

## Chapter 4

# REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITATIVE TEACHING ON SOCIAL QUESTIONS

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When we examine the issues on which disagreement and conflict in the church have been most frequent at least during the last twenty-five years, we find that they are seldom directly related to doctrinal, jurisdictional, or liturgical questions. Conflicts within the denominations and at the ecumenical level are apt to erupt over social, economic, and political issues. While earlier struggles and divisions in the church have never been unrelated to such factors, they have now become more prominent and explicit. Churches are frequently perplexed about how to face these problems, caught in the dilemma of being irrelevant or of provoking bitter controversy and even division.

The reasons for the urgency that this problem has acquired seem to me to belong to two aspects of modern society:

### **The Nature of Modern Society**

There is, I think, a threefold transformation characteristic of modern life and society which one could summarize in a sort of cumulative scale which is somewhat related to historical development. To put it in a simplified and over-compressed way we could say that modern life becomes increasingly *socialized*, *politicized*, and *globalized*. Human life has, of course, always been social. Personal decisions and actions have always been to a significant extent determined by social mores and conventions. But until very recently we were not clearly aware of this fact. Consequently, it was possible to conceive ethical issues as individual decisions. Churches, therefore, felt that their main ethical responsibility was to shape personal life according to Christian conviction, doctrine, or regulation. Even in dealing with issues that had a clear social matrix, ecclesiastical pronouncements and legislation tended to try to produce individual responses. Both the development of larger social units (urbanization) and the results of

social sciences have made us aware of the fact that behavior is largely determined collectively. The basic process of "moralization" is concomitant with the processes of socialization. Consequently, if we want to foster certain types of ethical responses, we have to attempt to create a collective conscience that will support them. The churches have thus had to move from indications about personal behavior to "ethical teaching" for the whole society, to the articulation of a "social doctrine" that will be able to respond to the issues raised by the increasing socialization of life and to our understanding of corporate behavior.

Human life has not only become more clearly socially determined but society itself is more clearly politically organized. By this I mean that personal activity (work, education, living conditions, security, recreation) are more and more inserted into structures which are not amenable to individual decision. If we want to shape or direct them in any way, it has to be done through concerted social action and usually by means of laws, general institutions, or large scale plans. Thus, Christian conviction, if it intends to be effective, has to try to exert its influence (hopefully through means that are both effective and compatible with the faith). It is interesting to note how hesitatingly Christian theology has moved from general ethical teaching on society to areas of political and economic decision. While it felt entitled to speak with the authority of faith in areas of public morality (family, education, charity), political and economic questions appeared as governed by an autonomous reason for which it had no competence. When the churches tackle these areas, their teaching becomes more exposed to criticism—through the criticism of the structural (economic and political) mediations assumed in articulating their positions on ethical issues.

Finally, there is *globalization*. That is, the political and economic structures which so widely and deeply affect human life are more and more all-embracing geographically. This happens not only because of the growing network of communications, science and technology, exchange, transportation, international trade, transnational production, international division of labor, political blocks and spheres of influence (all of which is well known), but also because almost everybody is drawn into these networks. Some peoples and groups may be marginal in terms of the "benefits" they derive from the system, but practically nobody is anymore marginal in terms of being able to live independently of it. This transformation has led to the quest for universal guidance for human life and society. The magisterial office of the churches has been naturally drawn into this quest. It seems necessary for the churches to speak on these issues at the most universal level possible. But in a broken and asymmetrically divided world, most of what it says becomes highly controversial.

## The Operation of Religious Authority

In his classic discussion of the concepts of authority, power and domination, Max Weber makes an interesting distinction between any form of "hierocratic domination," which establishes its claim by "psychical coercion, granting or refusing goods of salvation" and that form which treats the churches as "hierocratic institutions," the organic authorities of which "retain a claim to the legitimate monopoly of hierocratic coercion."<sup>1</sup> His distinction helps us to see the twofold nature of our problem. On the one hand, the question has to do with the *legitimate authority* issuing the statement; on the other, with the possibility of *ensuring the assenting reception of such a statement*.

The difficulty in dealing with this question in our time is that the relation between these two aspects of "ecclesiastical authority" has radically changed in modern times. Political and ideological changes have deprived the churches of the use of a number of objective means of coercion, both legal and social. "Authoritative statements" have lost most of their legally binding power and have become advisory. This is the case even in a church like the Roman Catholic church, with a very developed canon law which, in fact, becomes hardly enforceable outside the restricted circle of the clergy. While most churches have not seriously revised their stated doctrine and canons of authority, they function quite differently from earlier times. We urgently need a careful study—using recent sociological research—of the way in which "hierocratic power" operates in the "religious field" in relation both to civilian and political society.

