

**THE BISHOP IN THE CHURCH AND THE BISHOP  
IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

**A POSITION PAPER PREPARED FOR  
THE RIGHT REVEREND DR GEOFF PEDDLE,  
BISHOP OF EASTERN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR,  
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**PART ONE**

**THE BISHOP IN THE CHURCH**

1. The noun *episkopos* occurs five times in the New Testament, and may literally and accurately be translated as “overseer”. In one case – 1 Peter 2:25 – it refers to Christ, who is the “shepherd and overseer” (*poimena kai episkopon*) of our souls. The other four occurrences are to be found in Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:2, and Titus 1:7. The book of Acts was undoubtedly written by the author of the gospel of Luke, and the letter to the Philippians is certainly one of the genuine letter of St Paul. The majority view of the scholarly establishment is that the Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus – were written after Paul’s death by one of his followers. Whether, as a consequence, they possess less authority than the genuine letters is a matter of some dispute. It is certainly true that some parts of 1 Timothy are simply ignored by most of the mainline churches, the obvious example being the section in 1 Timothy 2:9-13 dealing with the dress and conduct of women in and out of churches. This question of authority is a delicate and tricky subject, for it can reduce certain epistles, which, according to the official teaching of all the Christian churches, are divinely inspired, to a supermarket shelf from which one selects just the products one needs. Given this caution, what do these verses say about bishops and their role?

2. Acts 20:28 states that the “overseers” must watch over themselves and the whole flock which has been entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit. They are “to shepherd”<sup>1</sup> the church of God. Philippians 1:1 says, effectively, nothing: Paul simply addresses his letter “to the overseers and deacons” of the Christian community at Philippi, though this in itself (as we shall see in a moment) is important. 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9 are much more detailed. Together they state that an overseer, who is “God’s steward”, must be above reproach, a lover of goodness, the husband of one wife,<sup>2</sup> temperate and not given to wine, prudent, upright, devout, respectable, sensible, hospitable, not self-willed but self-controlled, a teacher who can exhort the faithful with sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it, gentle and not violent or quarrelsome, and not a lover of money or someone

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<sup>1</sup> The verb is *poimainein* in Greek. A shepherd is a *poimēn*.

<sup>2</sup> Quite what this means is unclear, and is a matter of considerable dispute. There is no generally accepted interpretation.

greedy for gain. He must be able to manage his own household (for if he cannot do that, he certainly cannot manage a church), he must not be someone new to Christianity,<sup>3</sup> and he must have a “good testimony” from outsiders – in other words, a good reputation.

3. For the moment, we can go no further than this, for we need to say a word about the administrative structure of the early Church. The earliest Christian community was led by apostles, prophets, and teachers, in that order. This is eminently clear from Acts 11:28, Acts 21:7, and 1 Corinthians 12:28. But the apostles died off, the prophets were eventually silenced (the Church never cared for prophetic utterances that it could not control), and the teachers became the bishops, presbyters, and deacons of a new generation. Exactly how this transition took place remains obscure, but what is clear is that in its earliest stages the titles “overseer” (*episkopos*) and elder/presbyter (*prebyteros*) referred to the same person.<sup>4</sup> This is obviously of some importance, since the high moral qualities demanded of overseers in the Pastoral Epistles must apply equally to presbyters. The essential difference between an overseer/presbyter and a deacon was that the former could celebrate the Eucharist, while the latter could not. In practice, in some rural areas, it is clear that deacons were celebrating the Eucharist, since the Council of Arles in 314 and the Council of Nicaea in 325 explicitly forbade them from doing so.

4. Given that in these formative days of the Christian community elders and overseers were essentially the same, the injunctions to be found in 1 Peter 5:1-3 apply to both. This is a letter which may well contain some genuine Petrine elements, and the author, who calls himself “a fellow-presbyter/elder (*sympresbyteros*)”, exhorts the other elders to shepherd<sup>5</sup> the flock of God. They are to oversee them – this is the verb from the noun *episkopos* – not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. “Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock.”<sup>6</sup> Once again, the emphasis is laid on shepherding and overseeing.

5. By the early decades of the second century, in most places, though not in all, the overseers/presbyters had become overseers and presbyters. This is eminently clear in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, who was martyred in about 110, and there were a number of reasons for this. First, in any group of supposedly equal people, it is essential, for logistical purposes, that one be appointed spokesman. Such a person may be appointed as a consequence of age, learning, charismatic authority, majority vote, or some other quality or qualities. In the Middle Ages and later, the office of bishop was frequently bought, but simony is regarded both as a sin and as a contravention of canon law. Second, as the Christian Church spread and grew (despite persecution, which did not come to an end until the passing of the Edict of Milan in 311 and the Edict of Toleration in 313), it was obviously necessary to have a single representative to speak for the various Christian communities. And third, as is clear from the letters of Ignatius, a Church threatened not

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<sup>3</sup> The Greek word means a novice or neophyte.

<sup>4</sup> See Acts 20:17, Phil 1:1 cited in §2 above, and Titus 1:5-7. It is also clear in Clement of Rome’s letter to the Corinthians and in the *Didache*.

