantinople recognized some prominent bishops of the Church who exercised a still wider *episkopé*. Canon 2 of Constantinople, Meyendorff informs us, talked of 'the bishops over a diocese' (οἱ υπὲρ διοίκησιν ἐπίσκοποι):

For the understanding of this text it is essential to go back to the Greek original, which is not always properly rendered in the various translations, which often
confuse terms like διοικησα and ἐπαρχία. These are civil, not ecclesiastical terms, designating administrative divisions of the empire. An ἐπαρχία is a “province” which is not very big - like a Swiss canton in size - several cities, but not too many. A διοικησα, is, however, a large section section like Asia, the Pontus, and Thrace. There were three διοικητες in Asia Minor, each one having twenty or so provinces. So, what appears in canon two is a new category: an ἐπισκοπος ὑπὲρ διοικησα: a bishop exercising authority over an entire diocese.29

Thus we find, clearly established, a hierarchy of primacies. We are not, however, told what the actual functions and powers of these hierarchs might be, but merely what they were not entitled to do. Clearly, Constantinople represents a major move on from Nicæa with regard to primacies, not least in size. It is, however, inconceivable that this move should be made contrary to the Church’s understanding of its own nature. Zizioulas argues that increasing levels of primacy is a fundamental dimension of ecclesiastical life.

b) The Primatial Churches
Above these supra-regional primacies, we find Churches which have some claim to a universal primacy. Constantinople explicitly acknowledges that the first place belongs to the Church of Rome. Yet this is not an acknowledgement of Roman jurisdiction over the other Churches. On the contrary, the canon acknowledges the place which is due to the Church of Rome precisely in the context of affording increased recognition to Rome’s upstart rival, Constantinople. Although Rome protested at this move, arguing that Constantinople lacked apostolic foundation,30 this was to no avail.

In the Western Church, the fact that Rome was the only Church founded by an Apostle contributed greatly to the acceptance of Roman claims. This led to Rome’s increasing conviction that not
only was she the Church with the highest expression of primacy, but that this primacy was of a fundamentally different kind from other primacies in the Church.\(^{31}\) Indeed, Damasus addresses the other bishops, previously 'brothers', as 'sons'.\(^{32}\)

Leo the Great (440-464) 'sought judicial control over all the churches: he orders, decides, reprehends, deposes, corrects, defines - the language of one who possesses the *gubernacula ecclesiae universae*.'\(^{33}\) Pope Leo presided over the Roman Church at a time when political circumstances combined to allow its bishop to take a central role during the collapse of the Western Empire. Leo, capitalizing on his unique opportunities, and in response to a crisis in Gaul precipitated by the reforming zeal of Hilary of Arles, managed to obtain from the Western Emperor Valentinian III (425-455) an important *Constitutio*. This stated that:

> it was quite improper for any to go against the authority of the Roman see, "inasmuch as the primacy of the apostolic see is assured by the merit of St. Peter, prince of the episcopal order, by the rank of the city of Rome, and also by the authority of a sacred synod".\(^{34}\)

Although this decree was effective only in the Western empire, the territory over which Valentinian held sway, it was nevertheless easy for successive Popes to see in this a mandate to govern the entire universal Church. This was in spite of the fact that such a document need not be viewed as conferring any further privileges other than what were commonly recognized as belonging to Rome anyway. Provided that the document is interpreted in the spirit of the Council of Constantinople, there need be no great problem here.

c) Justification of the Primacy

Accepting the fact of the primacy, what are the criteria determining which Churches are to have this primacy? In the West there was a growing emphasis on the necessity of apostolic foundation. This contributed to the Roman claims, for if apostolicity is a requirement, what Church better qualified than that of the Apostle Peter himself?
However, the text of the Constantinopolitan canon is clear on this matter. The primacy was awarded not purely on grounds of apostolicity, for that was never of itself very important in the East, but rather depended upon secular factors. Primacy was awarded because of the secular importance of a city and, presumably, the corresponding importance and size of its local Church, along with its historic contribution to the witness of the entire Church. As Meyendorff affirms:

the reason why the Roman Church had been accorded an incontestable precedence over all other apostolic churches was that its Petrine and Pauline "apostolicity" was in fact added to the city's position as the capital city, and only the conjunction of both these elements gave the Bishop of Rome the right to occupy the place of a primate in the Christian world with the consensus of all the churches.36

The 28th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon (451) reaffirms the secular criteria for according primacy. It explicitly affirms that 'It was for right reasons that the Fathers accorded privileges to old Rome, for this city was the seat of the Emperor and Senate ...'37 Throughout subsequent history Orthodox theologians have taken this canon as axiomatic. Thus the mediaeval writer Nilus Cabasilas sees the origin of the Roman primacy in the Donatio Constantini, the Chalcedonian canon and legislation emanating from the Emperor Justinian, rather than in a theological requirement deriving from the nature of the Church. Even Barlaam the Calabrian (a Greek from Southern Italy), opponent of the hesychast theology sponsored by Gregory Palamas, and therefore sometimes incorrectly suspected of being pro-Latin, writes that: 'The Pope has two privileges: he is Bishop of Rome and he is first among other bishops. He has received the Roman episcopacy from the divine Peter; as to the primacy of honor, he was honored with it much later by the Councils.'38

The Orthodox position on primacy is that any privileges are accorded by Councils rather than being inherent in a Church by virtue of its
founder's position. Although Peter undoubtedly possessed a certain 'priority' among the Apostles this did not make him an autocratic ruler over them. Moreover, it is inconceivable that the Pope, as Bishop of Rome, is ontologically different from any other bishop, for that would be to posit something which is higher than the president of the eucharistic community - something which would be directly contrary to the consciousness of the early Church.

However, the Church has, from early times, acknowledged the existence of primacies within itself. Although many Orthodox view these as being solely primacies of honour, without power or ultimate ecclesiological significance, Zizioulas does not believe this to be the case:

Personally I think that in a united Church the question of universal primacy would automatically arise, since there can be no communion of local churches without some form of universal synodality, and no universal synodality without some form of universal primacy.39

Such a position, however, is neither self-evident nor, at least at first sight, easily compatible with Zizioulas' belief that each local Church, precisely because of its dependence upon the eucharistic event for its very being, is absolutely equal, each being the full manifestation of the Catholic Church in its own location.

**Primacy Contested**

Primacy has been contested vigorously for much of the history of the Church. It constitutes a grave ecumenical obstacle, for unless the issues surrounding it can be adequately resolved there can be little hope of there ever being reunion between the Roman Catholic Church and any other, either Protestant or Orthodox. However, we must distinguish between two dimensions of primacy. First, there is the principle of primacy in general. Here we will have to consider the possibility of there being any primacy allowable at all, in view of the
eucharistic nature of the Church, presupposing as it does the absolute ontological equality of all bishops. Secondly comes the question of the possibility of a universal primacy. One should take seriously the possibility, assumed by many Orthodox writers, that it is possible for primacy to exist within the Church, but that nevertheless the concept of a universal primacy is contrary to the nature of the Church. Furthermore, we shall have to ask whether, even if we grant the possibility or necessity of a universal primacy, it must necessarily belong to the Roman Church. If, as I contend, Zizioulas is offering a valid ecclesiology, one which has important implications for the contemporary ecumenical endeavour, then it is imperative that he deals successfully with these issues.

The Orthodox have long had an ambivalent attitude to primacy. On the one hand, they have a strong theological attachment to the absolute equality of bishops which would seem to indicate a denial of the premises of primacy, whilst on the other hand there is a strong tradition of 'rule' by a senior bishop, usually a 'patriarch' of an autocephalous Church. However, we should note that with regard to the understanding and exercise of primacy in the contemporary Orthodox Churches is can be said that:

the ecclesiological dimension is obviously lacking and the great variety of existing patterns - from the almost absolute "monarchy" of the Russian Patriarch to the more or less nominal primacy of the Archbishop of Athens - reveals the absence of a common understanding of primacy, or of a consistent canonical theory of it.40

One of the most basic theological objections to the notion of primacy is rooted in the insights of eucharistic ecclesiology. Zizioulas observes that 'there is no ministry in the Church which can be conceived outside or above the community.'41 Precisely because the bishop is, within his Church, the living icon Christi then it is inconceivable that there could be any order ontologically higher than a bishop. To elevate another to the rank of 'super-bishop' over the head of the leader of the local community is in effect to elevate

393
another over Christ himself. Affirming that it is essential to preserve
the independence of the local eucharistic community, Zizioulas
states as a first principle that:

The councils or synods . . . cannot interfere with the
affairs of the local church. No other bishop, be it a
metropolitan, an archbishop or a patriarch can intervene
in the administration of another diocese. If the
Ecumenical Patriarch wishes to celebrate the Liturgy in
the tiniest diocese of the world, even within the
jurisdiction of his own patriarchate, he must ask for the
permission of the bishop of that place. Nothing in the
relations among the local churches can be dictated or
imposed from above.42

This echoes Schmemann’s insistence that no bishop or Church can
be subject to another.43 Schmemann believes that primacies belong,
not to the ‘essential’ layer of the Church’s existence but rather to a
later, ‘jurisdictional’ layer, which should not be confused with the
former.

In his seminal paper, The Church which Presides in Love (1963),
Afanasiev argues against the concept of primacy within the Church.
From a survey of the literary evidence he feels that:

The doctrine of the Universal Church was not entirely
accepted by the conscience of the pre-Nicene period.
Before the beginning of the Nicene period, Rome did not
hold the primacy of power. . . . Is it not remarkable that
the edicts of Gallienus, Licinius and Constantine seem
unaware of the Universal Church and Rome its
president? They only speak of local Churches in
isolation.44

This, Afanasiev believes, reflects the situation in the primitive
ecclesiological consciousness of the Early Church. From the earliest
writings of the Patristic authors, such as Clement, Afanasiev can
find no hint of Roman, and hence universal, primacy.45 The witness
of Ignatius of Antioch is likewise conclusive for Afanasiev: Ignatius,
in his letter to the Roman Church makes ‘no reference to its power
over the other Churches’46 - something which, if a universal primacy
was recognized, is inexplicable.

**Primacy - A Place in the Church?**

Dumitru Staniloae, whose researches have been of great importance not only to Orthodox theology but also in the wider ecumenical scene, believed that through ordination the minister synergetically participates in the ministry of Christ who works through him. Christ is therefore thus made visible to the Church by means of the bishop. On the basis of the equality of the grace given by the Holy Spirit to bishops, Staniloae rejects any notion of primacy among bishops.47

Yet this notion of primacy, along with that attacked by Afanasiev and others, assumes that 'primacy' is to be equated with the power held by one bishop which he exercises over the others. This is what most Orthodox writers object to when criticizing the notion of primacy.48 Interestingly, Romanides locates the necessity for the absolute equality of bishops within the context of the equality of local eucharistic communities:

One local manifestation of the body of Christ could not be more body of Christ or less than another. Likewise the living image of Christ (the bishop) could not be more image or less image than another image because Christ, whose image the bishops are, is identically One and Equal with Himself.49

It is because of the association of the essence of the local Christian communities with the Eucharist that Afanasiev opposed the notion of primacy within the Church. Understanding primacy as 'the power of one bishop over the whole universal Church,' he believed that the very principles of eucharistic ecclesiology exclude it: 'Such a power cannot exist in the eyes of eucharistic ecclesiology, or (to be exact) this power cannot pass beyond the bounds enclosing a local church.'50 How, then, can Zizioulas argue for not only the practical
exigency of primacy, but also - and more fundamentally - for its theological necessity in eucharistic ecclesiology?51

For Afanasiev, it is indeed true that primacy is excluded. However, in spite of this he is convinced that eucharistic ecclesiology itself demands the existence of the concept of what he terms 'priority.' Contrary to the impression created by Zizioulas,52 Afanasiev, whilst certainly stressing the priority of the local eucharistic community, cannot really be considered as a 'congregationalist'. For Afanasiev, 'the local churches appear to the eyes of eucharistic ecclesiology not as separated or divided; not at all, they are mutually joined together.'53 In this understanding, one of the Churches has a certain 'priority' over the others, a priority founded on the differing degrees of witness:

The witness of local churches might vary in weight. In absolute terms, however, every local church has the same value as another. This equality of value is between the Church of God and herself; for she is one, unique, and fully present in the eucharistic assembly of every local church. If the local churches were not equal in value, we should have to say that the Church of God was not equal to itself in value. But there is no need to think that equality of value between local churches destroys the hierarchy of these churches, far from it: the equality creates a hierarchy of churches grounded in the authority of witness belonging to the several local churches. The Church of God lives fully present in the eucharistic assembly of the local churches, but each of them has a different way and degree of making the presence actual in its own life. A local church will have higher authority of witness if it has a greater realization of the presence of the Church of God. Though the local churches are by nature equal in value, they are not necessarily equal in authority: this difference in authority causes hierarchy among them.54

As Afanasiev goes on to say, a hierarchy of Churches requires a Church to head the hierarchy. However, this 'priority' is distinguished, in his eyes, from 'primacy' precisely because whilst notions of primacy rely on 'power' and 'right', 'priority' does not.
For Zizioulas, the 34th Apostolic Canon is to be seen as holding the key to a rightful understanding of the nature of primacy within the Church. Zizioulas observes that, according to this canonical provision:

in each area (ἴδνος) there should be a πρῶτος who would preside over the synod of all the bishops of that area. No bishop should do anything without the consent of the πρῶτος while the πρῶτος will do nothing without the consent of the others.55

Zizioulas thus begins his understanding of primacy beyond the local eucharistic community by working from the regional or provincial level. Here, although the language is different from that of Afanasiev, we can find a common understanding between the two writers on this point at least. Primacy, or priority, is needed, but it is not to be understood in terms of power. Indeed, in Zizioulas' account, the authority which the primate has is strongly balanced by the collegial 'authority' of his fellow-bishops. It is a situation of 'mutual interdependence.'56 For Zizioulas:

Just as within each local church everything happens in communion, equally on broader geographical levels unity without communion is inconceivable. The universal Church is essentially a communion of churches and this does not exclude but necessitates primacy, provided that this primacy operates within the context, the spirit and the actual requirements of true communion.57

Zizioulas bases his requirement for a primacy, or more strictly, a series of primacies, on his understanding of the theology of the "One" and the "Many" within the context of conciliarity. The local Churches can no more be conceived of in isolation than can the individual Christian. Because the Churches, each being Body of Christ, are creations of the Holy Spirit, they are by definition relational entities. There is a 'communion in space through conciliarity.'58

McPartlan has identified an important tension within Zizioulas'
thought in this dimension of the structure of the Church as communion. Commentating on the progression of Zizioulas' thought here, he notes that:

whereas Zizioulas recognises the unity of persons in the local church as the many forming a differentiated unity-of-complementarity around the one in their midst who holds them apart in unity, he describes the unity of local churches as a coincident, or overlapping, unity-of-identity.59

By this, it is meant that the many individual Christians within the local eucharistic community are given, by the Holy Spirit, the various charisms which differentiate their function in the building up of the Body of Christ. These charisms are never to be seen as being given independently of the bishop, who as alter Christus is the One who gives unity and cohesion to the many different members. Yet because each bishop has an identical value and status as head of a local eucharistic community, there would appear to be no way in which, whilst remaining true to the principles of a eucharistic ecclesiology, the problem of the unity of the universal Church can be answered in a way which does justice to the concept of the 'One and the Many.' How, then, has Zizioulas sought to resolve this tension in terms of the basic presuppositions of his own ecclesiology?

Zizioulas has moved, over the years, towards a solution of this problem by means of viewing the local Churches as being grouped around primatial Churches in a series of concentric circles, with a universal primatial Church at the heart. Conciliarity and the issue of primacy are intrinsically related. At the heart of conciliarity, Zizioulas believes, is the conviction that 'eucharistic communion in a certain community is a matter that concerns all communities in the world.'60 McPartlan views this as being of immense importance to Zizioulas's thought:

Conciliarity, then, expresses a relationship between communities which is reminiscent of that within a corporate personality, where all are implicated in what
A corporate personality requires that there be a 'one' at its heart, which whilst being constituted by the 'many' also gives identity, even existence, to them. However, it is at this point that Zizioulas appears to be in danger of departing from what is understood as being the Orthodox interpretation of the role of the Council in the constitution of the Church. Therefore, we are compelled to enquire as to the extent to which Zizioulas, in his seeking fruitful dialogue with the Catholic Church is consonant with Orthodox ecclesiology on this point.

**Pope or Council?**

There is no single Orthodox position on the authority of the conciliar institution. Until the latter part of last century, it was generally held that the Council was of itself authoritative. This position has not been modified by all Orthodox and, indeed, it is still possible, not least within the Greek tradition, to find expressions of it. Although, following Khomiakov's rejection of any inherent authority in the conciliar institution, some form of 'receptionism' has become normative within most of Orthodox theology, particularly that emanating from the so-called diaspora, the fact remains that, for most people, Orthodoxy represents the authority of the Council as opposed to that of a Papacy. John Meyendorff remarked that:

> The highest doctrinal authority for orthodox Christians is the council, and not the voice of a particular local church, because the council expresses a consensus of churches in all of which Christ dwells and which are all guided by the Holy Spirit.

Particularly at the time of Vatican I, Orthodox theologians were keen to stress that their system of autocephalous Churches, expressing themselves in conciliar fashion, is an alternative to papalism.
However, such a line of argument immediately encounters a serious objection.

The argument states that the universal Church has no need of a visible head for the very reason that Christ himself is invisibly present within the Church as head. Such a line was taken by Khomiakov himself, not least for the reason that, in emphasising the concept of *sobornost'* as the controlling principle of ecclesiology, he wished to exclude just that kind of exteriority which he saw typified in a papal system. Yet in uncritically adopting this view both Khomiakov and others are effectively removing one of the central pillars of Orthodox ecclesiology, that of the necessity of the bishop.

For the Orthodox, as for the Roman Catholics, the bishop is the head of the local Church. The fact that Christ is understood as head of the Church (Col. 1:18) in no way abrogates the necessity for the Church to have a visible head who, by the very fact of his position as head of the eucharistic community, stands in relationship to Christ as *icon*. It then becomes contradictory to insist that the position of Christ as head of the Church negates the need, or even the very possibility, of having a visible head. Having admitted the necessity for a visible head of the local Church, it is then logically impossible to deny the possibility of there being a visible head of the universal Church, although this position may ultimately be rejected on other grounds.

Conciliarity is of the essence of the Church. It is derived from a Trinitarian understanding of the nature of God and the Church. Thus, the Council, perhaps suitably modified to accommodate some form of reception theory, would appear to be the perfect ecclesiological expression of the triune nature of God in the Church. Accepting this *datum*, does this necessarily impel one to deny the existence of a primacy within the Church and council?

In recent years some Orthodox writers have moved away from what
has for long been deemed the 'authentic' and 'traditional' Orthodox position, expressed earlier in this century by the Greek theologian, H.S. Alivisatos, who asserted that the Early Church never recognized the position of St. Peter as being any higher than that of the other Apostles. Consequently:

the absolute equality of the several bishops is recognized, and even the very first of them has no more power than the last bishop on the list. . . . Thus the ecumenical synod for the whole Orthodox Church and the synod of the bishops for its several departments or autocephalous churches are the highest ecclesiastical authorities in accordance with the democratic spirit of the very foundation of church organization.67

Neither Zizioulas nor those others who have taken the same road have intended to reduce the stress on collegiality. On the contrary, and this applies to Zizioulas in particular, they have rather sought to strengthen the concept of collegiality through a renewed theology of the primacy which, under one form or another, has long existed within the Church.