To put it quite simply, church teaching, of one kind or another, can *compel* nobody except to the extent that it appeals to conscience. Not only is there no direct power (*potestas directa*) of the church, except in a very few places and circumstances, but there is no indirect power (*potestas indirecta*), which the churches used to exercise when secular governments felt under the obligation of legislating according to their teachings. The issue is even more complex insofar as there is a simultaneous plurality of different—and not seldom contradictory—ecclesiastical teachings competing for the conscience of both people and authorities. The authoritative character of a teaching, as far as its effectiveness is concerned, does not lie in the formal authority which the church may attribute to it but (a) in the social, ethical, and spiritual prestige which such a church may enjoy in the population (or in the dominant sectors of it), and (b) in the capacity of the contents of the teaching to recommend itself to the people on its own worth. Though this is obvious, churches need to be reminded of it, because they tend to give undue importance to the "intended" rather than to the "performative" (effective) authority of their pronouncements.

If this analysis is correct, "authority" depends very much on the particular characteristics of a given society and the relation of the churches to that society. The significant role that ecclesiastical pronouncements play in Latin American population can only be understood when we realize that the people retain a strong religious outlook. The "goods of salvation," to use Weber's expression, however differently understood and experienced, occupy an important place in the life of Latin American peoples. More secularized societies would react more indifferently to the church's judgments. However, it is interesting to note that even in advanced technological and supposedly secularized societies, there is a fierce struggle to obtain religious legitimation for political and economic policies. The impassioned responses—of enthusiasm or rejection—in the United States to ecclesiastical pronouncements, for instance on nuclear weapons, the economy, or foreign policy, cannot be explained unless the people involved (in many cases, governments, politicians or economic leaders whose religious practice is none too impressive) realize that such statements carry a weight in public opinion which is significant in order to obtain consensus for their policies.

The nature of that "weight" relates to the "service" which, in the consciousness of the people, the church renders to them. It seems to me that such service comprises two elements which, in different degrees and relation to each other, are always present. The fundamental one is the relation to "the transcendent," the more direct religious dimension. In this sense, a teaching can be significant if it "engages the faith," if people perceive that their relation to God is at stake in the particular issue to which the teaching refers. This, however, is also perceived through an ethical mediation: the statement rests on values and principles (human dignity and worth, justice, peace, reconciliation) which are understood to be an integral part of the religious faith. But when these values appear as autonomous, disconnected from their transcendent roots, the ecclesiastical statement loses its specific authority as such—it becomes a commonsense, philosophical, or ideological statement which may carry its own weight but which does not directly "engage the faith." This is no doubt a debatable point. I simply submit the thesis that people do not listen to the church because it is wise, good, or progressive but because, in some way, it speaks for and about God.

Finally, the effective "weight" of a teaching rests on its perceived "relevance," that is, the ability of the teaching to give expression to concerns that people feel to be significant for their lives and to offer guidance that "makes sense" in that situation. The higher interest on statements on peace in Europe and North America compared with Latin America or Africa and the reverse situation in relation to statements on social justice,

illustrates the point I am making. This does not mean that people's perception of the crucial questions and of sensible answers is correct. Churches may find it necessary to criticize, correct and broaden such perceptions. But they cannot discount them if they want to be heard.

### **Illustration from the Methodist Tradition**

Teaching on social questions has been a significant part of the Methodist tradition from the beginning. It could be both interesting and profitable to trace the history of that teaching from the point of view of the style, self-understanding of the Church in relation to society, way of addressing the questions and type of reception expected and obtained. I am not competent for this job, but, as a very simple illustration, I would like to make a few comparative remarks on three such forms of teaching, taken from very diverse moments in the development of Methodism and in the historical circumstances: Wesley's "General Rules," the social creed of The Methodist Episcopal Church (1908), and the recent Pastoral Letter and episcopal "Foundation Document," "In Defense of Creation" (1986).

