

Sept. 19, 1979

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

Whereas, the provisions of the Gospel direct us to be witnesses to the peace of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, it has been asserted by many that the arms industry has contributed to inflation and that military spending provides fewer jobs per tax dollar than in any other sector of the economy; and

Whereas, it has been demonstrated that there can be conversion of military bases to alternative forms of production, including full retraining of these workers as a result of work carried out by the Office of Economic Adjustment of the Department of Defense; and

Whereas, it is very important for members of the Church to actively encourage the conversion of our military economy to alternative productions as an aspect of our faith in Christ, our peace; now therefore be it

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That this 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urges each Diocese in which there is located a significant military industry or facility where such an installation has outlived its usefulness, to undertake a ministry and witness of conversion to non-military uses as an outward and visible sign of our faith in Christ's peace, and to assign people with a commitment to such a witness to the work of converting military-related industry to socially useful forms of production.

The resolution was seconded by the Bishop of Minnesota.

Resolution failed

Theology

The Bishop of Ohio, Chairman of the Committee on Theology, moved the adoption of the following statement:

Statement on Collegiality

The concept of collegiality, as a description of the relation of Bishops with one another, has an historic basis in the exercise of *episcopate* (oversight) in the Church.

The first examples of the collegial exercise of apostolic oversight are found in Scripture (c.f. the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15), and Church history is full of examples of Bishops taking counsel together on regional, national and international levels. Normatively, Bishops have been guided in the exercise of their Ministries by the decisions and counsel of other Bishops.

Recent documents reflecting on the nature and exercise of Episcopacy see each individual Bishop as a member of a College of Bishops. The 1968 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops Report alluded to this when it wrote, "He can fulfill his role as focus of authority in his Diocese only because his Ministry is exercised in partnership with his brother Bishops and with the regional and universal Church" (page 108). And Lambeth 1978 reiterates (page 76), "The Bishop receives his authority from both Head and Members and neither without the other. This authority is not to be exercised apart from the Church, that is, without collegial consultation at proper times with brother Bishops, and without ensuring that it has support and consent of the rest of the Church as far as possible." It is instructive to note the general agreement in this respect from as different points of view as those represented by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the Consultation on Church Union (COCU).

The Canterbury Statement, issued by ARCIC, referring to Ephesians 4:12, states that Christian Ministry is for building up the Church, the Body of Christ, the

Community of Reconciliation. *Episcopate* is the responsibility of the ordained Ministry and a special responsibility of the Bishop as he signifies and serves the unity of the Church. In the ordination of a Bishop the presence of at least three Bishops and their action of laying hands on the new Bishop is the means of his reception "into their ministerial fellowship." As a result, "this new Bishop and his Church are within the Communion of Churches." In the Venice Statement, also issued by ARCIC, the role of the Bishop is described as helping insure that the local Church is "aware of the universal Communion of which it is a part." The Statement goes on to say: "For every Bishop receives at ordination both responsibility for his local Church and the obligations to maintain it in living awareness and practical service of the other Churches."

A recent document by the Consultation on Church Union, speaking of the role of Bishops, says, "Episcopacy is *collegial* in the sense that responsibility for the apostolic unity, continuity, and mission of the whole Church is the special obligation of the body—or 'College'—of Bishops. Though Bishops are individuals responsible for the authenticity of the Church's confession and witness, no Bishop is independent or autonomous in the exercise of this Ministry. Just as, in a particular area or district, the Bishop's work of oversight is carried out in fellowship with Presbyters, Laity and Deacons, so with regard to the whole Church, it is carried out by the Bishops as a College, acting together with the representatives of other Ministries. The College of Bishops meeting for mutual counsel and operating on national or regional levels is, thus, an expression of the fact that the Ministry of Oversight is a single Ministry shared by many individuals" (Emerging Consensus, first draft—#35c).

The issue of Collegiality has come to have a special urgency in our day. The manner in which the Church is being challenged to state and restate its position on a score of topics and the instant communication which make the words of one Bishop immediately accessible in every Diocese place special burdens on Episcopal Collegiality. And yet the conditions of modern technology also offer Bishops opportunities for consultation and mutual support such as never was possible in former ages. This is, therefore, an appropriate time to reassess the significance of Collegiality and to build upon its implications for authority in the Ministry of God's Church today.

Collegiality must sometimes take into account matters involving sharp differences of conscientious conviction. There are those who for one reason or another cannot endorse a majority view or even a fairly impressive agreement. There may be those who feel called by God to words and actions which go further than any present consensus; there may be some who find difficulty endorsing agreements already achieved. Collegiality involves a sensitivity to such persons and a patience and forbearance expressed in a willingness to listen, to communicate and to learn. On their part, Bishops holding minority views will need to give whatever agreement has been achieved its due weight by remaining open to whatever of the truth and conviction such agreement represents. A problem of a different order is involved when a Bishop, in the administration of the sacraments, acts without the authorization of this Church. On such occasions the Bishop does not act as an agent of his Church.

All this indicates the necessity of consultation among Bishops whenever a Bishop anticipates the need to act apart from the agreed position of the House of Bishops, or in a situation where no collegial guidelines have been set. By so doing we respect the integrity and unity of our own Episcopal College and its relationship to the rest of the Church, maintaining "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The Statement was seconded by the Bishop of Massachusetts.

Motion carried