Costa Carras, to whom with his wife Lydia Zizioulas dedicated Being As Communion, has stressed the role of the primate as defined by Apostolic Canon 34, exactly the authority cited by Zizioulas himself.68 This lends support to Zizioulas' emphasis on conciliarity as being essentially a matter of the “One” and the “Many.” Both are equally necessary and each conditions and affects, even constitutes, the other. Thus the organizational pattern of the Church reflects, not as Alivisatos would suggest, the 'democratic spirit' but rather the Trinitarian life in which we are called to participate.69

Fundamental to Zizioulas' theological reasoning is the conviction that there is ‘an exact correspondence between the trinitarian theology . . . and Orthodox ecclesiology.’70 Given this position, does not the position of primate become theologically not only desirable but actually essential? Does it not also necessitate a certain reconsideration of the conciliar structure within Orthodox
ecclesiology to accommodate a renewed understanding of the primatial office?

There is a serious problem if we insist on this insight as the basis for a theology of primacy in the Church. The Father is, in a certain sense, the ‘source’ of the other Persons in the Trinity. They derive their life from him. Yet this cannot really, in Orthodox ecclesiology, be applied to the primacy, precisely for the reason that, as *icon Christ*, each bishop represents *Christ* and not the Father. This likewise applies to the first bishop. Even if we allow that Ignatius of Antioch sometimes saw in the bishop a correspondence to the Father71 rather than to Christ, this would not resolve the difficulty. It is because the bishop derives his identity from his role in the eucharistic celebration that he is held by Zizioulas to represent Christ. Yet no single bishop has a more exalted role; each fully represents Christ, just as each draws his position from his consecration rather than from a single bishop acting as source of Order in the Church. This appears to effectively rule out, from an Orthodox point of view, any possibility of the primate having the *plentitudo potestatis* and being the *fons et ortgo* of all ecclesiastical life, as Roman Catholic theology would traditionally affirm.72

Zizioulas’ moves towards acknowledging a crucial role for the primate are of importance at a time when Roman Catholic theologians have embarked on a mirror process, but from the other end. Whereas Zizioulas gives fresh theological impetus to moves made by Orthodox theologians over the last few decades towards the acknowledgement of a role for the primacy beyond that of a bare primacy of honour, many Roman Catholic thinkers, particularly since Vatican II, have stressed the importance of the collegial dimension of the Church.

McPartlan has observed with great clarity Zizioulas’ moves in this direction. Zizioulas does not believe, suggests McPartlan, that Orthodoxy has replaced the ministry of unity, which is the function of the primacy, with oneness attained through an abstract
conciliarity, for according to Zizioulas:

The council is not present in Orthodox theology as a substitute for the Roman Catholic Pope, and this for the simple reason that the council cannot play the role of the Pope or replace his ministry.\(^{73}\)

Given that Zizioulas sees a necessity for both the conciliar institution and the ministry of unity which is provided, whether on the regional or the universal level, by the ministry of primacy, of the 'One', we must ask whether or not Zizioulas' views on this matter correspond to recent Roman Catholic approaches and whether or not there is hope here of a fruitful ecumenical convergence.

**Episcopate and Primate**

Because, for Zizioulas, 'ecclesial communion at the universal level should base its form on the pattern of the local Church,'\(^{74}\) it is imperative that unity on the universal level be justified and explained through the ministry of the bishop. This means, in practice, that:

such a universal ministry also should be episcopal in nature and be exercised by the head of a local Church. This is to assure that universal catholicity does not bypass or contradict the catholicity of the local Church, but remains dependent on it. It seems clear that Zizioulas is not adverse to such an understanding of the ministry of the bishop of Rome.\(^{75}\)

Thus, Zizioulas resolves the tension of the relationship between local and universal by means of a genuinely primatial local Church. This is important, as it serves to answer Afanasiev's concern that primacy is not a relational concept, in that, adhering as it does to a bishop rather than to a Church, it is at least theoretically possible that 'the person who possesses primacy might be found altogether outside any definite church.'\(^{76}\) For Zizioulas, the primate, be he regional or universal, 'owes his ecclesiological status to the fact that
he is the head of a particular local Church.'77 This is reflected in traditional Orthodox practice, where:

the ultimate level of authority was never any particular individual, but the body of bishops as a whole. The institution which best reflects this ecclesiology is the synod *endemousa*, by virtue of which the Byzantine Church considers itself as being permanently gathered in synod.78

Here we find a system in which there is mutuality. In theory if not always in practice, the Patriarch or Metropolitan is to be considered as *Primus inter pares*, 'first among equals.'79 For the Orthodox, the role of the primate is to lead the synod, although Francis Dvornik has rightly pointed out the somewhat limited role of the Roman bishop or his legates in Council, where their function had the sort of presidency of the *princeps senatus*, or speaker of the Roman Senate.80

However, Afanasiev, to whom Zizioulas is indebted whilst, at the same time maintaining a critical distance from some of his ideas, saw certain difficulties with the concept of *primus inter pares*, at least as generally interpreted within the Orthodox Churches today:

This formula, though generally allowed, is misleading, and it would be difficult to find justification for it anywhere in the history of the Orthodox Church. It is indeed doubtful that the bishops ever thought themselves the equals of the patriarch in every respect, or that he thought himself their equal. Equality is really a difficult claim, when the patriarch possesses rights of which the other bishops are deprived. A fairer statement (to use language borrowed from Cyprian of Carthage) would be: the patriarch as member of the episcopate of the autocephalous church is not above it, but as its leader he is first in the episcopal body.81

Zizioulas sees in the thought of Cyprian the origins of the current Roman Catholic understanding of collegiality:

With Cyprian the eschatological image of the apostolic
college surrounding Christ - an image which was applied to the structure of the local Church by Ignatius and Hippolytus (the bishop surrounded by the presbyterium) - is changed to become an image of the apostolic college surrounding its head, St. Peter. Thus for him each episcopal throne is not, as it is for Ignatius, the "place of God" or Christ, but the cathedra Petri. The significance of this alteration is that we can now talk of unus episcopatus dispersed over the earth with Peter as its head.\textsuperscript{82}

Zizioulas is not content, however, to allow to the 'One' a bare primacy of honour. His ecclesiological presuppositions compelled him to clearly state his position on this: 'Nor is the Primus simply primus inter pares, there is content in his function . . . you cannot do without him.'\textsuperscript{83} Although Zizioulas views the 'One' as being essential to the Church's life, the primus, equally, cannot do without the synod. Therefore, primacy is:

a function which operates in the context of the Koinonia, the communion of all the churches. Just as within each local church everything happens in communion, equally on broader geographical levels unity without communion is inconceivable. The universal Church is essentially a communion of churches and this does not exclude but necessitates primacy, provided that this primacy operates within the context, the spirit and the actual requirements of true communion.\textsuperscript{84}

If the Orthodox have understood Latin ecclesiology as being deficient with regard to the role of pneumatology, thereby producing a one-sided stress on the primus, Zizioulas is aware of the risk of the opposite approach within Orthodox theology, wherein it is the Christological dimension, the primus, who is insufficiently recognized, thereby risking 'being pneumatomonistic if it is not conditioned by the ministry of the "one."'\textsuperscript{85}

It is a central concern of Zizioulas, in reaction to what he sees as both the tendency towards 'Christomonism' in the West and an excessive stress on pneumatology in Eastern ecclesiology,\textsuperscript{86} that there be a balanced synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology
and that this synthesis be reflected in the structures of the Church. The essential insight which Zizioulas is here promoting finds official expression in the important 'Munich Document' of 1982. From an Orthodox point of view, this document proved particularly satisfying, not least because 'it is recognized that the conciliar system is the basis upon which must be founded any further discussion of the primacy of honour.'

Primacy and the Unity of the Church

A central concern of Zizioulas' ecclesiology lies with the problem of the unity of the Church. The very title of his programmatic thesis, *The Unity of the Church in the Eucharist and the Bishop*, indicates where he sees this unity as being located. We have seen, in the previous two chapters, how he resolves the problem of unity, first in the local Church itself, through the double principle of bishop and eucharist and then goes on to link together the various local Churches throughout the world by means of the same double principle, applied through the context of the conciliarity of the local bishops. Primacy can therefore be expected to be linked to the unity of the Church.

It is surprising that, given Zizioulas' positive appreciation of the theological thought of Maximus the Confessor, he does not directly refer to his understanding of the ministry of the Pope. Thunberg has noted that Maximus himself had a high regard for the position of the Bishop of Rome.

Maximus:

simply identified the See of Rome with the Catholic Church, and he spoke of "the very holy Church of Rome, the apostolic see, which God the Word Himself and likewise all the holy Synods, according to the holy canons and the sacred definitions, have received, and which owns the power in all things and for all, over all the saints who are there for the whole inhabited earth, and likewise the power to unite and dissolve. . . ."
Unity is something which particularly pertains to the Apostolic See of Rome. As a later letter makes clear, Maximus envisaged this unity as deriving from Rome's unimpeachable orthodoxy of faith:

she {the Church of Rome} has the keys of the faith and of the orthodox confession; whoever approaches her humbly, to him is opened the real and unique piety, but she closes her mouth to any heretic who speaks against the {divine} justice.\footnote{91}

Thus the Church is understood as being a communion of local Churches in communion with the Church of Rome and its bishop. Unity in the one Church is expressed, \textit{par excellence}, through communion with the Pope. The 'Many' thus find their identity as Church in the ministry and person of the 'One' who is at their heart. Maximus' position was dictated by the adherence, as he saw it, of Rome and its bishop to the true Orthodox faith. It would therefore seem reasonable to suppose that, if Rome were ever to abandon that faith then she could no longer retain her position of centre of unity of the universal Church. It is the faith which is ultimately decisive, not the interpretation of that faith held by any one particular local Church, no matter how exalted that Church might be.

For the Orthodox Churches the primacy exists to give expression to the unity of the local Churches and this remains true at whatever level we are discussing, whether within the local eucharistic community itself,\footnote{92} within a province, a 'diocese' (in the political sense of the term) or, indeed, at the universal level. Indeed, this was already emerging in the Early Church, within the context of the conciliarity of the bishops: 'It was at the heart and highest point of this communication of bishops that the privileged position of the Roman Church - \textit{Ecclesia principalis}, in St. Cyprian's words - emerged.'\footnote{93}

Theologically, Orthodoxy accepts the need for the ministry of primacy, whilst \textit{at the same time} recognizing the absolute ontological identity of all local Churches with each other as Body of Christ. In
this context:

The "primacies" of some Churches are defined - first morally, then jurisdictionally - as tools for securing unity of the churches: such definitions can only be made through ecclesial consensus (i.e., conciliarity) and, obviously, cannot create "super-bishops" invested with power over the other churches: primates are responsible before the churches in their ministry of unity.\(^9^4\)

Both Meyendorff\(^9^5\) and Schmemann\(^9^6\) see primacy as essential to the very nature of the Church precisely because it is an expression of the unity of the Church at the universal level. It is to Schmemann's credit that he courageously dealt with some of the problems of contemporary Orthodoxy, caused in part by traditional Orthodox fears of anything resembling 'papacy,' which unfortunately results in a debilitating weakening of Orthodox universal consciousness. A result of this antipathy to a truly universal ministry of primacy is the often excessive nationalism and divisiveness which afflicts the contemporary Orthodox Churches, resulting in sterility and failure to witness effectively in the world.

Zizioulas centres the unity of the local Church in the bishop, precisely because of his role as eucharistic celebrant. Because of this, the bishop has a decisive role in determining the faith of the Church. He is responsible, before God and his community, for the reception of the witness to the faith by credal and conciliar formulas. The eucharistic context is important, for 'No matter how widely something is received in the Church unless it is received in the context of the Eucharist it has not yet been received ecclesially.'\(^9^7\) Zizioulas is emphatic about the need for the bishop in this process. This is quite understandable when viewed in the light of his Christic-pneumatological conception of 'the "One" and the "Many."' Zizioulas insists that:

Reception does not take place on the level of individuals but of communities. Because the Churches receive the Gospel, the creeds etc. as communities, there is need for a certain ministry expressing the unity of the community.
In the classical mode of reception this was the function of the bishop, or to put it better, the ministry of the episkopé.98

If reception is not to be thought of as being an individual matter but rather one for the ecclesial community, then it is equally true to say that reception cannot be a matter for each community as an individual, autonomous body. The basic principles of eucharistic ecclesiology require that such reception be a matter for all the local Churches:

Reception cannot be limited to the local level but has to be universal. A ministry of universal reception is needed which should meet the requirements of communion. Such requirements would involve the following: (a) that this ministry should be episcopal: i.e. it should be exercised by the head of a local church. This would assure that universal catholicity does not bypass or contradict the catholicity of the local church. (b) That a consensus of the faithful should be obtained in every case of reception and that this should pass through the local bishops and not be a matter of individuals. In these circumstances one should not hesitate to seek such a ministry in the Bishop of Rome.99

This is important for three reasons. In the first place, Zizioulas is here opting for an ecclesiology which does not see the unity of local Churches as being one of undifferentiated oneness, but rather as a communion of differentiated Churches. It is precisely because this unity is based on a differentiated oneness that Zizioulas can posit a situation in which, whilst each Church retains its full ontological value as Body of Christ, independently but not separately from the other local Churches, there exists the possibility of a primacy which has real power.

Secondly, reception is a matter not for the individual members of the Church as such, but is rather expressed through the ministry of the local bishop. In opting for this position, Zizioulas is demonstrating a move away from the more individualistic, pneumatologically conceived understanding of Khomiakov and his followers.
Finally, Zizioulas specifically opts for the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. This is important for the very reason that he is implicitly recognizing Rome's **right** to the primacy in a united Church. This is a position which is not adopted by all Orthodox, in spite of Rome's undoubted primacy in the Church until the final formalization of the Great Schism.\(^{100}\) Many have held that Rome has, through schism and heresy, forfeited the right to the primacy, which has now passed elsewhere.\(^{101}\) Zizioulas, in distancing himself from such a position, is here in accord with contemporary writers such as Keshishian, in whose thought the problem is not Roman primacy *per se*, but rather the manner of its exercise.\(^{102}\) In viewing the universal primacy in terms of service to the unity of the Church rather than in strictly jurisdictional terms, Zizioulas finds himself in accord with much contemporary Roman Catholic ecclesiological thinking.

**Unity - An Ecumenical Convergence?**

The unity of the Church is itself instrumental in the search for a wider unity, that of all humanity, and it is in this light that the unity of the Church must be seen.\(^{103}\) It has been noted that:

> Humanity is on the search for the true unity: ultimately this is the keynote of the age in which we live. The one word that touches the heart of our era is the word unity. . . . The one question - but also the deepest one - is: why is unity particularly the key word in God's history with men and women? Why does God desire, not only the unity of every individual with him, but also the unity of all human beings with one another? The answer is himself, it is the innermost mystery of God himself.\(^{104}\)

Since Vatican II, Roman Catholic thought has increasingly turned to the concept of the papacy as centre of unity of the Church. Whilst it is fashionable to blame the mediaeval Schoolmen for all unpalatable developments in post-mediaeval theology, the jurisdictional claims of the Roman Church in the high Middle Ages owed at least as much to political considerations (i.e. the need to ensure the independence of
the Church from imperial control, especially as manifested in the Germanic proprietary system) as to an ecclesiology seeking to extend Roman 'rights' and 'power' over the non-Western Church. Although it is certainly true to say that, for Aquinas, unity with the Church of God means unity with the Pope, nevertheless he is not primarily interested in questions of rights and jurisdiction, but of unity. Robert Kress argues that unity is the prime duty and function of the papal office. For Thomas, the papacy must always be seen in the light of the Pauline belief that 'God is not a God of confusion but of peace' (1 Cor. 14:33). Aquinas explains that:

The error of those who claim that the vicar of Christ, the pontiff of the Roman Church, does not enjoy a primacy of the universal Church is similar to the error of those who claim that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son. For Christ himself, the son of God, consecrates his church and seals it for himself by the Holy Spirit as if by a character or seal. So, likewise does the vicar of Christ, as a faithful minister, by his primacy and providence preserve the universal Church subject to Christ.

In contemporary Roman Catholic theology, Eugenio Corecco, for example, draws out the implications of such an understanding of the papal office, arguing that the Bishop of Rome is not so much an authority with a higher divine power, but is to be understood as custodian of the unity of the Church:

with power not over the Church, but rather within the ecclesial communion. And this communion in its turn depends rather on a bond of love in the Holy Spirit ('sobornost') than on the legal position of a monarchical authority deriving from the possession of an ecclesiastical office.

Within the inter-locking web of communions of local churches, the ministry of the primacy is to promote and ensure the cooperation of the local Churches within the real unity of the one Church. It would seem that the opportunity exists for an understanding of collegiality which resembles that advocated by Zizioulas. In this understanding, the Pope requires the other bishops just as they need him. The Pope
functions as the 'One' in Zizioulas' 'One/Many' configuration. Indicating the 'corporate personality' of the Pope in this configuration, McGarry observes that, 'To be in communion with the Pope, who is at once the visible symbol and the efficacious cause of the Church's unity, is to be one with Christ.'

For the Orthodox, the universality of the Church flows from the catholicity of local communities centred in the Eucharist. This implies the necessity of communion with all the other local Churches. Just as the bishop becomes, in the eucharistic event, the touchstone for communion within the context of the local Church, and just as within each province or autocephalous Church the metropolitan or patriarch becomes the focus and manifestation of unity, so at the universal level Orthodox are compelled by the internal logic of their position to seek a similar principle of unity who, as Zizioulas has shown, must be present in the same way as within the local Church, in order that supra-local, supra-episcopal structures be avoided. Failure to accept a ministry of universal unity within the Church challenges the Orthodox acceptance of partial primacy on the regional level as being inconsistent.