The very existence of the *Rules*<sup>2</sup> asserts the claim of the church's (in this case the Wesleyan "society's") authority to enforce on its members particular laws concerning their participation in social questions. The prohibitions to sell, buy and possess slaves, to sell, produce or consume liquor, or the rules about the transaction of business were not simply seen as pertaining to individual "virtue" but as relating to social issues (slavery, temperance, economic ethics) which had to do with "the reform of the nation." Although the rules themselves do not make it explicit, nor is the theological rationale always clear in this respect, Wesley's own treatises ("thoughts") on these issues show that the rules are related to a wider social perspective. But it is no less clear that the authority of the church is engaged through the behavior of its members. In the terms of our previous analysis we have here specific indications, meant to be followed, backed up by the disciplinary authority of the "religious society," and in turn guaranteed by the latter's capacity to "deliver or to refuse the goods of salvation."

Half a century later, the Northern Methodist Church in the United States faced the problems raised by the growth of industrial capitalism. "The Social Creed,"<sup>3</sup> as a responsible "social teaching" seems to be the first official document engaging the authority of the church. The shift in the nature and exercise of authority seems evident. In the first place, we have a more general sort of desiderata, not really general ethical or theologico-ethical principles but rather somewhere between what has later been called "middle axioms" (for instance, "equal rights and complete justice for all . . ." or "the principle of conciliation and arbitration") and more specific

requirements (“the suppression of ‘the sweating system’ ” or “release from employment one day in seven”). In the second place, the initial sentence defines the nature of the document: “The Methodist Episcopal Church stands—For. . . .” These are not rules addressed to individuals to regulate their social behavior; it is not in the first place teaching for the church (in fact, only later we find in successive revisions the introduction of a theological rationale and more general social teaching). It presents itself as a witness to society: the things the church “stands for. . . .” The church seems to understand itself as a moral conscience of society, speaking for justice at a particular juncture, acclaiming particularly the rights of those who stand at a disadvantage. Finally, the church places itself within society, accepts the fundamental laws of the economic and social system (“the lowest *practical point*”—for hours of labor; “the highest wage that each industry *can afford*”), and tries to humanize it, correcting “the social ills” and making harmony and peace possible.

In the recent declaration “In Defense of Creation,”<sup>4</sup> we are faced with a third kind of statement (even recognizing that the subject is different). In the first place, it is addressed “to all those people called United Methodist in every land”—certainly, the bishops expect the “message” to have a larger impact. But it is primarily a “teaching document” meant to engage the church in the consideration of an issue “of utmost urgency in our time.” It does not claim to settle the issue but “to lead the Church in study, prayer and action”<sup>5</sup> (from the Pastoral letter introducing the document) The bishops do not claim authority to enjoin on members a particular conduct. Nor do they intend to define officially a uniform “church stand.” Rather, they invite the church to come to grips with a crucial question and provide elements for the church to grasp the facts and analyze the issue theologically and ethically. It is the teaching office of the bishops conceived as a process of mutual consultation and joint reflection. This is why it requires a clear and solid theological and ethical foundation (chapter I). In this sense, it tries to make clear why this issue belongs to the very heart of the Christian faith—in God the Creator, the Preserver, and the Redeemer. But it also requires a clear spelling out of the ethical and technical mediations. The first is discussed in terms of the issue of peace and war in the Christian tradition. The second is developed in three chapters (chs. II–IV) including both an ideological and a political analysis, buttressed with technical evidence. This explication of the mediations is a new element in relation to the first two documents and responds to the need to prove the spiritual and ethical value but also the “relevance” of the proposals. Finally, the discussion is left open in the sense of not claiming final authority. But it defines a position from where dialogue is invited: a set of concrete proposals on specific questions raised by “the nuclear crisis.”

I do not now intend to discuss the substance of these documents, but from a more formal point of view to underline the change that has taken place: (a) the direct addressee—from the individual believer, to the nation, to the church as a plural body; (b) the purpose: to shape personal behavior through specific rules, to present to the nation moral orientation on some acute social problems, to engage the church in the consideration and to invite it to “covenant” for action on a critical issue; (c) the style: from a concise enumeration of rules, to more general ethical principles, to a developed theological, ethical and social argument; (d) the way of “engaging the faith”: from a direct command—How is the specific command discerned? to an appeal to faith through a reasoned argument (“prayerful study”). There is continuity in the intention. There is also a significant continuity in the contents. But the three statements belong undoubtedly to different conceptions of the church’s role and authority and to different expectations regarding the “reception” of ecclesiastical teaching on social questions.