<sup>5</sup> *Poimnate* in Greek: see n. 1 above.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet 5:3.

only by external persecution, but also by internal divisions – what would later be called heresies (especially the popular and persuasive alternative Christianities generally referred to as Gnosticism) – it was vital to have a single point of focus.

6. In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius tells his flock to follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father. Whatever needs to be done for the Church must be done by the bishop, not by anyone else, and that the only valid Eucharist (*eucharistia*) is one that is celebrated by the bishop or his appointed delegate.<sup>7</sup> And in the letter to the Philadelphians, Ignatius declares that “Take care therefore to use one Eucharist (*eucharistia*). For [there is] one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one chalice to unite us by his blood; one altar as [there is] one bishop, together with the presbyterate and the deacons, my fellow-servants.”<sup>8</sup> Ignatius is the first to use the Greek term *eucharistia* for the sacrament, and he makes it eminently clear that the Eucharist makes the Church.

7. Over a short period of time, it came to be understood that only the bishop – we may now use the term – acting on behalf of his fellow-presbyters, could ordain candidates to the position of presbyter. Thus, a key distinction between the bishop and other presbyters became to be just as significant as the distinction between overseers/elders and deacons. This is a matter of first importance, for it pertains not only to the ordination of an individual, but to the continuance of the Church and its ministry. In the patristic period, a man was ordained to the presbyterate by the laying on of hands by the bishop and all the other presbyters present. It was a simple rite, much elaborated in the Middle Ages and later, but its essence remained the continuance of the Church in accordance with Apostolic Tradition, which is not here our concern.

8. Ignatius is often credited, with some justice, as the founder of what came to be known as “the monarchical episcopate”, that is to say, that the bishop was “monarch” or the ultimate source of authority in the territory in which he held sway. We cannot yet speak of a diocese: that demands a settled state of administrative affairs not yet achieved. The original meaning of the Greek word *dioikēsis* was house-keeping or the management of a household, but it soon came to be a term used in Roman law for a territory administered and governed by a city. In the West, its use in designating an ecclesiastical area under the governance of a bishop seems to have appeared first in Africa at the very end of the fourth century. It was not the only term so used, but eventually became the most common.

9. Under the auspices of Constantine I/Constantine the Great, who was acclaimed as emperor in 306 and died in 337, the threat of persecution was lifted from Christians. Constantine himself was baptised, though only on his deathbed. He was an astute and immoral politician who saw the clear advantage of having both pagans and Christians to support him. But as a consequence of his policies, the Christian Church underwent a dramatic expansion, and with the increasing number of congregations in both urban and rural areas, it became necessary to increase the number of bishops and/or to delegate

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<sup>7</sup> See Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. ad Smyrnaeos*, viii; PG 5:714B.

<sup>8</sup> Ignatius, *Ep. ad Philadelphenses*, iv; PG 5:700B.

some of their functions to others. Different parts of the Christian world adopted different solutions to the problem. Sometimes episcopal functions were delegated to local presbyters;<sup>9</sup> sometimes to what were termed chorbishops – *chorepiskopoi* in Greek, *chorepiscopi* in Latin – which means, literally, “rural bishop”. *Chorepiscopi* may have existed as early as the third century,<sup>10</sup> but they became ever more important as the Church expanded. Their powers, however, were limited, and they were subject to the metropolitan bishop of the area in which they worked. In 314, for example, the Synod of Ancyra prohibited *chorepiscopi* from ordaining priests or deacons, and when, in 343, the Council of Sardica decreed that no *chorepiscopus* should be consecrated when there was a local presbyter to do what needed to be done, that was the death-knell of the *chorepiscopi* in the East. In the West, *chorepiscopi* are first mentioned in the late fifth or early sixth century, primarily in what is now Germany and France, where they operated as auxiliary bishops under the direction of the diocesan bishop. They faded out in the course of the Middle Ages and were replaced by archdeacons. In the West, however, the bishop retained the exclusive powers to confirm and to ordain. Again in the West, the *chorepiscopi* would eventually be resurrected to a new and different life as Coadjutors, Regional Bishops, and Suffragans.

10. To what extent the early overseer/presbyters were involved with financial matters is impossible to say. It was certainly not the major part of their mandate, but, given the importance of almsgiving and hospitality (something strongly emphasised both in the New Testament and in early Christian literature), even a small local house-church had certain responsibilities. As the overseers/presbyters became bishops and presbyters, and as their areas of jurisdiction continued to increase, it would have become ever more necessary to keep a watchful eye and a careful hand on the purse. The officials of the Roman Empire who were involved with finances and tax-collection were well skilled at their job (though inclined to graft), and if such a one had converted to Christianity, we may suppose that a local bishop would have made use of him. Such occurrences, however, may not have been common, and the local overseer may have had no recourse but to do the best he could himself. Then as now, some would have been more successful, some less so. But financial administration was always secondary to these early bishops. Their chief task was the continuation of the Church’s ministry and the spiritual welfare and spiritual guidance of their flock.