Roman Catholic teaching on the nature of the Papacy has, in recent years, been quite deliberate in expounding the crucial role it has for ecclesial unity. In the document on the nature of the Church as communion, published by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1992, it is emphasized that:

As the very idea of the body of the Churches calls for the existence of a Church that is head of the Churches, which is precisely the Church of Rome, "foremost in the universal communion of charity", so too the unity of the episcopate involves the existence of a bishop who is head of the body or college of bishops, namely the Roman Pontiff. Of the unity of the episcopate, as also of the unity of the entire Church, "the Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation."
The Eucharist is situated within the context of universal communion, not only with the local bishop but also with the Pope, the 'first' bishop of the universal Church:

The unity of the Eucharist and the unity of the episcopate with Peter and under Peter are not independent roots of the unity of the Church, since Christ instituted the Eucharist and the episcopate as essentially interlinked realities. The episcopate is one, just as the Eucharist is one: the one sacrifice of the one Christ, dead and risen. The liturgy expresses this reality in various ways, showing, for example, that every celebration of the Eucharist is performed in union not only with the proper bishop, but also with the pope, with the episcopal order, with all the clergy and with the entire people.\textsuperscript{113}

These moves towards understanding the Pope as being at the centre of the unity of the universal Church, that is, in conciliar terms rather than as being the 'bishop over all the members of the church, over the bishops and the other faithful,'\textsuperscript{114} are mirrored, to a certain extent, within Orthodoxy. Archbishop Methodius (Fouyas), a committed ecumenist, approvingly quoted what he saw as Möhler's 'moderate' position, remarking that such an idea of authority cannot be totally excluded by Orthodox believers and noting its similarity to certain ideas suggested by Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev:

The episcopacy, the continuation of the Apostleship, is accordingly revered as a Divine institution: no less so, and even, on that very account, the Pope, who is \textbf{the centre of unity}, and the head of the episcopacy. If the episcopacy is to form a corporation, outwardly as well as inwardly bound together, in order to unite all believers into one harmonious life . . . it stands in need of a centre, whereby all may be held together and firmly connected. . . . Without a visible head the whole view, which the Catholic Church takes to herself as a visible society representing the place of Christ, would have been lost, or rather, never would have occurred to her. In a visible Church, a visible head is necessarily included.\textsuperscript{115}

For many Orthodox scholars today, primacy is a real necessity.  

413
However, though a sign of unity, 'it does not imply jurisdictional power or a structure of authority over the church.' Schmemann has observed that:

The ecclesiological error of Rome lies not in the affirmation of her universal primacy. Rather, the error lies in the identification of this primacy with "supreme power" which transforms Rome into principium, radix et origo of the unity of the Church.

Rightly understood, primacy is not a matter of jurisdictional power of one Church or bishop over the others. On the contrary:

Eucharistic ecclesiology is thus an ecclesiology of communion where "the principle of power gives way to the principle of harmony." This communion is structured round centres of harmony, one of which is universal and "presides in love", to use the words which St. Ignatius of Antioch describes the vocation of the Church of Rome. But just as in the Trinity "the Father assures the unity without threatening the perfect equality of the Three", so, in the communion of churches perfectly equal in their ultimate reality where each is the Church of God, primacy can only be one of service and of icon: serving the communion of all the churches, functioning as an icon of their unity, an organ of their missionary universality.

Zizioulas' ecclesiology offers exciting possibilities for dialogue between Rome and the Orthodox on the nature of primacy within the Church. His seeking a centre of unity in a universal primacy resonates within both contemporary Orthodox and Roman Catholic ecclesiology. His distinctive contribution lies in his application of this 'One/Many' configuration not only within each local Church, in which it is the bishop who is the corporate personality, but also among local Churches dispersed throughout the world. Yet, as Schmemann notes, it is not Rome's claim to universal primacy that is the issue, but rather the manner in which this primacy is exercised. It is essential that we turn to this question of the authority of the primatial Church, for as McPartlan has suggested:
Zizioulas does not bring fully to light the real issue, which is that of whether being equally answerable vertically to God for their own churches precludes the bishops from having in their midst one whose horizontal role is truly unique and personal.\textsuperscript{120}

\section*{Universal Primacy and Authority}

For Zizioulas, the 'reception' of Christian doctrine - and hence the nature of Christian authority - is determined by the pneumatological dimension. The Incarnation itself is a work of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35), which means that reception itself (that is, definitively, the receiving of Christ himself as gift of the Father) must be determined by the pneumatological. Zizioulas argues that:

There are many elements basic to pneumatology, but from the ecclesiological point of view the most crucial one is that the Spirit is koinonia. If, therefore, reception takes place \textit{in the Spirit}, it must always take place in and through an \textit{event of communion}. By giving his Son as his own very love, God does not \textit{impose} the reception of this gift upon us. The Spirit is freedom, and reception of anything that is the content (the "what") of reception cannot be imposed, on anyone by anyone. Truth is not authoritarian; it is authoritative by springing from an \textit{event of communion}.\textsuperscript{121}

We may deduce that Zizioulas is opposed to the authoritarian and autocratic mode of exercise of the primacy. Yet it would be unjust to see in Zizioulas' position just another negative critique of Roman Catholic practice by an Orthodox theologian. Zizioulas is equally critical of what he views as being unsatisfactory theology and practice within his own communion.

Two things may be drawn from this position of Zizioulas. On the one hand, there is a 'negative' dimension in which he criticizes the manner of exercising the primacy, whether local, regional or universal, which conflicts with the principle of communion. In practice, although he can be sharply cutting regarding his own
Church, this effectively means maintaining a critical distance from post-Patristic understandings of the exercise of papal power in the Church. Authority, in Zizioulas' understanding, is not dependent upon an exercise of power, of naked potestas. Positively, there is a 'power' in the Church, although this should rather be termed 'authority', which is manifested through the event of communion. The truth, by very fact of its being truth, has an inherent claim to acceptance which impresses itself upon the recipient, although it may of course be ignored or rejected. This position opens up the possibility, essential for any meaningful ecumenical rapprochement with Rome, of there being a primacy which exercises authority within the Church but which, equally, is not a monarchical papacy acting in isolation from any real practice of conciliarity.

A basic principle is that, 'All power and authority in the Ecclesia Dei et Jesu Christi is fundamentally the power and authority of Christ and should be understood and derived from this "christological principle of power"'.\textsuperscript{122} In the New Testament almost all authority is internal, that is, it depends upon weighty moral or spiritual example, or convincing arguments, rather than on any obvious authority attaching itself to the role or position of the person considered to be authoritative. As such, authority persuades; it does not coerce. Because of this lack of coercive power,

\begin{quote}
The decisive factor in the New Testament understanding of the concepts "power, sovereignty" etc., is that all exercise of power in Christ's Church is understood fundamentally as diakonia and not as arché.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

Because of this understanding of authority, we could expect that the exercise of power in the early centuries of the Church's history would be in accord with the principles of ministry and service. Was that in fact the case? The bishop exercised authority in a collegial fashion, first of all with his presbytery and then with the whole people.\textsuperscript{124} However, how did the rapidly developing primatial sees exercise their own authority, firstly on a regional, and then on a universal, level?
Ontologically, all Churches are equal yet the witness of some may outweigh that of others. This gives the former no jurisdical rights over the latter but, from early times, did give them a certain priority of moral authority, which gradually became institutionalized in canonical form. Each primatial Church acted as a sort of focus for the other Churches within its orbit, the first level of primacy corresponding to the Roman political provincial system. Within this system, the primatial Church acted as a focal point for the other Churches, convening and presiding over synods in the person of its bishop. Yet, at all times, the fundamental principle that the primate could do nothing without the others, as they could do nothing without him, remained axiomatic. This in no way implied a higher sacramental order of primates, nor power of jurisdiction over other local Churches, for the bishop is at the summit of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as president of the eucharistic community.

Those who exercised a primacy did not, in this era, consider themselves to be in a position to command obedience of other local bishops. Cyprian himself, whom Zizioulas defends against Afanasiev's accusations of being a prime mover behind the development of universal ecclesiology, stated categorically that;

\[
\text{Our present business is to state individually our views on the particular subject before us, judging no one, and not excommunicating anyone who may hold different views from ourselves. For no one of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by autocratic intimidation compels his colleagues to a forced obedience...}^{127}
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However, some modern Orthodox writers insist that in Orthodox ecclesiology, today as in the ancient Church, primacy is always purely honorary, having no jurisdical authority.\(^{128}\) Ware points out that:

\[
\text{in the ten centuries when East and West formed one communion, the four eastern patriarchates showed at times a deep reverence to the Elder Rome, allowing her more than a bare primacy of honour, but they never thought in terms of an 'ordinary and immediate' power of}
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417
This qualifies claims that Rome enjoyed only a primacy of honour, in effect a mere passing nod of respect. One of the major powers of the regional primacies was presidency of the synod. From early times a principle, if not the principle function of this synod was to regulate admission to the eucharist by acting as a court of appeal in cases of excommunication. It was merely an extension of this when primates came to exercise this function, on behalf of their colleagues. In Zizioulas' terms, it would be legitimate to see in this an example of the principle of 'the "One" and the "Many,"' the corporate personality in which the 'One' acts on behalf of the 'Many', in which the 'Many' act in the person of the 'One'.

Just as the patriarchs served as 'centres of communion' and courts of appeal, so from a relatively early time Rome functioned in a similar way for the universal Church. Whilst there was no sense in which the Pope was seen as having 'ordinary and immediate jurisdiction,' the Early Church certainly saw in him a centre for appeals. As the Council of Sardica stated in 343:

If any among the bishops has been accused, but thinks his cause is just and that a new synod should be called, let us, if you consent, honor the memory of the Apostle St. Peter, and let them who examined the case write to Bishop Julius of Rome.

This appellate role of the Pope is recognized also by modern Orthodox writers. Meyendorff, writing against a background of not only Roman claims but also many similarly worded claims by Constantinople, maintained that:

Orthodox ecclesiology does not know of any divinely appointed, institutional power of one local church over the other local churches and their bishops. It recognizes the existence of local primacies, and it always accepted the idea that one Church, that of Jerusalem, that of Rome, later that of Constantinople, may play the role of a universal arbiter, may enjoy the right of receiving appeals, a right established and regulated by the
Councils, and in fact may preside over the universal episcopate. But this “primacy” does not confer on the bishop of Rome or of Constantinople either infallibility or universal jurisdiction, but a kind of “priority” in settling controversial matters for the common good.133

However, Meyendorff has exaggerated the degree to which Orthodox writers have assented to the Roman primacy. Thus, for example, Khomiakov and those who have closely followed him have tended to draw the teeth from any primacy, and that must include, par excellence, that of Rome.134 Nevertheless, Zizioulas’ belief that primacy is important to the Church is echoed in the Dublin Agreed Statement between the Anglicans and Orthodox. Seeing primacy in terms of service and not coercion, the document recognizes different levels of wider leadership in the Church. Furthermore, it supports the ancient principle that primacy has an appellate function, yet may not directly intervene in the internal affairs of another local Church.

Primacy must be related to the eucharistic basis of the Church. Each local Church is fully body of Christ in virtue of its eucharistic independence, although not isolation.135 There are affinities in Afanasiev’s thought on this matter to Trinitarian theology, where ‘the fulness of the divine nature is found in each hypostasis of the blessed Trinity.’136 However, that being said, it is the relationships between the hypostases which actually make the Trinity, rather than a tritheistic conception of the deity. Likewise, it is the mutual relationships between the various local Churches which ensure that each is fully part of the Church of God. Failure to engage in these relationships would, ultimately, deprive a local Church of its status and character as Church.

With regard to primacy, the authority of the bishop who has priority depends upon his position as head of a local eucharistic community. As such, his direct authority is limited, as it is with any other bishop, to his own Church. However, the very fact of incorporation into the college of bishops means that the bishop has a solicitude for
all other Churches. This is certainly expressed in the concern the bishops show for the provision of a new bishop in a vacant see.\textsuperscript{137} Now, if this care and solicitude is demanded of all bishops, it must be required in greater measure from the 'One' who sums up within his own person the 'Many,' the plurality of bishops who come under his care.

For Zizioulas, the bishop can be considered primate only because he is head of the local Church which, in Afanasiev's terms, has 'priority.' Precisely because of that, the primate, the 'One,' has authority only because he expresses within himself the 'Many.' This makes him a corporate, and hence relational, being, which in turn radically affects the nature of his primatial authority. Just as the bishop acts collegially with the consent of the other orders within his local eucharistic community, so too the primate acts collegially with the other bishops. Zizioulas' treatment of the authority of the primate is consistent with his treatment of the authority of the diocesan bishop. The authority of the 'One' in this case is identical with that of the 'Many' for the reason that he is ontologically equal to them. However, in seeking to express primatial authority in terms which are consonant with his understanding of the nature of the Church as communion and in the light of his own key hermeneutical principle, that of corporate personality or 'the "One" and the "Many,"' Zizioulas comes headlong against the Roman Catholic dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope. As it is inconceivable that Rome should abandon this, it becomes imperative for Zizioulas and others who seek reunion between the Orthodox and the Latin West to find a resolution which, whilst having its roots within the Orthodox ecclesiology consciousness, nevertheless could prove acceptable to Roman Catholic theology.

**Infallibility and the Church**

Whilst the infallibility of the Pope has always been unacceptable to
Orthodoxy, these difficulties are raised in a heightened form in an ecclesiology of communion such as that proposed by John Zizioulas. Intimately tied to the problem of the authority inherent in the primacy, nevertheless infallibility has a problematic all of its own, for even if one concedes Roman jurisdictional claims this need not lead to an acceptance of the claims of personal papal infallibility.

As defined by Vatican I, in spite of what may be popularly believed, the dogma of Papal Infallibility is very narrow. It was defined in the *Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia Christi*, otherwise known as *Pastor Aeternus*. The crucial part of the definition states that “*Romani Pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae irreformabiles esse.*” Zizioulas’ teacher, Georges Florovsky, in common with the whole Orthodox tradition, would reject this teaching on the grounds that:

A bishop of the Church, *episcopus in ecclesia*, must be a teacher. Only the bishop has received full power and authority to speak in the name of his flock. . . . But to do so the bishop must embrace his Church within himself; he must manifest its experience and its faith. He must speak not from himself, but in the name of the Church, *ex consensu ecclesiae*. This is just the contrary of the formula *ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*. It is not from his flock that a bishop receives full power to teach, but from Christ through the Apostolic Succession. But full power has been given to him to bear witness to the catholic experience of the body of the Church. He is limited by this experience, and therefore in questions of faith the people must judge concerning his teaching. The duty of obedience ceases when the bishop deviates from the catholic norm and the people have the right to accuse and even depose him.¹³⁸

Whilst this would seem biased towards the Christological, there is nevertheless much here which Zizioulas would make his own. Zizioulas is emphatic that the bishop must be located *within* his Church and is not to be conceived apart from or over it. He receives his very being as bishop from the ‘Many’ who constitute the ‘One,’ whilst simultaneously being constituted by him.¹³⁹ Precisely
because the community constitute him, he ceases to be conceivable as an *individual* and becomes a relational entity, a *person* in the fullest sense of the term:

In the light of the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit, ordination relates the ordained man so profoundly and so existentially to the community that in his new state after ordination he cannot be any longer, as a minister, conceived in himself. In this state, existence is determined by *communion* which qualifies and defines both 'ontology' and 'function'.

Through the action of the Holy Spirit, Christ is made present in the ordained, but only as a relational entity and never in and for himself. The Pope is the first of the bishops precisely because he heads that community, the Church of Rome, which is deemed to have priority within the universal Church. Should that relationship cease to exist, then the Pope would lose his right to lead the universal Church.

The difficulty with attributing infallibility to any one bishop is that it sets him apart in the most radical way possible from the rest of the episcopate, who are not gifted with infallibility, even within their own dioceses, for their teaching must always be subject to scrutiny and, if necessary, correction, by the entire body of the faithful. The Bishop of Rome, on the other hand, enjoys an infallibility, by means of which he is actively preserved from error by God when teaching the whole Church *ex cathedra*, for the 'basis of the infallible definition is the assistance of the Holy Spirit.'

Because Vatican I explicitly stated that the consent of the Church is not required, as a *sine qua non*, for the exercise of papal infallibility, the pope is believed to be able to speak in an infallible manner without the consent of the Church. It becomes a serious possibility that the pope could teach not only without the consent of the Church, but even in direct opposition to the will of the Church universal. That being the case, there is no way in which such an institution, interpreted in this light, could be acceptable in Zizioulas' ecclesiology of communion.
Because the pope is removed from a meaningful relationship with the Church, by virtue of the infallibility of his office when teaching *ex cathedra*, he must therefore be above the Church and hence separate from it. From an Orthodox viewpoint, such is unacceptable.142

The Orthodox position is that the Church *as a whole* is infallible.143 Keshishian states the consequences in concise terms:

> The council serves as the mouthpiece of the church. Therefore, it is not above the Church; it is not infallible in itself. The infallibility of the council is derived from the church and is dependent on it. Hence, the Orthodox reject the dogma of papal infallibility as void of any biblical basis and theological foundation.144

Given this situation, the prospect of Zizioulas' ecclesiology being able to accommodate Roman Catholic dogma concerning the infallibility of the pope would seem to be remote. However, before finally deciding that papal infallibility and an Orthodox understanding of the Church are incompatible, it would be appropriate to consider a suggestion which might offer the germ of a possible solution.

The pope cannot, according to the clear terms of *Pastor Aeturnus*, infallibly expound *any* teaching which occurs to him. Infallibility, correctly comprehended, is not a positive attribute but a negative grace which prevents him from falling into error whilst teaching *ex cathedra*. The pope can therefore teach only that which is in accordance with the Tradition of the Church.145 That being the case, might it not be possible to suggest that the pope, in teaching infallibly, that is, *ex cathedra*, is in fact expressing the faith of the Church as its mouthpiece?

Theologically, we would therefore have a situation in which the pope speaks as a corporate personality, as Zizioulas' 'One' who sums up in his own person the 'Many' represented in this case by his brother bishops and, through their persons, the entire body of the Church.
Infallibility would still be the prerogative of the Church as an entirety but the organ of this gift of God to the Church would be the pope, speaking in the name of, and on behalf of, the episcopate. Infallibility, thus understood as the province of the whole Church expressed through the teaching of the senior bishop acting on behalf of the entire Body of Christ, would not have the character of an external guarantee of truth, as opposed by recent Orthodox views. On the contrary, an interpretation such as this would not only ensure that the pope would be relocated within the episcopal college but would also provide a logical summit to Zizioulas' understanding of corporate personality in the Church within the framework of a Christic-Pneumatic ecclesiology of communion.

**Primacy and Ecumenism**

Because this issue arises frequently in dialogue between Rome and the Orthodox, being the single most contentious issue between the two communions, this is a subject in which Zizioulas is particularly interested. He notes that the question of primacy is one which the Orthodox tradition must face:

Is there a primacy, a universal ministry of unity, or is such a thing not necessary? The Orthodox have to make up their minds about this, because while on the one hand we stress unity at the universal level through the synods, on the other hand we also recognise a certain primacy in certain sees.

In his contribution to a seminar on Episcopal Conferences, a Roman Catholic phenomenon which has no strict parallel within the Orthodox Churches, Zizioulas asks, 'A synod . . . needs a head in order to function. What is the ecclesiological significance of this head in relation to the synod?' Within Orthodoxy, he goes on to observe, there is, at present, only regional primacy but it is possible to derive some general principles from this. With regard to a future reunited Church, the question of a universal primacy would be
unnecessary, and not merely from the pragmatic realization that the Roman Catholic Church is not going to abandon its commitment to at least some form of expression of universal primacy for the See of Rome. For Zizioulas, this is essentially so because, ‘there can be no communion of local churches without some form of universal synodality, and no universal synodality without some form of universal primacy.’ Yet primacy of the universal Church is not purely an honorary affair. On the contrary, it is possible to draw conclusions from current autocephalous practice on this matter:

... it would be a mistake to regard the authority of let us say a patriarch in relation to a synod in the Orthodox Church as simply a primacy of honor, as it is often stated by Orthodox theologians. There is certainly more to this primacy than simple “honor.” The patriarch can convoke the synod and set its agenda. His presence is a *sine qua non* condition for all canonical deliberations, such as the election of bishops, etc. This means that the synod cannot function without its head; the many without the one are inconceivable. The *primus* therefore gives its theological status to the synod, and not simply honor.151

If this is a principle which is accepted as a theological prerequisite by the Orthodox on an autocephalous, regional, level then it becomes difficult to deny its necessity on the universal level. Indeed, it is perhaps especially on the universal level that it is most required, for it is precisely on the universal level that the unity of the various local Churches becomes truly most manifest.