### **Conflict in Society**

However different, the kinds of teaching on social issues that we have examined share some basic presuppositions: they address society as a whole. They seem to conceive society as a body made up of different groups or sectors among which disagreement and even conflict can emerge, but which shares a fundamental consensus and functions within a fundamentally acceptable order. The social function of the church is to spot, denounce, and help to correct particular imbalances or dysfunctions (which sometimes are considered serious and urgent). Consequently, it will try to defuse or to bring down the level of conflict, to try to be objective—in some way above the conflict—in order to bring the conflicting parties to an agreement. Even strong documents like the United Methodist one on the nuclear crisis<sup>6</sup> or the recent Roman Catholic pastoral letter on economy<sup>7</sup> operate within these premises.

Can this perspective be “normative” for all ecclesiastical teaching on social questions? This question was posed at the ecumenical level by the Church and Society WCC Geneva Conference on 1966 on “The Political and Scientific Revolutions of Our Time.” The title was ambivalent but the issue was not avoided. In asymmetrical societies where power is unilaterally exercised by one of the social actors (whether internal or external to that society) to the detriment of others (and even to that of the majority of the people), is it enough to look for mechanisms of compensation or is the church called to ask for a fundamental structural change? Can the church arbitrate between the parts looking for conciliation and mutual conces-

sions or is it called to take sides and to struggle for a basic turnover in the power structure? Widely remembered is Paul Ramsey's strong criticism of the Conference in his book *Who Speaks for the Church?*<sup>8</sup> His explicit criticism is that in recommending specific courses of action for specific issues (for instance the Vietnam war or nuclear weapons) the Conference presupposes a decision on technical questions on which the churches have no competence. But when one looks more carefully at his argument, and particularly at his "provisional model for specific political pronouncements," two implicit concerns seem to be dominant. The first one is for "fairness" or balance for the opposing cases made by the different parties in discussion. It would seem that the task of the churches is to state as fairly as possible the case made by these different positions and to enunciate the middle axioms pertinent to the question but without enjoining any particular position or a specific course of action. The second is to "leave" the specific decision to the "policy makers"—who have the technical knowledge and a total view of the situation—and to offer, apart from the ethical general orientation mentioned above, the moral support of the churches. In fact it presupposes a trust in the knowledge, competence, and legitimacy of the present structure of society and its leadership to arrive at the correct decisions. In other terms, the church functions as a general moral advisor and a spiritual support of the present structure and system. Its existing checks and balances are considered adequate to cope with present challenges.

This is precisely one of the problems at stake today. It has become crucial for many Third World countries. Brazilian bishops (from the Northeast) posed the basic problem of their society some years ago (1973) in a pastoral letter entitled, "I Have Heard the Cry of My People."<sup>9</sup> It runs somewhat parallel to the United Methodist one in structure: a fundamental theological statement and a careful analysis of the situation. But this leads to a radical conclusion: the rejection of the prevailing economic and political model. It is this economic model that produces the oppression of the people. Therefore "the dominated class has no other road to freedom except the long and difficult trek, now under way, in favor of the social ownership of the means of production."<sup>10</sup> This is the struggle of the people—not of the church. But the church does not remain neutral, as an umpire arbitrating between the different sectors, but it takes sides: "We feel that the Word of God calls us to take a stand. A stand on the side of the poor." "As in the time of Moses," say the bishops, "a people that seek to ameliorate their situation and to shake off the yoke of oppression, is fulfilling an aspect of God's designs. . . . We are convinced that it is time to opt for God and for the people."<sup>11</sup> The same question of "option" in conflict was faced by the churches in relation to the national liberation movements



(particularly in Africa). With the support of the majority of the member churches, the WCC took the side of the liberation movements in several cases (Zimbabwe the most conspicuous) and made this option visible through symbolic financial support of certain activities (medical and educational) of these movements. The discussion was frequently sidetracked to the problem of violence. But the real heart of the controversy seems to me to hinge on two other aspects: the acceptance of a conflict that cannot be "appeased" but has to be fought through (the means is another question) and the need of the church to take sides in it. This casts the church in the role of adversary of the existing system, of a dysfunctional social actor, a role which the large Christian churches have not exercised for a long time, for which they are not prepared, and which they are very reluctant to accept.

The arguments against this option seem to overlook the fact that they actually rest on two assumptions: that the present structure of a society is fundamentally sound and able to accommodate justly the needs and rights of all its members and, therefore, that all conflicts within it can be solved by arbitration. But, in fact, in the proposed model the church, far from remaining neutral or "above the conflict," opts for the existing power structure and gives it religious legitimation. That may well be a justified decision—and it is so in many cases—but there is no theological or ethical reason to take it as "normative." The possibility that the church may have to express a negative judgment on a total system is an always present possibility. The question that it raises is again the question of criteria for such a rejection. Such criteria cannot be defined abstractly: in given situations, the very nature and form of the conflict points to the Christian concerns that are at stake. It is on this basis that the recent episcopal document defines "the defense of Creation" as the relevant criterion for the consideration of the "nuclear crisis" and comes to a total rejection of the nuclear option. The apartheid issue raised the fundamental Christian criterion of "the unity of humankind in creation and redemption" and led some churches to condemn "apartheid" outrightly as "heresy" or as determining a status confessionis. Many Latin American pronouncements on the regimes of national security have made the defense of life a basic criterion. This has led the churches to the condemnation of the national security doctrine and to a radical questioning of the operation of the economic system that has used this doctrine as its tool. When one brings together several of these criteria, one finds that they coalesce in fact in a certain "family of options" which, while leaving room for plurality, define a general direction that can help churches to test their responses to the critical dilemmas of today's world.

## Unity, Partisanship, and Pluralism

There is one further issue that I would like to introduce in the discussion. Partisanship on the part of the church—that is, opting for one side, radical opposition to the existing system—seems to threaten the unity of the church. On the other hand, it seems to contradict our own argument on the way in which church authority operates today. Liberal pluralism does not solve the problem because it is itself an ideological option. The inability of liberal pluralism to deal with system-rejection betrays its limits: it operates within a certain consensus and therefore it cannot accommodate in its plurality options that challenge such consensus.

The problem should not be over-extended. There are different kinds of ecclesiastical teaching on social issues. Probably most of it does not bring up these critical options. Although issues are interrelated—and even more so in our modern complex societies—not every question demands a radical option. But some do. Is thereby the unity of the church broken? Are people “forced” on the basis of an option which they cannot share? It seems to me that this raises an ecclesiological question. What is the concrete empirical correlate of the theological reality which we call “Church”? I think that on the basis of the fundamental Protestant (and I believe also fully Methodist) conception of the church as gathered by the Holy Spirit around the proclamation and the living testimony to the gospel, one can speak of “the church,” historically, as the multiplicity of ecclesiastical institutions, movements, and communities that identify themselves by reference to Jesus Christ and the gospel. But this “ensemble” must not be understood as an undifferentiated whole but as a “field,” a “space,” even a “battleground” in which takes place a constant “struggle for the Gospel.” It is a struggle that can take the form of dialogue, debate, confrontation, or conflict which is not based on liberal pluralism because it starts from the affirmation of the specific options that it makes as valid paradigms but does not close itself to the possibility of correction, reform, and change. A specific option, undertaken in earnest, with humility, and in “prayerful study” becomes a sign raised as a witness to the Gospel, inviting dialogue, discussion, disagreement, but also calling for commitment, for the “covenanting” called for in the episcopal letter. It is an attempt to define the Church (in the specific area of the option) from the center and not from the limits. It does not say primarily who belongs and who does not belong to the church. It raises the question for all other churches and Christians to answer: can one belong to the Church and not make this option? Is not the Gospel at stake in this decision? Is this a point at which faith and unbelief part company (*status confessionis*, heresy)? It does not raise such questions as merely academic arguments but as a call—an address of faith to the Christian

conscience. Naturally, not all teaching on social issues has this character. But we seem to have reached one of these crucial points in human history—a “kairos” to use Tillichian terms—when some such questions cannot be avoided.