Although most Orthodox writers have warmly welcomed statements of Vatican II on collegiality, nevertheless they feel that their concerns have not been properly addressed:

We Orthodox are disturbed by the distinction which is constantly drawn in *Lumen Gentium* between head and members, between the “Roman pontiff” and the episcopal college as a whole. At times it seems to us that the pope is regarded, not as the senior member and the elder brother within the episcopal college, but as a superior who is set above the college; and this, clearly, is not
what the Orthodox understand by *sobornost*.  

This distinction between head and college, which is a hallmark of Roman Catholic ecclesiology, is at the root of the ecumenical problem between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox. The fact that theologians such as the late Yves Congar held such views as the following does not entirely remove the problem. Congar wrote that the Pope:

> is in the college, but in the college he occupies a particular position which allows him to speak, as Peter did in the midst of the Twelve, in a quite personal way, freely and independently. All the same, even in this instance he is bound up with the others, and without them he would not be anything at all: bound to the Church by faith, he is also dependent on the faith of the Church. That is why, moreover, he is never completely alone. And I recall very well that in the famous *nota praevia explicativa* - the explanation preceding the *modi* added to Chapter III of *Lumen Gentium* which caused difficulties for a minority at the Council - the Pope is not said to act *solus* but *seorsim*. Not in solitude, but in a personal way.

Although the concept of collegiality is considered to be the hallmark of *Lumen Gentium*, not only does the document never set the Pope in the context of the college of bishops by referring to him by his title of Bishop of Rome, it also fails to fulfil Zizioulas’ requirements for a primacy within the context of collegiality. For whilst the collegiality of the bishops is affirmed in the documents of Vatican II and, indeed, in the new Catechism, their dependence on the Roman pontiff is likewise reaffirmed in ways which in no way modify the teaching of Vatican I. In Zizioulas’ understanding, it is essential that the ‘One’ is as dependent upon the ‘Many’ for his existence as they are upon him. For Zizioulas, *interdependence* is the key. This is because of the Christic-Pneumatological basis of his ecclesiology, which demands absolutely that the ‘One’ (Christ) is inconceivable without the ‘Many’ (the Church) and hence, because the Church is a creation of Christ in the Holy Spirit, the *primus* cannot even exist as such without the rest of the episcopate of which he is head.
Contemporary Roman Catholic doctrine, however much it has taken into itself the concept of episcopal collegiality, cannot satisfy Zizioulas' requirements for the very reason that it fails this crucial test of interdependence. As Meyendorff commented, 'The absence of any interdependence between the pope and the bishops in the decisions of Vatican II actually deprives the texts on collegiality of much real value.'

Although Zizioulas' understanding of the nature of primacy is not mirrored exactly within the Roman Catholic Church, owing to its distinctive understanding of the place of the pope within the college of bishops, nevertheless his ideas offer some hope for a growth towards a common understanding of the nature of primacy. Whilst we should avoid being too eager to hail his ideas as the breakthrough required in this area, nevertheless they have a contribution to make to contemporary ecumenical dialogue which is both substantial and positive.

**Conclusion**

Much of Zizioulas' interpretation of primacy within the Church merits approbation. Although a considerable number of Orthodox writers have denied the possibility of any meaningful primacy, they are far from consistent in this matter, as they all - even Khomiakov - adhere to an understanding of the bishop as primus within his own diocese. Logically, their opposition to primacy on a universal level, based on a supposed headship of the invisible Christ which removes the very possibility of headship being vested in a human, being would require them to adopt the same argument with respect to the local eucharistic community. If consistently applied, this could finally result only in the adoption of a 'democratic' form of Church government and worship such as can be found in parts of the Protestant tradition.
Zizioulas makes the unity of the universal Church depend on both Eucharist and bishop. However, he extends the principle of collegiality observed at work within the Ignatian and Hippolytan presbyterates to a universal level. There is to be no institution which can supplant the catholicity of the local eucharistic community. Rather, whereas a universalist ecclesiology supposes a figure as head who is superior to the local bishops, an ecclesiology such as that of Zizioulas, which is firmly anchored within a eucharistic ecclesiology, must express its universality through the conciliarity of ontologically equal heads of local Churches.

Yet this conciliarity is differentiated. Although ontologically equal, the bishops do not all have the same function, role or relationship as the others. There exists a differentiated equality which, following the lines of Paul's thought in 1 Cor. 12, is based upon a theology of differentiation of spiritual gifts. Thus, whilst the leading Church is certainly not ontologically different or superior to the other Churches, it can be said to enjoy a genuine preeminence of position.157 Yet this is emphatically not a lordship over the other Churches. The basic principles of Zizioulas' eucharistic ecclesiology do not allow such a possibility. Zizioulas' insistence that all ministries are dependent upon the others is echoed in the affirmation of the principle that, 'there is no ministry which does not need the other ministries.'158 It would imply that the Pope himself, although first bishop of the Church, cannot exist without the other bishops.

Vatican II is often understood as having placed the concept of collegiality at the heart of ecclesiology after its long absence from Latin theology.159 Yet, in the understanding of the Council, as expressed, in particular, through the text of Lumen Gentium, this collegiality does not imply that all are equal.160 Vatican II indeed affirmed collegiality, but this collegiality is a differentiated one. For the Roman Catholic Church, collegiality by no means rules out the positive role of the primacy.161 Indeed:
"The college or body of bishops has no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head.” As such, this college has "supreme and full authority over the universal Church; but this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff".162

How does this compare with Zizioulas' own conception of collegiality? It is, in fact, far from being dissimilar. Zizioulas believes that it is essential that the 'Many' be united with the 'One'. It is the primum who gives the 'Many' their theological status.163 Reflecting his concern for a synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology, we can see here a parallel with his thought in the area of Christology. We, the 'Many', are given our relational status to God by virtue of the fact that we are made one with him in Christ, who is himself the 'One'. We cannot be conceived of apart from this 'One' and, indeed, outside of this 'One' we can have no real relationship with God. However, it is equally true that, in Zizioulas' understanding, it is impossible to conceive of Christ, the 'One', in isolation from the 'Many'. Just as we receive our identity as sons of God by virtue of our union with the Son of God, so too Christ exists as a relational being in relationship with humanity, only by virtue of being constituted by the Holy Spirit, thereby being a relational being. Ecclesiologically, this implies that the 'One', the Pope, must exist in a state of communion with the 'Many' - that is, with the other bishops of the universal Church. It is axiomatic for Zizioulas that the two exist in mutual interdependence upon each other. How true is this of the Roman Catholic Church?

Whilst Vatican II certainly affirmed the principle of collegiality, it nevertheless did so in such a way as to raise questions about the nature of this collegiality. It is not sufficient to say that, because both Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches talk of the necessity of collegiality within the Church or episcopate, they necessarily mean the same thing. Whereas for Zizioulas the primum is as dependent upon the rest of the episcopal college as they are on him and that without their consent he can do nothing, it is quite a
different case with regards to the Roman Catholic position.

Whilst Ratzinger, now Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, can argue that the papacy is in no way, even post-1870, a monarchical primacy, but rather requires the communion of the Pope with the bishops, the extent to which this is actually true is highly debatable. As one Roman Catholic commentator observes:

Episcopal collegiality is considered the hallmark of *Lumen Gentium* . . . [but] a noticeable characteristic of the discussion of collegiality is the reaffirmation of the Vatican I doctrine of the primacy either immediately before or immediately after affirmations of episcopal collegiality.

It is not surprising that Ratzinger, who was himself a supporter of the 'progressive' wing at Vatican II, can assert that the doctrine of collegiality was biased in a 'primatialistic' way owing to the intervention of the pope in the debate on the governance of the Church, which was expressed in the famous (or infamous) *nota praevia* or 'explanatory remarks.'

For the Orthodox, the primate must always act collegially with his brother-bishops. Zizioulas envisages this within the context of his key concept of the "One" and the "Many" and hence within a eucharistic framework. Contemporary Roman Catholic theologians, such as Ratzinger, would also envisage primacy and collegiality as belonging together and this is, indeed, the official Roman Catholic position. However, this is conceived of in such a way that the pope is capable of acting independently of the rest of the episcopate, should need arise, although they may never act independently of him. Clearly, this does not accord fully with Zizioulas' understanding of collegiality. Given that Rome remains committed to the doctrine enunciated in *Pastor Aeternus* and reiterated, with some clarifications, in *Lumen Gentium*, one must question whether we can expect to find full accord between Zizioulas, as an Orthodox,
and contemporary Roman Catholic understandings of the nature of collegiality. However, in spite of differences of approach and emphases, there is common ground. In moving to a positive understanding of the nature of primacy within the Church, Zizioulas has performed a valuable ecumenical service. As has been acknowledged at the highest official levels, through the adoption of the ‘Munich Statement’ of 1982, the conciliar system is the basis on which must be founded all future discussions about the nature of primacy.\(^{169}\) It is to Zizioulas’ credit that he has done precisely this and, in so doing, has contributed to the process of providing a more positive assessment of the nature and role of primacy from an Orthodox viewpoint.

However, one cannot accept Zizioulas’ position on primacy without critical comment. The foundation of ecclesiology, for Zizioulas as for many other writers, is the Trinity.\(^{170}\) The Church is the icon of the Trinity. However, the Trinity is not undifferentiated. There is indeed, without in any way compromising the absolute ontological equality of the Persons, a certain priority within the Trinity. In discussing the importance of ‘communion’ with reference to the trinitarian Persons, Zizioulas points out that:

\begin{quote}
this communion is not a relationship understood for its own sake, an existential structure which supplants “nature” or “substance” in its primordial ontological role - something reminiscent of the structure of existence met in the thought of Martin Buber. Just like “substance,” “communion” does not exist by itself: it is the Father who is the “cause” of it.\(^{171}\)
\end{quote}

Following the tradition of the Cappadocian Fathers, Zizioulas believes that there is a certain ‘order’ within the Trinity itself, in which the Son and the Holy Spirit depend, in a certain way, on the Father. What is of great note here is that this dependence can co-exist alongside absolute ontological equality. If, within a trinitarian context, communion cannot exist independently but must be rooted in a person and if the Church is a true icon of the
Trinity, existing in the same way as the Trinity, that is, as *communion*, then it would seem that there should be something within the Church which acts as the cause of its communion. This must surely be the *primus*, the 'one' whom the 'many' cannot do without.\(^\text{172}\) Zizioulas has elsewhere stated that the need for a principle of unity at a local level is repeated on a universal plane, 'Ecclesial identity must involve . . . (a) a ministry of unity on the local level; (b) a ministry of unity on the universal level.'\(^\text{173}\) That being the case, it is hard to see how we can avoid, on the basis of the iconological nature of the Church, attributing to a *person* the role of the Father in creating communion. Clearly, that person must be the *primus* and this must hold on each ever-widening circle of the Church, from local eucharistic community, through regional Churches, to the universal Church.

Zizioulas has made ever more clear statements on the need for a primacy which is more than honorary.\(^\text{174}\) Yet although the primus is *necessarily* a corporate personality,\(^\text{175}\) episcopal collegiality is a 'unity in identity.'\(^\text{176}\) McPartlan has remarked that although 'Zizioulas certainly appears to favour the transition,' from corporate personality within the local Church to corporate personality on a universal level,\(^\text{177}\) this transition is made with caution. Zizioulas does not seem to believe that there is an exact parallel, for:

> While we may say that, *within* the local church, the 'many' simply do not exist without the "one" (as there is no Christian without Christ), it does not seem that we can say the same *among* the local churches, for each of them has a certain fulness as the icon of the kingdom, even though it can never be this in deliberate isolation.\(^\text{178}\)

Given Zizioulas' eucharistic basis of ecclesiology, all that is required for the eucharist in a given community is that there be the presence of all the orders of the Church. If the local community has a eucharist, under this condition, then it is fully Church and cannot be said to *depend* on any other local eucharistic community,
although it cannot exist in isolation. If, as Zizioulas insists, the Church cannot do without the primacy, then this would appear to qualify the independence of the local Churches. I would wish to suggest that the trinitarian model of the Father having a form of ‘priority’, or ‘monarchy’, over the other Persons can be applied with profit to Zizioulas’ understanding of the Church. In so doing, we would move away both from a strict insistence upon the absolute independence of the local Churches from any dependence on a centre or source of unity and, at the same time, from the classical Roman Catholic insistence upon the position of the pope as having full and immediate universal jurisdiction over the Churches. Such a move would have the advantage of maintaining a strict relationship to trinitarian theology, seeing in the primus a certain causation of the unity, the ‘communion’, of the Church. At the same time, it would help satisfy the Orthodox requirement for mutual interdependence, for the Father is not Father without the Son and the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the primus can do nothing without the other bishops and, indeed, cannot even be said to exist without this relationship of mutual communion.

If there is ever to be a rapprochement between Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, it is hard to envisage without some understanding of the primacy which will go some way to satisfying the theological convictions of both sides. Zizioulas’ ecclesiology of the primacy, firmly based as it is on an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharistic and at one and the same time on his key concept of corporate personality, certainly marks a noted advance in this area. However, this is at the cutting-edge of Zizioulas’ thought and may yet receive further elaboration. At the same time, I would suggest that a more radical understanding of the implications of trinitarian theology along the lines suggested here would go a considerable way towards satisfying Roman Catholic doctrinal requirements. An approach such as this, firmly rooted in Zizioulas’ own insights but extending them somewhat further, may go some considerable way towards creating a situation in which we
could truly recognize that, 'The universal Church does not have a single principle of unity, the papacy, but a double one, papacy and episcopal college.'

A further important modification concerns the possibility of the creation of cultural episcopates, particularly within an ecumenical context. By combining the adoption of these with a model of primacy such as that suggested by Zizioulas, where the primus has some real power, though always in collegiality, we have the beginnings of a productive step forward. In Zizioulas' understanding, it is essential that the local Church be conceived of as a territorially-based entity. Yet the early Church was a good deal more flexible in this matter than Zizioulas would have us believe. Without by any means wishing to deny the symbolic, and hence very real, advantage of the concept of 'one bishop in one city,' I would suggest that the judicious use of the concept of primacy, both at a regional and at a universal level, could be an important ecumenical tool in the quest for wider unity between the Churches.

The bishop, as head of the local eucharistic community, is the focal point of the unity of the redeemed community. It is because of this that he is, in a sacramental sense, the representative to God of a redeemed culture:

Any human representation and celebration of redemption in terms of a redeemed community had an inseparable cultural form. Culture at a purely human level is an inseparable part of the history of our humanity which, by definition, requires a spatio-temporal location. But it is also inseparable at the level of God's redemptive activity in Christ, since grace perfects nature and does not destroy it.

I would suggest this is an appropriate model for ecumenical reconciliation; a scheme whereby each 'part' of a reuniting Church within a given geographical area would retain its own bishops. Primacy, both within a fairly narrowly-defined geographical location and on the universal level, would be the touchstone for ecclesial
communion. Those who were in communion with the *primus* would be deemed to be in communion with all others thus in communion. Such an approach would obviate any anticipated problems over just who would be *the* bishop in any given area, whilst at the same time blocking any form of liturgical or cultural imperialism. Theologically, such a model would serve to give an excellent demonstration of Zizioulas' concept of 'the One and the Many,' whilst performing the practical task of providing a ministry of unity and cohesion within a culturally diverse situation.
Chapter Seven

Notes


2. Obviously, this does not include those whose intentions are more restricted. Thus, for example, a theologian who is attempting to delineate an ecclesiology in a situation in which two or more Protestant Churches are working towards union, may feel no need to devote time to this question. Yet that does not mean to say that he ought not to. On the contrary, as will be argued during the course of this chapter, it is difficult to avoid the question of primacy in some form, even in a supposedly non-hierarchical Church.


4. C. Konstantinidis, Authority in the Orthodox Church, pp.205 - 206.


7. V. Corwin, St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch, p.31.

8. In Acts 2 it is clearly Peter who has the leading part in the foundation of the Jerusalem Church. Likewise, it is Peter, in his role as head of the community, who speaks for the Church in the affair of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Peter, however, did not remain solely in Jerusalem but was to be found journeying round Palestine preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ. In such a situation, it was imperative that the Church had a settled leadership. Therefore it is no real surprise that we find another person - James - taking the leading part in the 'Council' in Acts 15. There is no question of James having a purely personal primacy. Rather, priority is given to the Jerusalem Church as a whole and exercised through James, who thus acts, by virtue of his presidency of
the community, as the 'voice' of that community. If this were not so and primacy was exercised by James in a personal capacity then there would have been little need for a 'council.' it would, in such a situation, have sufficed for James to give his personal assent to the developments among the Gentiles. Yet this is precisely what we do not find.

9. V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch*, p.44.
19. Cf. V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch*, pp.44 - 45. Corwin argues that, at least at this early stage, it would be 'not too daring to surmise that they influenced in some degree the Christian organization.' She observes that H. de Genouillac, *L'Eglise Chrétienne au temps de St. Ignace d'Antioche* (Paris, 1907), pp.45f., sees the influence of the imperial religious organization on the Christian Church, but not as a slavish imitation by the Church. We must remember, of course, that in the Roman Empire of the time, as in the later Christian state, there was no absolute and firm distinction between the civil and religious spheres. Thus, the provincial political assemblies were also in part for religious activities, something which Corwin would see, at least in part, reflected in ecclesiastical organization.

437

21. Thus, for example, Ludwig von Hertling, *Communio: Church and Papacy in Early Christianity* (ET Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1972), makes sweeping conclusions about the extent to which Rome was the supreme guarantee of orthodoxy and apostolicity in this period. Michael Fahey, *Ecclesial Community as Communion* in J.H. Provost (ed.), *The Church as Communion*, p.16, observes that 'One modern Dominican exegete, L.-M. Dewailly [Communio - Communicatio in Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, 54 (1970), pp.46 - 63], interprets the historical material about the role of Rome much more modestly. Such a careful interpretation of Rome's role in the first four centuries for verifying authentic koinonia has important implications for current Orthodox - Catholic dialogue.'


24. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 3, 2. It must be noted that the Latin is difficult to translate and is debated among scholars. The Latin text runs 'Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiorum principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditt.' Afanasiev suggests the use of the translation proposed by F. Sagnard (Irénée de Lyon, Contre les Hérésies, Sources chrétiennes 54, III, 3, 2 (Paris, 1952). Cf. Afanasiev, *The Church Which Presides in Love* in J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, p.129.

25. A claim which is clear in *The Letter of Clement to James* in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, which has its probable origins in the early part of the third century and possibly made as early as the mid second century.


Church, p.147.