4. Ibid.
  5. William Wrede, *Paul*, trans. Edward Lummis (London: Philip Green, 1907), pp. 122–3.
  6. Ibid., pp. 125–6.
  7. In Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 78–96.
  8. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 271–2.
  9. See note 1.
  10. L. Tyerman, *Life and Times of John Wesley*, vol. 1 (London, 1872), p. 443.
  11. *Journal and Diaries*, 1:250 (May 24, 1738).
  12. Sermon 5, “Justification by Faith,” paragraph 4.2, *Sermons* 1:194.
- How far may these statements be regarded as providing a universal pattern of what Christian experience ought to be? It is worthwhile to quote a sentence or two of what follows in the Journal. “It was not long before the enemy suggested, ‘This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?’... After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations.” *Journals and Diaries*, 1:250 (May 24, 1738, paragraph 16).
13. Martin Luther, “Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, 1522,” *Works of Martin Luther*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1932), pp. 451–2.
  14. Ibid., p. 451.
  15. *Luther's Works*, vol. 25 *Lectures on Romans*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 274–5. “‘Iustitia’ et ‘iniustitia’ multum aliter, quam philosophi et iuriste accipiunt, in Scriptura accipitur. Patet, quia illi qualitatem asserunt anime etc. Sed ‘iustitia’ Scripture magis pendet ab imputatione Dei quam ab esse rei. Ille enim habet iustitiam, non qui qualitatem solam habet, immo ille peccator est omnino et iniustus, sed quem Deus propter confessionem iniustitie sue et implorationem iustitie Dei misericorditer reputat et voluit iustum apud se haberi. Ideo omnes in iniquitate i.e. iniustitia nascimur, morimur, sola autem reputatione miserentis Dei per fidem verbi eius iusti sumus” (Third Corollarium to Rom. 4:7, W.A. 56.287).
  16. “Preface to the Epistle to St. James,” *Works of Martin Luther*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1932), p. 477.
  17. Ibid., p. 478.
  18. Ibid.
  19. “What is New Testament Theology? Some Reflections,” in *Intergerini parietis septum (Eph. 2:14): Essays Presented to Markus Barth on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Dikran Y. Hadidian (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1981), pp. 1–22.

#### Chapter 4: Reflections on the Church’s Authoritative Teaching on Social Questions

1. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, ed. Günther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 54–56.
2. Published with the signature of John and Charles Wesley in 1743 as “Rules of the Society of the People Called Methodists,” *Works*, 8:270–1.
3. On the origins and modifications of “the Social Creed,” see Walter C. Muelder, *Methodism and Society in the Twentieth Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961), chapters 2–5.
4. The United Methodist Council of Bishops, *In Defense of Creation* (Nashville: Graded Press, 1986).
5. Ibid., Introduction.
6. Ibid.
7. *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Bishops, 1986).

8. Paul Ramsey, *Who Speaks for the Church?: A Critique of the 1966 Geneva Conference on Church and Society* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967).
9. "Ouvi os clamores do povo," in *Los Obispos Latinoamericanos Entre Medellin Y Puebla* (UCA 1978), pp. 40-63; Eng. Trans.: "I Have Heard the Cry of My People," *Catholic Mind*, 72 (November 1974), pp. 39-64.
10. "I Have Heard the Cry of My People," p. 63.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2 (translation altered).

## Chapter 5: Teaching Authoritatively Amidst Christian Pluralism in Africa

1. Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1968.
2. ACC: African Charismatic Churches, e.g., Aladura, founded and run by Africans. An association of these churches has decided that they be known as African Instituted Churches (AIC).
3. WCA: Western Churches in Africa, e.g., Roman Catholic, Methodist.
4. Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986), preface.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
7. John E. Skinner, *The Meaning of Authority* (Washington: University Press of America, 1983), p. 3.
8. Richard Sennett, *Authority* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 16-19.
9. I.H. Mosala and B. Tlhagale, *The Unquestionable Right to be Free* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986); Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986); George V. Pixley, *God's Kingdom: A Guide for Biblical Study*, trans. Donald D. Walsh (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981).
10. Adrian Harker, *Commentary on Agreed Statement* (ARCIC, 1976), p. 21.
11. Letty M. Russell, *Growth in Partnership* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981); *Idem*, *Household of Freedom: Authority in Feminist Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); *Idem*, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979).
12. Richard Sennett, *Authority*.
13. Letty Russell, *Household of Freedom*, p. 25.
14. *Agreed Statements by ARCIC* (Venice, 1976).
15. John E. Skinner, *The Meaning of Authority* (Washington: University Press of America, 1983).

## Chapter 6: Consensus and Reception

1. Journal for January 25, 1738, *Journals and Diaries*, 1:212.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Letters* (Telford), 7:54.
5. *Journals and Diaries*, 1:213.
6. *Corpus Reformatorum* 4, (Halle: C.G. Bretschneider, 1834ff.), cols. 664-76; here, col. 670.
7. Conveniently accessible in T.G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981). In Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 an attempt was made to distinguish "the power of the Church" and "the power of the sword" in terms of their respective spheres of operation. The "power of the keys" or the "power of bishops" is a "power or command of God" to preach the Gospel, remit and retain sins and to administer the sacraments (28:5). The civil government must protect not souls but bodies (28:11). Both powers are to be held in honor and acknowledged as gifts and blessings of God (28:18). Both authorities are thought of as requiring obedience, and the issue is whether bishops may intrude upon areas of jurisdiction properly belonging to the state or impose rules and