29. J. Meyendorff, Catholicity and the Church, pp.128 - 129.

30. In response to this criticism, Byzantine scholars were to promote the myth of their Church's foundation by the apostle Andrew. Cf. F. Dvornik's fascinating study, The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the legend of the Apostle Andrew (Cambridge, Mass., 1958). Paradoxically, in promoting this claim, the Byzantines were undermining the whole Eastern view, expressly endorsed by the Council of 381, that apostolic foundation of itself was not the decisive factor in attributing primacy.

31. Caution must be exercised here. Although Roman claims certainly increased over the centuries, this advance was by no means steady. Thus, whilst Pope Gregory I accepted the primacy of his own Church, he was strongly opposed to the claim by Constantinople to the title of Ecumenical Patriarch or bishop, not because he believed that the title rightfully belonged to himself as Bishop of Rome, but because he believed, in common with the tradition of the ancient Church, that no bishop could claim jurisdiction over the universal Church. This is a clear indication, in addition, of the understanding of the difference between primacy and jurisdiction.


34. S.G. Hall, Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church, p.224.

35. J. Meyendorff, Catholicity and the Church, p.131.

36. J. Meyendorff, St. Peter in Byzantine Theology, p.68.

37. Cited by J. Meyendorff, St. Peter in Byzantine Theology, p.68.

38. Quoted by J. Meyendorff, St. Peter in Byzantine Theology, p.84.
48. Thus, writing almost forty years ago, John Romanides stated that:
   ‘If the Eucharistic life of selfless love is thus understood as an end in itself and the only condition for continual membership in the Church, it follows that the relationship of one community to another cannot be one of inferiority or superiority. Nor can one community be considered a part of another community because the fullness of Christ is to be found in the Eucharist which itself is the highest and only possible center and consummation of the life of unity and love.’
51. J. Zizioulas, *The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church*, pp.33-34.
52. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.133.

53. N. Afanasiev, in *The Church Which Presides in Love*, p.115. Given the importance of this paper, it is surprising that Zizioulas maintains his assertion that Afanasiev’s ecclesiology position verged on congregationalism. In truth, Afanasiev wished to avoid what he perceived to be the pitfalls of a ‘universalist’ ecclesiology, and to that extent may have somewhat exaggerated the independence of the local Church, but clearly, as can be seen from this reference, he was also concerned to maintain the unity of the local Churches.


60. J. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion*, p.156, n.62. Zizioulas goes on to note the intrinsic relationship between the problem of eucharistic communion and the origins of conciliar activity: 'The moment they would admit a supra-local structure over the local eucharistic community, be it a synod or another office, the eucharistic community would cease to be in itself and *by virtue of its eucharistic nature* a “catholic Church.” The moment, on the other hand, they would allow each eucharistic community to close itself to the other communities either entirely (i.e. by creating a schism) or partially (i.e. by not allowing certain individual faithful from one community to communicate in another or by accepting to communion faithful excluded from it by their own communion they would betray the *very eucharistic nature of their catholicity* and the catholic character of the eucharist. The council was, therefore, an inevitable answer to this dilemma, and its genesis must be seen in the light of this situation.'


62. F. Gavin, writing in the first quarter of the present century, notes: 'The organ for the formulation of doctrine is the Episcopate which, when representing the whole Church, functions *ipso jure* infallibly. the Ecumenical Councils represent such infallible action on the part of the Church. . . . Consequently whatever the Episcopate teaches is infallible, “whether as in part in local dioceses, or assembling as a whole in Ecumenical Councils.”'  


64. See, for example, The Dublin Agreed Statement, where infallibility, manifested through the reception of conciliar statements, is the property of the whole Church.


66. J. Erickson, *Concrete Structural Organization of the Local Church: The 1971 Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*, p.11.

67. H.S. Alivisatos, *The Greek Orthodox Church’s Unbroken Continuity with the Undivided Church* in *Church Quarterly Review* Vol. 118 (1934), pp. 269-270.


69. Alivisatos’ error here is to appeal to the wrong model for the Church’s structural organization. Rather than an appeal to what is, in essence, a socio-political model (that of democracy), we would be better looking to the Church to reflect the pattern of the Holy Trinity. This is of great importance. Fundamental to Orthodox trinitarian theology is the conviction of the absolute ontological equality of each of the Persons of the Trinity. Yet this by no means implies lack of distinction between the Persons, any more than the hypostatic distinctions compromise the absolute ontological harmony between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Within the Trinity, and this is a point which will have importance for a critical comment on Zizioulas’ thought towards the end of the present chapter, the Father has a sort of primacy, for:

> ‘the oneness of God is represented in a sovereign, specific manner by the Person of the Father, who remains the source of life for the other hypostases.'
For this reason, very often we find in the Cappadocians and their successors a rather close identification between the Father and Divinity. The other Persons are there because of the Father, the principle of their unity."

L. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor*, p.34.

Given the fact that Orthodox ecclesiology should posit a model of the Church which corresponds to the trinitarian paradigm, it would seem that it would be perfectly possible to argue, from *within* the Orthodox ecclesiological tradition, that primacy is by no means detrimental to the trinitarian concept of conciliarity.

78. E. Corecco, *The Bishop, Head of the Local Church and Discipline*, p.48.
79. Cf. J.H. Erickson, *Concrete Structural Organization of the Local Church*, p.17. We should note that, with regard to the Orthodox Church of America, this is a new situation. Prior to the 1971 Constitution, the 1955 Statute governing the then Russian Church in America held to a theology of the ‘Highest Authority’ in which the Metropolitan, rather than the diocesan bishops, held the real authority in each diocese. Since 1971, however, a balance has been restored.
82. J. Zizioulas, **Being As Communion**, p.200, with reference to Cyprian, *Epistle* 69 (66): 5; 43 (40):5; *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, 4; 5.

Zizioulas goes on to note, however, that for Cyprian each episcopal throne is a *cathedra Petri*:

'This is significant because it implies that the Ignatian view of the indivisibility of the apostolic college in its eschatological nature, as it is manifested in the eucharist, is preserved fully for each episcopal Church. It is, therefore, wrong to read universalistic ideas into the ecclesiology of Cyprian.'

J. Zizioulas, **Being As Communion**, pp.200-201.


85. J. Zizioulas, *The Nature of the Unity We Seek*, p.344.


87. *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist*, 'Introduction'.

88. J. Zizioulas, **Being As Communion**, p.52, n.46.

89. L. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, pp.25-27. However, we should note that this was written at a time when Maximus faced persecution by the Byzantine authorities. This *may* have contributed to the style of Maximus' language with regard to Rome.


92. We should remember that, in the very earliest communities, there was almost certainly no division between 'bishop' and 'presbyters,' with the office and function of 'presiding presbyter' or 'bishop' not coming to the fore until sometime later. Cf. R.A. Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority Within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh; T & T Clark,1994), p.218. Cf. also R.E. Brown, *The Critical meaning of the Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), pp.139ff. These titles are thus to be
understood as being, for whatever reason, alternative designations of the same office. It is noteworthy that, as is generally agreed by scholars working in this field, this situation prevailed in Rome, an intensely conservative local Church, until the mid second century. This is therefore the situation in Rome in Ignatius’ time and we should remark that, in his letter to the Church of Rome, he makes no mention of it as possessing a ‘monarchical’ bishop.

93. J. Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, p.168.
100. It would be a gross simplification to suggest that the period of the ‘undivided Church’ (if there was, in reality, ever such a thing) came to a sudden end in the events of 1054. On the contrary, this was, in itself, a strictly limited thing and, as Ware recognizes, ‘is not really an event whose beginning can be exactly dated. It was something that came about gradually, as the result of a long and complicated process, starting well before the eleventh century and not completed until sometime after.’ (*The Orthodox Church*, p.51).
In the twelfth century, Nicetas, Archbishop of Nicomedia, could state with regard to the papacy:

‘My dearest brother, we do not deny to the Roman Church the primacy amongst the five sister Patriarchates; and we recognize her right to the most honourable seat at an Ecumenical Council. But she has separated herself from us by her own deeds, when through pride she assumed a monarchy which does not belong to her office. . . How shall we accept decrees from her that have been issued without consulting us and even without our knowledge? If the Roman Pontiff, seated on the lofty throne of his glory, wishes to thunder at us and, so to speak, hurl his mandates at us from on high, and if he wishes to judge us and even to rule us and our Churches, not by
taking counsel with us but at his own arbitrary pleasure, what kind of brotherhood, or even what kind of parenthood can this be? We should be the slaves, not the sons, of such a Church, and the Roman See would not be the pious mother of sons but a hard and imperious mistress of slaves.'

Quoted in T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p.58.

Ware believes that, for the ordinary believer in both East and West, the events of 1054 mattered little or were even largely unknown and that it was the crusader assault on Constantinople, with the subsequent erection of a Latin Patriarchate there, which definitively set the seal on the schism. See T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p.69.

101. These writers included, notably, Anna Comnenus, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus, George Tornikes and Nicetas Seides. For full details, see J. Meyendorff, *St. Peter in Byzantine Theology*, pp.75-76.


103. Vatican I, *Lumen Gentium* I. The Church is 'the sign and instrument . . . for the unity of all humanity.'


106. 'We call schismatics those who refuse to submit to the Supreme Pontiff, and who refuse to communicate (that is to say, be in communion) with the members of the Church who are submissive to him.' *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q.39, a.1. Quoted in J. Hamer, *The Church is a Communion*, p.178.


that here Thomas is writing against views held by the likes of Anna Comnenus and others, as noted at 101 above. However, as we have seen, most Orthodox did not object to the concept of primacy but rather to both the interpretation given to it and the practical manner of its exercise by Rome. It is unfortunate that Thomas chose to identify the universal primacy with a Filioquist position, not least because it has come, in the minds of many Orthodox, notably V. Lossky, to be equated in such a manner that the Filioque is deemed to be the source of exaggerated papal claims and, at the same time, the very fact of papal primacy is inextricably linked to what the Orthodox generally regard as the heresy of Filioquism. Such an identification can only serve to cloud and confuse the issue.

109. E. Corecco, The Bishop, Head of the Local Church and Discipline, p.48.

110. C. McGarry, Collegiality and Catholicity, p.205.


112. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, The Church as Communion, para. 12, with reference to St. Ignatius of Antioch, Romans, prologue; cf. Lumen Gentium, 13, par. 3; 22, par.2; 23; Pastor Aeternus, D.S. 3051-3057; Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiae 1.

113. The Church as Communion, para. 14, with reference to Lumen Gentium 26; St. Ignatius of Antioch, Philadelphians 4; Smyrneans 8; Roman Missal, 'Eucharistic Prayer III.'


125. J. Zizioulas, *The Bishop in the Theological Doctrine of the Orthodox Church*, p.33.


128. See, for example, A. Keshishian, *Conciliar Fellowship*, p.39.


130. It is debatable as to the extent to which political influences determined the appellate structure of the primatial sees. Undoubtedly such an influence may well have existed. However, theological factors would also have been present and it is only these which would satisfactorily account for a very interesting phenomenon within the Early Church, that of the appellate procedure adopted by the Persian Church.

Francis Dvornik, in an illuminating account, noted that, although clearly distinct from the Church of the Roman Empire, the Persian Church, under the leadership of the Bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, nevertheless saw a certain primacy in the patriarch of Antioch (F. Dvornik, *National Churches and the Church Universal* [London, 1945]). This manifested itself, not in the interference of that patriarchate in the internal affairs of the Persian Church but rather through the form of an appeals tribunal. Thus, in 315 Papa Bar Aggai, in a disciplinary dispute, referred to the Patriarch of Antioch and the Metropolitan of Edessa. The Persian Church submitted to their decision.

In so doing, we can clearly envisage an understanding of primacy very similar to that advocated by Zizioulas and others. Acceptance of this form of primacy in no way precluded the Persian Church from being an independent Church with its own mentality and concerns. There is no submergence of this
regional, indeed national, Church into the structure of another.

131. F. Dvornik, Origins of Episcopal Synods in J.A. Coriden (ed.), The Once and Future Church. Studies on Unity and Collegiality in the Church (New York: 1971), p.36, quoting Canon 3, Council of Sardica. The following points should, however, be noted. In the first place, although Sardica was a Western council, it received recognition from the Eastern Churches and Canon 3 can be found in the 6th century canonical collection of John Scholasticus. Thus we may cite this as evidence of a universal practice. Secondly, the primacy of Rome is a gift. The Council are here asked, in order that honour may be done to Peter, to grant this appellate function to Rome. It is thus implied that it was for the synod to accede to - or refuse - this request. Primacy, the ministry of the 'One,' is therefore controlled and limited by the 'Many.' the Christological is balanced by the Pneumatological, bringing about a truly relational situation. Finally, it is not for Rome to reverse the conciliar ruling. Rather, if the Pope had good reason, he could order another synod to meet. Note, however, the 'appeal' is not to be heard in Rome (something which came later) but rather in the province from which the appeal to Rome originated. This in itself is a powerful indication of the limited nature of the primacy under consideration.

132. 'In the Middle Ages, there were numerous instances when the Patriarch of Constantinople acted, in fact, as the real head of the entire Church of the East. For example, the "Great Council" of St. Sophia (879-880) describes Pope John VIII and Patriarch Photius as two equals, united in faith and responsible before each other in disciplinary matters (canon 1). Similarly, in the last period of the Byzantine Empire, as the imperial government was reduced to begging and exercised little power beyond the city of Constantinople itself, the patriarchate was able to preserve and even to reinforce its authority and influence throughout the Orthodox world. It happened then that some patriarchs defined their role in terms similar to those adopted by medieval popes, even if some allowance should be made for rhetorical exaggeration. Thus, Patriarch Philotheos, addressing Russian princes in 1370, would call himself 'the common father, established by the most high God, of all the Christians found everywhere on earth,' [Miklosich-Müller, [ed.]. Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani, I, p.516. "Since God," he writes
in another letter, "has appointed Our Humility as leader (προστάτημα) of all Christians found anywhere in the inhabited earth, as solicitor and guardian of their soul, all of them depend on me (πάντες εἰς ἐμὲ ἀνάκεινται)" (ibid., p.521). The patriarch continues by defining the role of bishops, appointed to see in any part of the world, as being his personal representatives."

J. Meyendorff, Catholicity and the Church, p.137.

133. J. Meyendorff, The Orthodox Concept of the Church, p.70.

134. P. O'Leary, The Triune Church, p.106. Khomiakov saw no distinction between a bishop and a metropolitan, save that of 'honour,' a somewhat nebulous concept in his theology. It is interesting to note that Khomiakov's thought contains a number of inconsistencies in this regard. On the one hand, with respect to secular politics, Khomiakov strongly supported the principle of autocracy. However, although this was not carried over into his ecclesiology, neither did he advocate a synodal form of government, despite this seeming to be more in keeping with the basic principles of his ecclesiological presupposition that truth cannot be the preserve of the individual but belongs, rather, to the community in its entirety. In seeking to account for this strange state of affairs, O'Leary suggests that 'he may have refused to consider these seeming advantages because the admission of a preference would imply that the Patriarch, who was replaced by the synod, did have a role beyond that of the ordinary bishop, since the synod which replaced him manifestly had an important place in the government of Russian Church affairs.' (p.106).

135. J. Zizioulas, The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Tradition, p.51. However, without denying Zizioulas' basic conviction that Afanasiev somewhat understated the need for visible, eucharistic communion between the local Churches, I would consider that Zizioulas somewhat overstates his own case. Contrary to the impression that Zizioulas creates here, as elsewhere, Afanasiev explicitly asserts the need for communion and interdependence between the Churches. Indeed, it is clearly difficult to make a great deal of sense out of his own ideas on primacy if this dimension of his thought is denied.

136. A. Nichols, Theology in the Russian Diaspora, p.177.

137. Cf. A. Nichols, Theology in the Russian Diaspora, pp.179-180. This concern received canonical expression at Nicaea, which required not only three consecrators of a new bishop, but also
the written consent of all the bishops in the province who could not attend in person.


139. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.136.

140. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.226.

141. J. Hamer, The Church is a Communion, p.215.

142. A. Keshishian, Orthodox Perspectives on Mission, p.73.

143. The Dublin Agreed Statement, p.106.

144. A. Keshishian, Orthodox Perspectives on Mission, p.73.

145. P. O'Leary, The Triune Church, p.146.

146. Cf. e.g., The Dublin Agreed Statement, p.30.

147. I deliberately avoid suggesting that the root of this difference lies directly or solely in the Filioque doctrine, which is the underlying argument of Lossky. However, Y. Congar has convincingly demonstrated that Lossky's position somewhat exaggerated the effects of 'Filioquism' on the Western Church. Although Lossky and others have suggested that the doctrine of the Filioque led directly to the papal claims, I consider such an argument to be somewhat simplistic. Whilst by no means denying either the importance of the Filioque in itself (as a matter of authority, rather than the merits or otherwise of the doctrine itself), I would consider that it is the issue of the nature of the Roman primacy which is the root problem. The Filioque, in the eyes of many Orthodox theologians of the past, including those of the stature of Maximus the Confessor, whom Zizioulas himself greatly admires, is an allowable opinion, when correctly interpreted (see L. Thunberg, Man and the Cosmos, p.33), but, precisely because it has not been defined by an Ecumenical Council, it cannot be insisted upon as a dogma of the Faith. Indeed, the schism between East and West did not spring directly into being as a result of the Filioque.

Originating, probably in Spain, as a safeguard against Arianism, it was interpolated into the Creed at the third Council of Toledo (589) at the latest. Spreading to Charlemagne's empire, it was taken on board at the semi-Ioniclast Council of Frankfort (794). Rome, although convinced of the doctrinal soundness of the clause, believed it
unwise to tamper with the Creed and did not adopt it before the start of the eleventh century.
In eventually altering the Creed without consultation with the Churches of the East, the West was guilty of a sin against both unity and love. Yet it was the papal claims which led to the situation in which the Western, Roman, Church claimed the right not only to arbitrate in disciplinary matters (a right, with certain safeguards, long recognized in the East) but also to dictate in matters of faith. It was the growing development of this claim, not least under the ninth century Pope Nicholas I (858-867), which led to the so-called 'Photian Schism' between the Roman Church and the Church of Constantinople.

It is to be noted that these claims by Rome were being pushed towards their logical conclusion long before the Roman Church itself accepted the *Filioque*. To therefore see a direct causal link between *Filioque* and papal claims is thus to stretch the evidence too far.


152. K. Ware, *Primacy, Collegiality and the People of God*, p.125.


155. This, however, must be somewhat qualified in regard to Khomiakov. Although he admits an essential sacramental function to the hierarchy, without which the Church would cease to exist, he is inconsistent in that he does not extend this insight into the field of teaching.

156. Such is to be found, for example, even in the Orthodox Church. At certain periods, for example, a new Patriarch of Moscow would undergo a new consecration, despite having already been consecrated as a bishop. This, of course, indicates a presupposition that the primus possesses a supersacrament of Order.
157. At an official level this finds recognition in the Anglican-Orthodox Dublin Agreed Statement, p.24.


160. C. McGarry, Collegiality and Catholicity, p.194.

161. Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 877.

162. Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 883, quoting Lumen Gentium 22.


169. The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist, p.25.


171. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.17.


173. J. Zizioulas, Confessional Identity and Ecclesial Identity the nature of the Unity we seek; cited by P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.207.

174. Cf., for example, The Ecclesiology of the Orthodox 453
175. 'Necessarily' because 'this “one” must be present in the same manner as the many, such that, for instance, the central presence of Christ, the “one” in the eucharistic gathering is not the eucharistic elements, but the bishop, who stands as a human being among human beings.' P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.205.

176. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.155.


180. K. Rahner noted that, 'It is impossible to divide up the Church exclusively on a territorial basis . . . . The territorial principle is one important natural and permanent structural principle . . . But it is not the only structural principle.' Theological Investigations, Vol. 6, p.328; quoted by A. Brent, Cultural Episcopacy and Ecumenism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), p.21.

181. A. Brent, Cultural Episcopacy and Ecumenism, p.152.
Conclusion

Introduction

For a week during Summer, 1982 the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches met in Munich. Their deliberations, the culmination of many years of hard work, led to their adoption of the 'Munich Statement', one of the most important documents in the field of ecclesiology. In its reaction to the publication of this document, the official organ of the Church of Greece, Ekklesiastiki Aletheia, remarked that, 'The text is particularly satisfying for the Orthodox . . . because in it ecclesiology is seen in the light of the trinitarian teaching of the Fathers.'\(^1\) This official welcome is especially gratifying because one of the members of the Commission was John Zizioulas.

Throughout this document it is possible to detect strong echoes of Zizioulas' own theological concerns. This reflection of Zizioulas' stance in such a major official ecumenical document serves to confirm Zizioulas as being not only an important thinker in his own right,\(^2\) but also as being firmly within the mainstream of contemporary Orthodox ecclesiology. This impression receives confirmation when one recalls Zizioulas' appointment as an official representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to many ecumenical groups and, in particular, his appointment as Co-Chairman to both the dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church and with the Anglicans. Such recognition from the highest official levels of the Orthodox Churches, along with his appointment as Metropolitan Bishop of Pergamon in 1986, betokens the degree of approval which his theology has met within Orthodoxy.

An earlier Agreed Statement on the Church encapsulated a concern
which lies at the heart of Zizioulas' own understanding of the Church. Eight years before the 'Munich Statement' the two participating Churches affirmed their common conviction that the Church 'has its origins and prototype in the Trinity in which there is both distinction of persons and unity based on love, not subordination.'

For Zizioulas, the Church is not primarily an institution, nor a society, even though she at times displays characteristics appropriate to these. The Church as a reality goes much deeper, for 'She is a "mode of existence," a way of being. The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world and to the very being of God.' This approach to ecclesiology removes it from the sole purview of specialist scholars to make it immediately relevant to all members of the Church. Fundamental to this ecclesiology of John Zizioulas is the conviction that 'The Church cannot be conceived in isolation; it can be defined only in relationship.' This notion of 'relationship', of communion, is something which lies at the deepest level of Zizioulas' theological consciousness and forms the basic theme of his theology. Indeed, for Zizioulas, 'relationship' is really to be understood as forming the ontological category.

If communion is at the root of his ecclesiology, nevertheless the key to understanding its significance lies in the idea of 'the "One" and the "Many"' as the dominant concept in Zizioulas' thought. This is a unifying factor found throughout his work and is based on his conviction of the relational character of reality as intended by God. At root, it is an intrinsically Christological concept, for it is a feature of Zizioulas' entire ecclesiology that it is thoroughly Christological. Yet Zizioulas believes Christology to be decisively affected, indeed constituted, by Pneumatology. This 'Christic-Pneumatic Synthesis,' to use Areeplackal's term, conditions the whole of Zizioulas' ecclesiology, not least with regard to questions concerning the nature, scope and exercise of authority in the Christian Church.
The purpose of this study has been to examine how Zizioulas uses his understanding of the Eucharist to illuminate the nature of the ordained Ministry, particularly that of the bishop, its relation to the whole body of the Christian people and the manner in which authority within the Church should be exercised. Zizioulas' ecclesiology, not least in its understanding of the nature and exercise of authority, cannot be separated from his understanding of the nature of God as Trinity, as communion. If, to quote the title of one of his books, we are to understand 'Being As Communion', this applies not only to God, who is Being itself, but also to humanity, which is created in the Image of God, and also to the Church, which as the Body of Christ is precisely that entity which God has created to bring about the theosis of mankind.

In this final part of my study of Zizioulas, I wish to accentuate five major areas relating to authority in the Church to which Zizioulas has contributed. In each case I wish to explore the implications of Zizioulas' contribution, asking whether such a contribution can have a positive impact on our understanding of authority in today's Church and how it affects its exercise. The five issues I wish to consider are, firstly, the validity of a Trinitarian model of ecclesiology for an understanding of the nature of ecclesial authority; secondly, the place of the laity in the decision-making processes of the Church as envisaged in Zizioulas' thought and as reflected in reality; thirdly, the sufficiency of Zizioulas' interpretation of the nature of the bishop as being head of a geographically conceived eucharistic community; fourthly, I wish to briefly consider his contribution to the understanding of conciliarity in the Church; and finally, the contribution Zizioulas' approach can make to an understanding of primacy at a universal level within the contemporary Church.

a) Trinity and Authority

It is a central principle of Zizioulas' ecclesiology that 'The Church is
primarily *communion*, i.e. a set of relationships making up a mode of being, exactly as is the case in the Trinitarian God.9 Indeed, Zizioulas demands in this article that, 'The Church must in all respects and above all in her being, in her ontology, be the “Church of God” as Paul calls it, which means an image or sign of the Trinity.'10 This requires that the actual *structures* of the Church reflect the Trinitarian paradigm: 'The mutual indwelling of the persons of the Trinity is paralleled by the coinherence of the members of the Church. In the Church there is no conflict between freedom and authority; in the Church there is unity, but no totalitarianism.'11 However, the strict application of a Trinitarian model to ecclesiology raises certain questions, not least with regard to the matter of authority. In this model, the exercise of power must reflect the nature of the Trinitarian hierarchy itself. That there is a hierarchy within the Godhead is an important point within Orthodox theology. Therefore:

In the language of theology, the Father is the “cause” or “source” of Godhead, He is the principle (*arche*) of unity among the three; and it is in this sense that Orthodoxy talks of the “monarchy” of the Father. The other two persons trace their origin to the Father and are defined in terms of their relation to Him.12

A trinitarian model for Church authority carries with it the implication that, just as the Father does nothing without the other two persons, neither does the hierarchical leadership of the Church do anything without the other members of the Church.13 This means that the bishop is not, even within the confines of his own diocese, to act as an authoritarian despot, requiring absolute and unconditional obedience. Likewise, conciliar decisions are not to be imposed by *fiat*, but are accepted as authoritative through a process of reception by the whole Church.

Unfortunately for such an idealistic image, empirical reality often
presents a challenge to this trinitarian model for understanding the exercise of power in the Church. One need not rehearse every historical incident pointing to manifest abuses of power within the Church in order to understand that the Church has been as much prone to exercising authority in a manner which rather echoes the patterns favoured by oppressive secular regimes than after the model of the Trinitarian God.\textsuperscript{14}

In affirming the trinitarian nature of authority in the Church, Zizioulas is in some danger of down-playing the ambiguity of the Church's situation. Whilst the Eucharist provides the eschatological focus of the Church, nevertheless the Church cannot live perpetually in the Eucharist but has to return to the world. If the Eucharist is to be understood as 'visitation', then we remain in a situation in which the Church, whilst periodically refreshing itself in the participation of the heavenly mysteries, nevertheless abides within this present world. Thus, in asking whether a trinitarian model of authority for the Church is realistic, one must bear in mind that the Church exists in a fallen world. Sin must be taken with the utmost seriousness, for it is something which, as an intrinsic element in the world, must affect not only individuals but also societies and structures. This is an element to which Zizioulas has not yet afforded adequate recognition.

Although baptism, in Zizioulas' thought, brings the baptized into a new status, signified through his use of the terminology of 'ecclesial hypostasis', nevertheless the individual remains subject to sin and death. As 'Body of Christ', Chalcedonian Christology must be applied to the Church also. This means that the Church must exist in a state of tension: 'it is already the Body of Christ, and thus perfect and sinless, and yet, since its members are imperfect and sinful, it must continually become what it is.'\textsuperscript{15} Given the empirical state of any Christian Church today, it is an open question as to whether or not the Church can, in reality, express authority in terms which truly mirror the nature of the Trinity. In a truly relational,
trinitarian view of ministry, such as that proposed by Zizioulas:

order is not provided or imposed by a single group, permanently over against another. . . . A church which introduces permanent subordinations within its life reveals its lack of understanding of the mystery of the Trinity and its unwillingness to relate it directly to ecclesiological concepts. In a perichoretic community of love, a self-ordering process takes place in which, although individual persons will fulfil unique and necessary roles, the total ordering is achieved without any one being in a permanently subordinate position to another.16

Although this is distinguished from Zizioulas' position in that he would see the permanent relationships formed by each specific ordo in the Church as being essential, nevertheless he would echo this concern for the rejection of any form of coercive domination over another in the Church.

Yet despite the position of baptized Christians as members of the Body of Christ and hence, as adopted by God in Christ, we are still in a sinful state. As such, we sometimes exercise positions of authority in a coercive fashion. Baptism, whatever eschatological significance it may have, cannot be said, on a purely existential level, to lessen or extinguish our sinful impulses. Indeed, it is quite possible that, morally speaking, the unbaptized may display a level of ethical conduct unsurpassed by the overwhelming majority of Christians. Thus, whilst we may have received, in baptism, the marks of the 'ecclesial hypostasis', nevertheless this must be in an anticipatory and incomplete manner. Therefore we should expect to see marks of our fallenness manifest within ecclesiastical structures. In our situation, in which individuals and structures remain afflicted by sin whilst being summoned to a truly trinitarian pattern of the exercise of authority, it is unrealistic to conceive of the power structures of the Church as already manifesting this paradigm. Rather, we remain in a situation in which the 'now' exists in tension with the 'not yet', thereby creating a situation in which, whilst
seeking to display as fully as possible the trinitarian characteristics, the Church yet must continue to fall short of them. Even in the Eucharist itself, we have only an anticipatory, and hence partial, participation in the life of God.

Practically speaking, this implies that we should expect to find, inherent in the authority structures of the Church, elements of coercion and domination. This is necessarily so because, as fallen beings, we cannot, in this life, attain that to which we are called. Whilst Zizioulas' belief that the Church manifests, in her exercise of authority, nothing less than the same life which is God's, this is surely something more of a hope and expectation for the future than an existential reality. A measure of ambiguity is perhaps to be expected, in which we will find elements both of the trinitarian pattern and of the biological hypostasis. That being so, Zizioulas' theology of authority serves the purpose of constantly challenging and reminding us of what the Church is called to, but, at the same time, cannot provide a fully satisfactory account of the manner in which power is exercised by the existential Church.

b) The Role of the Laity

For Zizioulas, the Church is not composed of the clergy alone but of the whole People of God, clergy and laity alike. Because, for the Orthodox, the Church cannot really be considered a worldly institution, 'Its essentially sacramental and hierarchical character determines the form of service in it for everyone. . . . Each has his or her distinctive vocation, each is equally important and equally active, from the verger to the Patriarch.' However, because Zizioulas specifically locates the role of the laity in the Church within the frame of a trinitarian theology, it is essential that this trinitarian model be fully applied if it is to make a contribution to the communitarian model of the Church.
For the Orthodox, the Eucharistic liturgy may not proceed without the presence of the laity. Yet they do not function in the same way as the clergy. The clergy lead the service, actually performing the Eucharistic 'action', whilst the laity sing the responses and affirm the actions of the clergy through their liturgical 'Amen'. As one may expect, Zizioulas sees this eucharistic structure reflected in the wider life of the Church beyond the synaxis. This is particularly so when it comes to the government of the Church, not least in the conciliar event, whether it be on a regional or universal level.

As Zizioulas is emphatic that voting rights in the Council are restricted to the bishops, he sees the ministry of the laity (and, indeed, of the minor clergy) as being manifested in a process of reception. The reasoning underlying this is strictly theological:

Because of the fact that in the Holy Spirit everything takes place as an event of communion, the classical model of reception provided that every decision by the bishop or the bishops in council should be received by the community. A form of vicious circle was thus created: the community could do nothing without the bishop and the bishop had to receive the "Amen" of the community in all he did. This was a profoundly eucharistic approach to the reception, since the "Amen" of the people always formed an integral and indispensable part of the Eucharist.

However, is this to actually attain a proper application of trinitarian models to ecclesiology, particularly when viewed in the light of the Christic-pneumatic synthesis which is so fundamental a concern of Zizioulas? Is there not a risk that the Christological again becomes more prominent and even determinative here?

With regard to Vatican II, Zizioulas feels, in common with other Orthodox, that 'the Holy Spirit was brought into ecclesiology after the edifice of the Church was constructed with Christological material alone.' In emphasizing that Christology and Pneumatology have to exist simultaneously, Zizioulas is
consciously adopting a position which demands that Pneumatology be constitutive of Christology. However, when dealing with the role of the laity in receiving conciliar decisions, it seems that Zizioulas in fact accords priority to the Christological element, in other words, adopting the approach for which he criticizes Vatican II. In the conciliar process, the hierarchy, that is, the Christological element, reaches decisions alone and then hands these down for reception. True, there is the chance that the Church will not receive these decisions, and historically, this has happened on a number of occasions. Yet there is an imbalance between the Christological and the Pneumatological elements, for whilst the Christological has an institutional dimension, the Pneumatological has not.

Precisely because Zizioulas believes that 'Reception does not take place on the level of individuals but of communities', the ministry of the bishop is to reflect or express reception at the local level. As the bishop encapsulates in his person the local eucharistic community of which he is head, he is the one who is fitted to bear in his own person his community in council. Yet must this necessarily imply that it is only the bishop who can thus represent his community?

A relational model in which laity visibly balance hierarchy in Council is a feasible option. In such a model, the laity of each local community would elect one or more of their members to represent them in council, alongside their bishop. Whilst having full voting rights, this would not necessarily impinge on the prerogatives of the hierarchy to teach. Rather, the laity would be there to give visible and immediate expression of the assent of the Churches to the bishops' teaching. This could be accomplished on the synodical lines of many episcopal Churches, in which Houses of Clergy and of Laity vote along with the Bishops. The advantage in such a model would be that it seems to give better expression to Zizioulas' concern for the Pneumatological to constitute the Christological and not appear afterwards.
Zizioulas' demand for a process of reception *outwith* formal structures relies on an understanding of the trinitarian nature of the Church as *love*. Indeed, this approach somewhat resembles that of Afanasiev, who was himself influenced by the Lutheran legal historian, Rudolf Sohm. At the same time, there is a strain in Orthodoxy which is somewhat suspicious of *formal* structures for reception by the laity, apart from the hierarchy. This is, paradoxically enough, a position which can be held both by those who wish to exalt the hierarchy and also by those who, following Khomiakov's own theological approach, are suspicious of formal mechanisms within the Body of Christ. There is also, at the same time, a strong connection with eucharistic ecclesiology, something which can also be affirmed from a Roman Catholic viewpoint:

In an ecclesiology based on the local eucharistic community, the doctrine of reception, if it is logically applied, must refer to reception by the local Church, and not reception by the faithful, in general. In this case it is clear that reception by the Church is exercised by the local bishop, since the bishop alone is authorised to speak in the name of his Church.

Yet this is still, however ecumenically attractive it may appear, to avoid a full and equal part being played by the laity. If it is only in the person of their bishop that reception takes place it allows little *real* room for genuine rejection by the People of God. Of course, historical examples of the laity, or at least a considerable portion of them within a diocese, refusing as *individuals* to receive the decisions of their bishop. Within Orthodoxy itself, beyond the conciliar era, the example of the *stauropegia* in late sixteenth century Western Russia serves as an interesting example of how laymen, in isolation from their hierarchy, developed *structures of reception* in the face of perceived abandonment of Tradition.

In advocating a form of reception which is still intrinsically dependent upon the person of the bishop, without the necessary structures of lay reception, Zizioulas opens himself up to the
question as to how far the structures and theology of the Church, as he sees them, erect barriers to the Spirit’s freedom to work among his people. Clearly, although there exists the danger that a formalized structure of lay participation in the ‘reception’ of doctrine may be unduly influenced by educated and articulated pressure groups, nevertheless such structures are the only effective manner in which the laity may effectively express dissent in the event of their bishops adopting an approach which is felt to be unsatisfactory. One wonders whether, with regard to the Roman Catholic Church, the debate on the prohibition of artificial means of contraception in *Humanae Vitae* would have had the same result if formal structures of reception by the laity had existed.

In an ideal situation, such formal structures would be unnecessary. Yet when one considers that the Church is not, in this world, a perfect society and that there are abuses of authority and position by those in power, it becomes essential that there be formal, legal balances and checks on the power of the hierarchy. However ill this may sit with a vision of the Church as existing in a state of perichoretic love, nevertheless history and human experience demonstrate their necessity. Carefully implemented, such structures should enhance, rather than inhibit, the expression of the local Church as being the Body of Christ. Such an understanding, which has the merits of accepting the underlying principles of eucharistic ecclesiology whilst at the same time remaining open to the ambiguous nature of the Church in human society, offers not only a more democratic model of structural organization for the coming centuries but also serves to better reflect the ambiguous nature of the exercise of authority within the historical Body of Christ.

**c) Territorial Episcopacy**

One of the central planks of Zizioulas’ understanding of the Church is its nature as a geographically conceived local eucharistic
community under the presidency of one bishop. In this, Zizioulas is by no means alone, for it is the normal position of not only the Orthodox Churches (in theory, at least), but also of the Anglican Churches and, in a more nuanced fashion, of the Roman Catholic Church. Underlying this demand, in Zizioulas' ecclesiology at least, is his understanding of the eucharistic nature of the Church. As eschatological portrayal of the Kingdom, the Eucharist manifests the final unity of all around Christ, portrayed in the Liturgy by the Bishop. Consequently, Zizioulas sees it as imperative that the 'many' be visibly gathered around the 'One' in the Eucharist. This precludes any conception of parallel episcopates within the one geographic area.

Zizioulas is wedded, here as elsewhere, to modelling the contemporary Church on a pattern devised in the very different conditions prevailing in the patristic era. Now, there may well be many insights from that era which can fruitfully be applied to the modern Church. The whole eschatological understanding of the Eucharist as promoted by Zizioulas is a point in case. Despite this, I must question whether it is either possible or desirable to apply patristic patterns of Church organization to a contemporary situation merely because they are patristic. This holds true even when some of the basic principles espoused are in themselves valid. Whilst it is one of the strengths of an ecclesiology such as that of Zizioulas that it seeks to return to patristic roots, this can also become a handicap if it leads to a failure to properly adapt to contemporary situations, which are inherently vastly more complex than anything the patristic writers could have envisaged.

A methodological difficulty arises in that Zizioulas appears to be somewhat selective in his determining the period which is to be considered definitive for our understanding of ecclesial structural organization. Although his decisive period is the first three centuries, nevertheless in practical terms the first of these receives scant attention. Admittedly, our evidence for the immediate New
Testament era is sketchy. However, we do know enough to believe that there was a substantial amount of development during this period and that we cannot presuppose any one system of Church government. The fact that a geographically-conceived episcopacy did triumph universally by no means indicates that this was the only acceptable pattern of ministry and, indeed, history has shown that a model which, whilst retaining certain geographical elements, yet based itself more closely with cultural concerns was also deemed permissible.

Zizioulas has certainly highlighted the need for the recovery of the relationship between Eucharist and ministerial structures in the Church. Although I have expressed considerable reservations about his insistence on the very early emergence of the concept of one bishop and one eucharistic community in any one city, nevertheless this does not affect the theological validity of his central insight on the eschatological and liturgical nature of the bishop in the understanding pioneered by Ignatius. Indeed, although he has expressed reservations about the historical accuracy of the picture presented by Ignatius of late first century Church order, Brent notes:

The occasion for the emergence of the single bishop was .
. . a period of dynamic liturgical development under pressure of the apocalyptic vision of the heavenly Church Order and a need to find the incarnation of that vision in eucharistic worship on earth.27

Zizioulas himself has commented on the pressing need for the Church to be incarnated within specific cultural situations:

The Church is local when the saving event of Christ takes root in a particular local situation with all its natural, social, cultural and other characteristics which make up the life and thought of the people living in that place. . . . [The Church] must absorb and use all the characteristics of a given local situation and not impose an alien culture upon it.28

Although Zizioulas takes this demand seriously, nevertheless his
commitment to a geographical identity for the local Church requires that there be a transcending of culture, particularly where, as is frequently the case today, there exists a number of diverging cultural elements within the one area. However, despite the obvious advantage that this has in attempting to bring together in one community various cultural forms, it nevertheless lacks the flexibility required in modern, complex societies.

The geographical model advocated by Zizioulas is the product, by and large, of an age in which a local society was, at least to a considerable extent, uniform in its cultural background and identity. Obviously, one must beware of an over-simplistic emphasis on this, for it cannot be held to be uniformly true. Nevertheless, it is, in general terms, largely accurate. In such a society, which can be described in terms described by Durkheim as 'mechanical solidarity', there is a great degree of social cohesion founded on a high level of common identity in occupation, dress, education etc., leading to a unified society held together by its members manifesting a great deal of similar behaviour. Modern, post-industrial societies, however, are considerably more varied, displaying, at their best, what can be termed 'organic solidarity', in which there is a wide variety of occupation, social relationships and in which the fabric of society is maintained by its members each acting in different ways.

In such complex organic societies, precisely because of the great variety of behaviour displayed by the various groups and individuals within that society, it is not possible to expect there to be a common cultural pattern. On the contrary, it is precisely in such societies that sub-cultures take on great importance and leads one to define oneself more in terms of such sub-cultures than to the wider culture or society of which one is nominally a member. Whilst organic societies favour the rise of more diverse forms of structural organization, such is not the case in a more 'mechanical' society. Brent makes the point that:

In such a community, the possibility of a diversity of
orthodox positions, with the diversity explained in terms of cultural incarnations of theological expression, is ruled out. . . . The position which I am taking . . . involves being able to say that, whilst Arianism was unquestionably heresy, Monophysitism, for example, was a phenomenon more explicable in terms of cultural forms which made the disputants end up talking at cross purposes.30

Among the many sub-cultures which exist within our societies must be counted those of a theological nature. A concept of a culturally-conceived episcopacy must therefore be of relevance, especially when considering the possibility of the restoration of full communion between divided groups of Christians. A model such as that advocated by Zizioulas, whilst perhaps representing an ideal, nevertheless is more suited to the mechanical type of community than to the more diverse organic society. Interestingly, the example of the Church in Armenia, in which we found a situation, at the very period which Zizioulas sees as paradigmatic for the structural organization of the Church, in which there existed cultural episcopates, was possible only because (unusually for its time) it was situated in a location in which some elements more akin to those found in organic type of societies were present.

Today, the Churches manifest differing understandings of the Christian revelation, whilst remaining convinced of the underlying theological orthodoxy of the alternative visions, despite considerable disagreements over many issues, not least of which are matters of Church order. In such a situation, for the first time, we find the different traditions moving together and even finding sufficient common ground to enable them to unite their structures in a shared identity. However, as various schemes for unity have demonstrated, old suspicions can die hard and it is sometimes the case that a smaller community may fear absorption into the larger partner. It is here that Zizioulas' understanding of the geographical nature of episcopacy fails to fully meet modern ecclesiological aspirations.

469
One of the more interesting features of Church life over the last few decades has been the emergence of a substantial realignment both between and within the various denominations. Whereas in the recent past the major divisions between the Western Churches were expressed through the Protestant-Catholic divide, this is now no longer so much the case. Rather, there is now a situation in which the primary divide can be seen in terms of theological approach, between 'liberals' and 'conservatives', regardless of denominational affiliation. Clearly, as with any generalization, the matter is not quite so simple but, nevertheless, reflects a broad recognition. The condition of the Anglican Communion may offer us a paradigmatic situation.

The ordination of women to the Priesthood and, increasingly, to the Episcopate, has served as the cataclysm for open divisions to emerge within Anglicanism. These are manifested not only between the various Provinces, but also within them and within individual dioceses of each Province. There has been a realignment, with 'liberals' from all sections of the Church tending to unite on this issue and, in response, the emergence of an unlikely alliance between conservative Evangelicals and traditionalist Anglo-Catholics, who remain opposed to the new developments. This is not the place to discuss the underlying causes, although the ordination of women is the symptom of deeper differences between the parties, rather than the primary cause of friction. What is important for the position I am advocating is that we now have, within one Church, a situation in which there is a considerable degree of schism, both open and implicit.

In such a situation, the conservative minority are faced with the choice of accepting the situation with as good a grace as they can muster, whilst harbouring reservations or, alternatively, withdrawing into their own unofficial ghettos, in which they increasingly find themselves at odds with their bishops and must, ultimately, face a situation in which it becomes possible that their diocesan bishop
would be a woman and hence automatically unacceptable. The alternative is to leave the Anglican Church altogether, either *en masse* or as individuals.

The recognition of such groups as being valid theological cultures in themselves opens the way for the possibility of their being represented through their own bishops, who would sum up in their own persons the theology, spirituality and sacral traditions of the group. As sacramental representative of this gathered, but still 'local' Church, the bishop would exercise precisely the same function that Zizioulas has him doing on a territorial, jurisdictional model. Obviously, the territory covered by such a bishop would *probably*, but by no means necessarily, exceed that of a bishop in Zizioulas' geographical model. Yet, at the same time, such a bishop would almost certainly have fewer people in his *eparchy*. This would therefore fit better with Zizioulas' own demands for smaller, less populous dioceses, thereby allowing the bishop to know and be known by his people, to be a real focus of unity for them, rather than a distant figurehead.31

The demand for a purely geographical understanding of the local Church made by Zizioulas is not as simple as it at first seems. Although Zizioulas himself frequently observes that the pattern of the ancient Church dictates that there be one local Church in each city, which he views as a distinct entity, he does not really apply this properly to contemporary conditions. Even the largest cities of the ancient world are small when compared with the modern metropolis or conurbation. Furthermore, a modern city will frequently have no discernible sense of unity, viewing itself in terms of the smaller units which have gone to produce the larger entity. Which of these, in Zizioulas' terms, should constitute the locus of the local Church? Although Zizioulas would, ideally, like to see the local Church being understood as the eucharistic community of all Christians within that *place*, there is grave doubt about the practical possibility of this being realized. Given the numbers of Christians within one area (or

471
city, in Zizioulas' preferred approach) it is inconceivable that they
could come together each Sunday for the Eucharist around their one
bishop. The nearest possible pattern might be one in which the
parish, which is to Zizioulas an ecclesiologically dubious entity
anyway,\textsuperscript{32} becomes an autonomous diocese, with all the orders of the
Church being present in the same way in which Zizioulas
understands them to have been in the Ignatian-Hippolytan
understanding of the eucharistic nature of the local Church.\textsuperscript{33}

A concept of cultural episcopacy has particular relevance today,
therefore, in that not only does it offer possibilities for ecumenical
convergence and avoidance of formal schism within some Churches,
but it also more accurately reflects the vastly more complex nature
of the world in which the Church is incarnated today. Obviously, there
is a need for the Church to challenge a culture as well as to identify
it, as well as the concrete difficulty in identifying a specific culture
and any form of cultural episcopacy must give these matters careful
consideration. Nevertheless, in spite of difficulties, such a model
would appear to be more fruitful than the less flexible approach to
episcopacy advocated by Zizioulas.

d) Conciliarity

Given that the Church is the locus of true personhood, derived from
the Trinitarian exemplar and expressed through the Church's
experience of life in the ecclesial hypostasis, the Church's nature
cannot be other than conciliar. Conciliarity is at the heart of what
it is to be Church and is visibly expressed through the celebration of
the Eucharist. Zizioulas identifies a number of concrete
manifestations of this conciliarity. At the local level, Zizioulas
makes concrete the synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology
by making the bishop, the 'One', a relational figure in such a way
that he cannot exist without the 'many', the people. Not only is he
expected to act with the approbation of the clergy, he also needs the

472
assent of the laity. His ministry is not that of a despot but rather must manifest the perichoretic love of the Trinity. In effect, this means that the people have the responsibility of checking the bishop’s teaching against the tradition of the whole Church and then making it their own through a process of reception. At the same time, if his teaching is found to be contrary to the consensus fidelium, it is to be rejected.

This pattern is continued by Zizioulas on a wider plane. Thus, the decrees of synods and Councils are again subject to reception by the wider Church. Whilst this certainly accords with ideas widely current in contemporary Orthodoxy, nevertheless it is not without difficulty. Although, for example, Berdyaev could hold that ‘The Orthodox Church did not possess one external authoritarian organization. It was kept firm by the strength of its inner tradition, not by external authority,’ nevertheless it remains true that the Councils did not consider themselves as having only a contingent authority. Rather, they were able to make free use of the language of command and intrinsic authority.

Even granted that the conciliar decisions, based on the model of the Christic-pneumatic synthesis which Zizioulas has constructed, must be subject to the ratification of the faithful, the question remains as to how the approbation of the Church is to be shown. This is the weaknesses of a theory of reception. Zizioulas believes that only diocesan bishops, precisely because as heads of their local Churches they embody that Church, have the right to vote in Council, although the voices of others may be heard. This, he believes, enables the whole Church to be heard. Elected delegates of Churches would only act, he suggests, as representatives of their particular constituencies. However, conciliar practice within the Anglican Church, at least at its best, does not bear this out. In a system where each parish elects a representative to the diocesan synod, to speak and vote on its behalf, there then exists a mechanism whereby the laity are able to exercise active participation.
in the affairs of the Church in such a way that the pneumatological, communitarian principle is not exercised almost as an afterthought. A system of Church government which demands the participation of all members of the Church, lay and ordained, but which allows no **structural** means of expression for one part of this partnership is in very real danger, despite protestations to the contrary, of rendering such participation extremely difficult and liable to misrepresentation. If pneumatology is to be understood as being constitutive of Christology at the same time as being constituted by it, then it would seem that some **formal** structure for the expression of this theological insight be required.

A further difficulty relates to the manner whereby it becomes clear that reception is complete. Zizioulas believes that Truth is found only in communion,\(^{36}\) a fact which would seem to preclude compulsion. However, if a significant proportion of the Church rejects, or refuses to 'receive', a conciliar definition, may we say that it has, in fact, been received? This question has particular significance regarding the dialogue between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, something with which Zizioulas has himself been intimately involved.\(^{37}\) Given that there is no organ of reception which can definitively declare a doctrine to have been received by the Church, is it possible to say that the process of reception is complete, in the case, for example, of Chalcedonian Christology? To insist that it is because the majority of local Churches have received it is a very challenging position to maintain, not least because history has shown the on occasions the majority verdict in the Church has not always been acceptable in the long term. Thus, the demand that conciliar decisions be open to continual, renewed reception in each age\(^{38}\) must include the possibility that, at least in cases where there has been long-running dispute, the process of reception has yet to be completed.

At a more basic level, Zizioulas' understanding of the process of reception appears to offer no possibility of the **individual** Christian,
lay or ordained, refusing to 'receive' the teaching of the Church on grounds of conscience. Admittedly, this is not something which he deals with but certain lines can be deduced from the general tenor of his thought. If membership of the Body of Christ frees one from the 'individual' and makes him a corporate being, then it would appear difficult to permit a situation in which the individual, even through appeal to his conscience, could legitimately break with the rest of the Body. The traditional Christian teaching on conscience is that one must always obey one's conscience (Conscientia semper sequenda), although we must also recognize that conscience can be misled and in error. Nevertheless, it remains true that conscience, objectively considered, must always be obeyed. Yet a highly corporate ecclesiology such as Zizioulas' appears to leave no room for this. The realm of ethical teaching is of particular concern, especially as Orthodoxy becomes increasingly incarnated in complex, technologically advanced societies. Must one always 'receive' the moral teaching of the Church, even when it is received through the person of the bishop and, indeed, of the majority of the faithful? Or is one compelled to make an individual stand on the basis of one's personal conscience? Whilst Zizioulas does not address this question, nevertheless one cannot but feel, in the light of his anti-individualist polemic, that there is little room for the individual conscience in his ecclesiology.

Zizioulas believes that the identity of the local Church as an icon of the Kingdom depends not just on its celebrating the Eucharist around its bishop, but also on it being in communion with all other Churches across time and space. This necessitates conciliarity. On the vertical plane, this communion is manifested through its identity of faith (thus the need to continually re-receive the Conciliar doctrines) and continuity in ministry. Horizontally, there is a requirement that the local Church be in communion with the other local Churches throughout the world. In calling to mind this requirement, Zizioulas challenges the Churches to carefully review their own practices in the light of an understanding of conciliarity.
e) The Primacy

Zizioulas' treatment of the question of primacy is of particular note, not least because it is at 'the frontier of his thought.'39 Zizioulas requires that conciliarity must, ultimately, be expressed not through an impersonal 'council', but rather through a person:

Conciliarity ... expresses a relationship between communities which is reminiscent of that within a corporate personality, where all are implicated in what happens to any particular member. ... true corporate personality demands that there be a specific and stable 'one' at the heart of the configuration, constituted by the many and yet also giving identity to the many. ... this 'one' must also be present in the same manner as the many, such that, for instance, the central presence of Christ, the 'one' in the eucharistic gathering is not the eucharistic elements, but the bishop, who stands as a human being among human beings.40

Of course, Zizioulas is not bound to demand that conciliarity be understood as a corporate personality, properly understood. However, he has demonstrated that he does, thus necessarily making the primate and the other bishops and communities mutually constitutive. Such a move is necessary precisely because being mutually constitutive is a definitive hallmark of corporate personality in Zizioulas' sense. With regard to regional primacies, Zizioulas stated that in each ecclesiastical province there must be one head, as an institution of unity. In making this requirement, he at the same time rules out a more democratic approach:

There is no possibility of rotation or of collective ministry to replace this one head. The local bishops-Churches can do nothing without the presence of the "one." ... [Yet] the "one" cannot do anything without the "many."41

Zizioulas believes that primacy cannot be confined to a regional level but must reach out to a universal one. McPartlan quotes Zizioulas as stating that 'Ecclesial identity must involve ... (a) a ministry of
unity on the local level: (b) a ministry of unity on the universal level." This ministry of unity Zizioulas would see in the Bishop of Rome. Yet the primacy of Rome, or of any other primatial Church, in Zizioulas' view, cannot belong to the bishop *per se*, but rather to the community of which he is head. This is because the bishop can only be considered in relation to the Church which gives him his very being as *bishop*. This is a valuable ecumenical contribution, recognizing as it does the essentially collegial nature of all episcopacy, including that of the primatial bishop.

However, Zizioulas' understanding of the ministry of the primacy requires a qualification in its use of the categories of corporate personality. Obviously, the primacy has to be exercised by a bishop, as this primacy is exercised *among* bishops, though never understood apart from their communities. Yet we face a problem. Within each local Church, the 'many' cannot exist without the 'one', the bishop. This is *not* the case when we consider primacy. This is for the reason that each local Church takes its character as Church from the Eucharist celebrated around the bishop, the living portrayal of Christ. As such, each Church has a degree of completeness which can never be added to by another Church. Obviously, this does not permit wilful schism, but nevertheless it remains true that, on the basis of Zizioulas' eucharistic foundations, the necessity for a primacy in the Church cannot be the same as the necessity for a bishop within the local eucharistic community. McPartlan notes that:

> Zizioulas does not bring fully to light the real issue, which is that of whether being equally answerable vertically to God for their own Churches precludes the bishops from having in their midst one whose horizontal role is truly unique and personal.

Although Zizioulas would still seem to be striving to articulate his thoughts in this area, he offers positive hope that there are sufficient grounds for constructive dialogue between Roman Catholics and Orthodox on the issue of primacy. It is this issue above all others
which divides these two communions. On the Orthodox side, Zizioulas is calling for a clear recognition of an unequivocal primatial role for the Bishop of Rome which goes beyond a mere primacy of honour and which is firmly rooted within an ecclesiology of communion informed by a Christic-pneumatic synthesis. With regard to the Roman Catholic Church, Zizioulas is calling for a dialogue which will help find a way in which primacy can be understood within the context of Trinitarian theology, as was recognized in the 1982 'Munich Statement' agreed by the two communions. In this way, primacy may be seen more clearly as 'a worldwide apostolic service,' and as service to the Eucharist.

Zizioulas' understanding of the primacy is of particular interest should one wish to construct an understanding of the structure of the Church based on cultural, rather than territorial, episcopacy. In such a case, where a greater degree of expressions of the Christian faith may be permissible, a ministry of universal unity, and indeed ministries of more regional scope, would become imperative. Unity between the various local and cultural episcopates could receive its expression through unity with a central, preeminent Church, as in Zizioulas' understanding. The inclusion of an element of cultural episcopacy would in no way affect the validity of such an understanding of primacy. Indeed, the example of the Roman Catholic Church’s acceptance of a cultural element through its Eastern Rite bishops exercising episkopé in the West, through unity with Rome, points towards just such a possibility.

Towards the Future

As a major spokesman for Orthodox theology in the West today, John Zizioulas has attracted considerable attention for his understanding of the nature of the Church. Ecclesiology, from having been a relatively minor and unimportant chapter of theology, has become, in recent decades, a matter of major concern. In part,
this is due to the growing convergence between the various divided communions of Christendom and their awareness of the necessity of seeking common ground in their interpretation of the Church. At the same time, however, ecclesiology has been informed by a greater understanding of the major themes of theology, not least of which has been a tremendous recovery of the importance and centrality of the Trinity. John Zizioulas has the distinction of being intimately involved in both the practical, ecumenical task and, at the same time working towards a more systematic account of the Church in God’s economy. It is because of his role in both these approaches that Zizioulas is of particular importance for modern thought on the Church. Yet the desire for ecumenical convergence is not merely the product of a romantic longing for a visible unity which the Church has long since lost, if it ever fully had. On the contrary, it springs from a deep awareness of the implications of the central revelation of God as Trinity.

The recovery of the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity is now well underway, although it would be foolhardy indeed to suggest that it is complete. From being a relatively neglected dimension of systematic theology, it has come to be seen as being of prime importance. Indeed, reflecting on earlier patterns of systematic theology, James Torrance observed that such approaches:

reflect the divorce of dogmatic theology from Christian worship and mission, and have contributed to the widespread feeling of the “irrelevance” of dogma to the real world, and the consequent use of purely “pragmatic” approaches to the “problems” of Church and society, and a preoccupation with only social issues.48

Through his wide range of contributions to the theology of the Church, John Zizioulas has made a considerable contribution to the correction of such an unbalanced approach to theology, not only within his own communion, but also on a far wider ecumenical stage.
Because the understanding of God as Trinity lies at the very heart of Zizioulas' theology, he has been able to make an important contribution to a range of contemporary issues. One area which has been crucial for much of his ecclesiology has been the application of Trinitarian categories to an understanding of the human person. In the first chapter of this work, I demonstrated how Zizioulas applied trinitarian theology to the nature of humanity as created in the image of God. Following his favourite Patristic author, Maximus the Confessor, Zizioulas sees in humanity an image of the Trinity. As Thunberg observes, 'There are ... in Maximus clear indications of a human imago Trinitatis ... and this is related to the constitution of man and also to his spiritual potentiality.' At the same time, the Church itself is likewise related to the Trinity as image:

The Holy Church is thus ... an icon of God in that it accomplishes the same unity among the believers as God. However different they are by their characteristics and their differences of place and ways of life, they find themselves nevertheless unified in it through faith.

Zizioulas has performed the invaluable task of closely relating humanity's very being to the being of God himself in and through the Church. In this way, he has helped towards a recovery of the importance of ecclesiology for the existential concerns of humanity.

At the same time, by linking together baptism, chrismation and the Eucharist, here in fundamental continuity (although with his own distinctive approach) with the thought of Alexander Schmemann and John Meyendorff, he has made a major contribution to the recovery of a deeper appreciation of the intrinsically related constituent parts of the process of Christian initiation, which receives its culmination and purpose in the Eucharist.

It is indeed to the understanding of the Eucharist which Zizioulas has made perhaps his most important contribution, yet not in such a way that it can be conceived of as standing alone. On the contrary, it is through his understanding of the Eucharist as
eschatological participation in the heavenly realities that Zizioulas goes on to elaborate his neo-patristic understanding of the Eucharistic celebration as iconic participation in the mysteries of the kingdom which therefore requires as a sine qua non that there be a visible representation of Christ, an icon present in the same way in which we are present. By seeing in the person of the bishop this iconic representation, Zizioulas makes a major contribution to our understanding of episcopacy, removing it from the context of a pattern of ecclesiastical administration and placing it on the level of relationship.

As head of the eucharistic community, a function he exercises because of his presidency of the eucharistic community, Zizioulas recalls us to the fact that the Eucharist is not merely something which the Church does, but is rather that reality which makes the Church continually become what it is. This has immense ecumenical implications, not least in unity negotiations between episcopal and non-episcopal Churches. A renewed understanding of episcopacy, in which the bishop is constituted in his very being by the people, whilst they depend, at one and the same time, on him has much to contribute to ecumenical debate, removing as it does the necessity to see the one deriving from the other, which has been a temptation no matter to which of the parties we would tend to afford priority.

This theological requirement that Christology be always constituted at its very roots by Pneumatology gives Zizioulas' views great importance in the debate on the nature of ecclesiastical authority. Rather than being forced into a position where we feel impelled to take a stance either for the priority of the whole body of believers or, on the other hand, for the hierarchy, it becomes possible to view each as being, at the same time, of equal importance, albeit in different ways. The fact that Zizioulas makes the authority of the hierarchy depend on a process of reception by the whole Church, whilst being no new insight in itself, gives practical weight to his
insistence upon a strictly trinitarian ecclesiology.

It is in his understanding of the purpose, the very necessity, of primacy, that Zizioulas is at his most eirenic. The question of Christian unity can hope for no real overall resolution unless the problem of primacy is successfully addressed. In advancing an understanding of primacy based firmly upon the Eucharistic nature of the Church, on its trinitarian foundations, Zizioulas is making a major ecumenical contribution. Although many Orthodox would reject any notion of a universal primacy, Zizioulas has performed the service of not only demonstrating, from an Orthodox viewpoint, how such an ecclesiological approach might be in keeping with the basic theological view of Orthodoxy but also how such an understanding is logically required in a trinitarian and eucharistic conception of ecclesiology.

Zizioulas has provided contemporary ecclesiology with an important and dynamic understanding of the Church based firmly upon a particularly rigorous application of Trinitarian theology. The implications of his thought for the understanding and practice of authority within the Church are immense. Zizioulas has always been alive to the faults of his own communion and is therefore all the more aware of the need for a sympathetic synthesis between Eastern and Western theology. If by striving to achieve that synthesis we are able to promote a model of authority in the Church which is both faithful to our theological vision of the Eucharist and at the same time is capable of translation into practice, then we will indeed be justified in seeing the Eucharist not only as the heart of the Church but the beating heart of the Church.51
Conclusion

Notes


2. The late John Meyendorff, in his Foreword to Zizioulas' Being As Communion, describes him as having been 'gradually recognized as one of the most influential Orthodox theologians of the younger generation,' (p.12). Yves Congar likewise referred to Zizioulas as 'one of the most original and most profound theologians of our age' in Bulletin d'ecclésiologie (1982), p.88. Quoted by P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.xiii.


4. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.15.


6. Thus it is no accident that he chose as the titles of his two collections of essays, L'Etre Ecclesial and Being As Communion. Both of these titles stress the centrality of the dimension of communion.

7. See J. Areeplackal, Spirit and Ministries, especially pp.168-188 for his treatment of this synthesis.

8. J. Zizioulas, Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, p.27; 'Truth is to be found only in communion.'


11. T. Ware, The Orthodox Church, p.244.
12. T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p.219.

13. Archimandrite Vasileios [Gondikakis], Abbot of the Monastery of Stavronikita on Mount Athos, remarks that:

   'Government by councils is trinitarian: it signifies a trinitarian mode of existence and operation. The Father does nothing without the Son: "There is nothing that He has willed, or ordained, or made without the Son," (Oecumenius, *Commentary on Ephesians*, Chapter 4; *P.G.* 118: 1208A). And the Son does nothing without the Father, "for whatever He {the Father} does, the Son does likewise (John 5:19); and the Holy Spirit does not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He speaks (John 16:13). God wanted to grant to His creation by grace that unity which by nature connects the three consubstantial persons of the one Deity from before the ages. This constitutes the ontological basis for man's being in God's image, and makes it possible for him to succeed in becoming His likeness.'


   This implies that the active participation of all orders in the Church's decision-making process is an absolute theological requirement. Thus: 'Nothing is done in the Holy Trinity without the three persons "holding an assembly"; and nothing is done in the Church without the assent of the fulness of the Church, without the consent of its ecclesial and trinitarian consciousness.'


14. Examples of abuse of power by the Church can be drawn from every age and nation. They range from petty abuses such as the exactions carried out on his flock by the Vicar of Tranent in Sir David Lindsay's *A Satire of the Three Estates* from 16th Century Scotland, through the use of ecclesiastical power to blight the careers of personal or theological enemies, to the wholesale persecution of opponents following an Ecumenical Council. For this latter, see J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, pp.187-202 in particular. Here, Meyendorff discusses the events following Chalcedon, during which each side attempted to gain the upper hand through the use of political manoeuvring and even murder. At one stage, the Chalcedonian party in Alexandria used the military forces of the Empire to secure the deposition of the Patriarch, thereby bringing about riots and a death toll of some ten thousand people.

   Within the Russian Church, the controversy between the 'Possessors' and the 'Non-Possessors' in the 16th century
serves to display the abandonment of any approximation of the Trinitarian model in that part of the Orthodox Church at the time. The 17th Century likewise saw the imposition of certain novel customs in the Russian Church, resulting in the persecution of the ‘Old Believers’, as they were termed. See T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp.113-125.

15. T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p.248. In a footnote here (n.2), Ware quotes G. Dix as stating that ‘This idea of “becoming what you are” is the key to the whole eschatological teaching of the New Testament.’ (*The Shape of the Liturgy* [London: A. & C. Black, 1945], p.247).


24. A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, p.81. Afanasiev by no means adopted all of Sohm’s strictures on Catholic Church order. As Nichols here states:

   ‘He disagrees with Sohm’s view that the “Catholic” Church pattern emerged through the penetration of law into primitive Christianity. On the contrary, the Church entered history as a society with a determinate structure, even though in the charismatic beginnings this structure was barely clothed in the fabric of history.’


It is of note that, in West Russia during the 16th Century, an area which was not then part of the later Russian Empire centred on Moscow, circumstances combined to bring about some historically and theologically interesting developments. There, the Orthodox were in constant contact with Western Christians, due to their position bordering on a number of Roman Catholic states, in particular Poland. The political situation in that region was for a long time extremely fluid, with many changes of boundaries. In this situation, the Orthodox were forced into a position where they had to justify their independence from Rome, whilst at the same time affirming their catholicity in the face of Latin denials of it. This situation became doubly difficult after the Reformation as they had to defend their position against the Protestants, who were frequently unable to comprehend the Orthodox viewpoint. The Orthodox, to defend themselves, were forced to take part in a Western dispute on Western terms. In order to defend and justify their position vis-à-vis both Catholics and Protestants, Orthodox theologians borrowed heavily from the West, especially as there was now no possibility of a fresh impetus from a vivifying Byzantine theology. Thus, for example, to refute Roman claims regarding papal authority, Orthodox writers made use of Protestant works. Likewise, Roman Catholic works would be utilized to attack Protestant views on the sacraments and Church authority. Combined with this was a tendency for theologians to form two camps, one of which saw Protestantism as the more pernicious error and the other seeing in Catholicism the greater danger. Not only, however, did they employ the theological writings of their preferred side, but they also attended their universities and seminaries, where they absorbed not only many of the actual doctrinal positions but also the whole of the scholastic, humanistic and rationalistic approach to theology, which was profoundly alien to Orthodox thought. Like Western scholasticism, the Russian variety was a systematization and rationalization of inherited patristic and early mediaeval theological materials in the light of a clearer conceptual analysis of a quasi-philosophical kind. Although this scholasticism was outwardly founded on the Greek Fathers and Byzantine theology, in reality it drew its ultimate inspiration from Western models and materials. It is important to note that:

'The spur to its creation was the Unia movement whereby a sizable segment of the Russian Orthodox Church in West Russia . . . passed over into communion with Rome. There was thus established what was long called the “Ruthenian” church.'


This *Unia* movement had its roots in the political desire of the
expansionist Polish state of the late sixteenth century, which at that time included considerable tracts of Western Russia, to achieve a greater degree of religious cohesion which was, in turn, aimed at attaining a higher level of internal political stability. The pro-Roman Unia movement in the Orthodox Church cooperated with the state's attempt to bring the Orthodox Church into submission to the authority of the Holy See at the 'Union of Brest' conference in 1595.

Yet in spite of a very active hierarchical leadership in this movement, coupled with legal enforcement of the Union by the Polish authorities, it was in large measure a failure. In the view of Florovsky, this was because:

'The Unia was fundamentally a clerical movement, the work of a few bishops, separated and isolated from the community of the Church, who acted without its free and conciliar consent, without a consensus plebis, or as was lamented at the time, "secretly and stealthily, without the knowledge of the Christian people."'


The great mass of Orthodox believers, in spite of the pressures brought to bear by the secular authorities, rebelled against their hierarchy and refused to have anything to do with the Unia. The new Uniate hierarchy condemned this resistance of the people as uncanonical disobedience to lawfully established and divinely instituted authority, backing up their claim by reference to both Orthodox and Roman Canon Law, decisions of Councils and Patristic authors, especially Ignatius of Antioch. Yet, for their part, the Orthodox laity saw their resistance to the hierarchy as being none other than their Christian duty, an inescapable demand of their fidelity to the Orthodox faith. As Ivan Vishenskii (died prior to 1625), a Russian monk and minor theologian of Mount Athos, wrote, 'Neither priests, nor bishops, nor metropolitans will save us, but the mystery of our faith and the keeping of the Divine commandments, that is what shall save us,' (Quoted in G. Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, Part One, p.53). Furthermore, he forthwith defended the right of the faithful Christian, layman though he be, to depose and drive out any apostate bishop, 'lest with that evil eye or pastor they go to Gehenna.'

So, then, wherein did Church authority reside, if not unconditionally in the hierarchy? To the hierarchical appeal to Canonical tradition and the writings of some Fathers, the Orthodox laity opposed the 'Orthodox consciousness' of the body of the Church. They argued that the hierarchy cannot make a claim to the unlimited and uncritical loyalty of the laity, but only insofar as they themselves remained loyal to Orthodoxy. The moment a bishop stepped outside of the
community of the Church not only did he lose the right to the obedience of his flock, but in truth he was a bishop no longer, for what is a shepherd who has abandoned his flock?

At about the same time, and as part of this reaction, another important development was taking place. This involved lay parochial organizations which had originated in the 1580s and were known as Brotherhcloas. Subsequently, they had taken up the defence of Orthodoxy and received ecclesiastical recognition. In their internal affairs the brotherhoods were autonomous. Some also came to enjoy the status of stauropegia, that is, they were independent of the jurisdiction of the local bishop. The brotherhood in Lvov even, for a time, had the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople to supervise the actions of their bishop, including the right to judge him as a court of final appeal. Although the circumstances of the time were highly unusual, nevertheless this was a daring venture, despite being short-lived. Obviously, in an ecclesiology such as that of Zizioulas, where it is the bishop who is the head of the local community, despite having to exercise his ministry with the consent of the other orders, a difficulty arises when one institutionalizes the rights of the laity in such a way. Yet the very fact that this was done raises the possibility that, in our more democratic age, where some at least of the laity are as well, or even better, theologically educated than their clergy, a similar structure may emerge for the formal, structural expression of the ‘reception’ of hierarchical decisions and teaching, although this in no way need be seen as having authority over the bishop.


'Ignatius’ description of Church Order is the idealized product of his own mystical imagination, unique and individual, but not chronologically false. His invention was not monepiscopacy per se, but a peculiar description of it. His record is not an objective of how that same Order precisely appeared to his contemporaries. Rather, the literary character and form of his letters show that what he writes is best described as a vision rather than a strictly historical record.

In chains and evidently from what he says limited to prison visitors, Ignatius contemplated mystically the personalities of his clerical visitors, and saw there the corporate personalities of their communities. From such mystagogically conceived data he developed his
picture of the Church Order possessed by their communities. That Order is not one of historically observed fact but rather an invisible Order as observed by Ignatius as a man of the Spirit. Historical facts will therefore regrettably be either lost or obscured through absorption into the vision.'


Clearly, if Brent is correct in this assessment, it has implications for Zizioulas' own interpretation of Ignatius, in that he would no longer be able to argue for an historical understanding of the Ignatian position in quite the form he does. Of course, this does not obviate the supposed validity of the theological vision, but nevertheless does affect Zizioulas' argument for the early spread of an Ignatian-type episcopacy.


29. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, pp.255-256. Zizioulas believes that:

'This kind of approach to the ecclesiality of the local Church puts the geographical aspect of locality in an advantageous position compared with other aspects of "locality," such as culture or profession. For the geographic "place" can serve as the common ground for the meeting of the various cultural and other elements επί το αὐτό, "in the same place" - an expression so significantly used for both Church and eucharist in the New Testament as an expression of geographical locality. In this kind of approach the geographical aspect of locality appears to be an indispensable element in the concept of the local Church.'

J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.256.

30. A. Brent, Ecumenical Reconciliation and Cultural Episcopates, p.277, with reference to F. Young, From Nicaea to Chalcedon (London: SCM, 1983), pp.178-265. I am indebted to Brent for his brief, but lucid, discussion of the application of Durkheim's sociological categories to this dimension of ecclesiology.

31. This is the solution advocated by Zizioulas himself, cf. Being As Communion, p.251, n.6. However, although he advocates small episcopal dioceses, he does not define what he means by this, nor does he seem to recognize the tension between this desire and his insistence on the necessity of a local eucharistic, and hence episcopal, community being composed of all Christians who reside in that geographical place.
32. This objection to the idea of the presbyter-centred parish is something which appears frequently in Zizioulas' ecclesiology. For the fullest, and also his earliest, discussion of the problem, see his L'Eucharistie, l'Évéque, et l'Église durant les trois premiers siècles (FT Paris: Brouwer, 1994), especially pp.191-240.

33. Clearly, this would have its difficulties. However, at least in theory, the Church of Scotland operates with a not dissimilar pattern. Each parish is headed by a minister, who is assisted by elders, who not only form a 'court' with him but also even sit around him at celebrations of the Eucharist. Again, at least in theory, he is also assisted in his ministry by deacons. The parallels with the Ignatian pattern, despite the Church of Scotland not adhering to a theology of structural Apostolic Succession, are clear and it is somewhat surprising that Zizioulas, who lived and worked in Scotland for a number of years, makes no direct allusion to this fact.

34. N. Berdyaev, The Spirit of Orthodoxy, p.4.

35. The Orthodox are by no means alone in seeking the opinion of the faithful. In the last century, Newman was exercised with this very problem. His view was that there is a consensus fidelium which will preserve the Church from error even in cases when the bishops fail in their duty on this point. In his article, On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine, published in 1859, Newman insisted, because of historical realities, that the laity have, at times, preserved the faith of the Church despite the lapse of the bishops. However, Newman did not suggest that it is the consensus of the faithful per se which is infallible, but rather the consensus is an indication to us of the judgment of the Church which is infallible.

36. E.g., J. Zizioulas, Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, p.27.

37. See his contribution to this, Ecclesiological Issues Inherent in the Relations Between Eastern Chalcedonian and Oriental Non-Chalcedonian Churches, pp.138-156.

38. Cf. J. Zizioulas, Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, p.25: The authority of the Ecumenical Councils does not lie in their institutional status, for . . . there is no institution as such called Ecumenical Council. It lies in the fact - for those of course who are prepared to admit it - that their decisions can make existential sense for all generations. But this is something that cannot be stated as axiomatic; it must be the
conclusion of a re-reception of these councils by the Church at all times.'


41. J. Zizioulas, Being As Communion, p.135.

42. J. Zizioulas, Confessional Identity and Ecclesial Identity; the nature of the unity we seek; unpublished paper read to the Colloque at the Monastère de Chevetogne, on the theme 'Identité confessionelle et traditions ecclésiales' August 22-26, 1983, p.14. Quoted by P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.207.


44. P. McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church, p.233.

45. The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. This document, the production of which Zizioulas was involved in, closely reflects his thinking here.


50. St. Maximus the Confessor, Mystagogia, Chapter 1; quoted in L. Thunberg, Man and the Cosmos, p.117.

51. The phrase is McPartlan's and is taken from the title of Chapter Twelve in The Eucharist Makes the Church.
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516


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518


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