11. An unfortunate though necessary consequence of the victory of Constantine and the removal of persecution from Christians was the ever-growing involvement of bishops in secular affairs. The imperial government bestowed on them jurisdictional powers, and with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century, many bishops had little choice but to take over the administrative functions of what, before a succession of foreign invasions, had been the responsibility of Roman officials. Added to this, the

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<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most obvious example is that in the East the sacraments of both baptism and chrismation were placed in the hands of the local clergy. In the West, the bishop retained the right to chrismate/confirm.

<sup>10</sup> There are problems with terminology here, but the principle of necessary delegation was never in doubt.

Church in both East and West regularly received legacies and grants of land which resulted in the bishops becoming landlords and leaders in the local community. Some welcomed this; some did not.<sup>11</sup> Here we see the beginnings of what was later to become the medieval episcopacy, in which bishops were as much men of the secular state as they were men of the Church. They had become, in fact, high-ranking civil servants, often lords of large estates, and their earlier and essential function as overseers and shepherds of their flocks was, in many cases (though by no means all), entirely overlooked. Such were the powerful prince-bishops of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but their legacy may still be seen in the twenty-six Anglican bishops – the Lords Spiritual – who sit alongside the Lords Temporal in the British House of Lords.

12. As we saw in paragraph 2, one of the functions of an early overseer was to be a teacher who can exhort the faithful with sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it. The Greek word in 1 Timothy 3:2 is *didaktikon*, an uncommon word which means “able to teach” or “apt at teaching”. This is elaborated in Titus 1:9 thus: “he must hold fast to the faithful word in accordance with the [established] teaching so that he might be able to exhort with sound teaching and confute those who contradict [it].” We must remember that at this time, what was to become the “official” Christian church was only one of a number of competing alternative Christianities – there was never ever one monolithic Church – and that it took more than four centuries for the essential Christian doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, Church, and Sacraments to be established. What this meant is that the overseer/bishop was to be the guardian of orthodoxy, and that, in turn, meant that he had to be fully aware of those systems of belief that he and his colleagues regarded as unorthodox. Hence, for example, the long examination by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon at the end of the second century, of the doctrines of the various Gnostic (and other) sects in his *Adversus haereses*. Many earlier and later bishops were more than capable of this; many more – undoubtedly the majority – were not. Many who were not preferred to adopt the ostrich approach of the Eastern Orthodox Church: if something nasty appears, stick your head in the sand and hope that it will go away.

13. The situation is little different in the present day. There are as many (perhaps even more) alternative Christianities now as there were in the first few centuries, and, together with that, we are in a time of rapid developments in the areas of ethics and morals. Obvious examples are the problems associated with assisted dying and same-sex relationships. A bishop’s own emotive response to such questions is irrelevant; he or she must be able to see both sides of the question, and, as the guardian of orthodoxy, be able to present a balanced case which looks to the future as well as preserving the integrity of the Gospel tradition. This demands both courage and vision. To be the guardian of orthodoxy does not mean simply looking back to the time of our grandparents and saying “As they did, so shall we”. Tradition must evolve as the Church must evolve, otherwise

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<sup>11</sup> What was true of bishops was, *a priori*, necessarily true of popes. Gregory I, for example, justly named Gregory the Great, had no choice but to act (with great reluctance) as a secular ruler. There was no one else in the West to do the job.

we have no more than ossification. And as Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia observed: “Christ did not tell us that nothing should ever be done for the first time”.<sup>12</sup>

14. Ideally, bishops who are deficient in theological training should be able to consult with someone who can provide them with the necessary information and arguments, just as bishops with limited financial expertise need financial advisors, or bishops who have had little experience in, let us say, conflict management, may need to seek professional advice. In the earliest church, the local overseer may well have done everything, but those were the days of small intimate Christian communities, often living under the threat of persecution – as, indeed, are many Christian communities in the Middle East today. The large dioceses of the present day are another matter entirely, and a bishop who does not seek appropriate professional assistance in all those areas where such assistance is necessary is courting disaster.

15. It is time now to summarise the main features of what has been said above. It can hardly be clearer that the duties and functions of a bishop are fourfold.

First, they are to provide, through ordination and, in conjunction with their fellow-bishops, consecration, for the continuance of the Christian Church and its ministry. The essential feature here is the laying on of hands, a tradition which dates back to the very earliest days of the Church.

Second, they are to be the chief overseer and shepherd of their flock, guiding it both morally and spiritually. That many sheep of the flock will not care to be guided morally, spiritually, or in any other way is irrelevant – “I have seen these people”, said the Lord to one of his greatest shepherds, “and they are a stiff-necked people”<sup>13</sup> – but the shepherd and overseer has no choice but to try. This, as was noted above, demands vision and considerable courage.

Third, they are to be the guardians of orthodoxy. As we pointed out above, this can be demanding, and requires both a selfless sense of balance and an up-to-date knowledge of what is happening in the theological world. The Church of England has never subscribed to the doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of Scripture, but rather to the “three-legged stool” of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason often attributed (mistakenly) to Richard Hooker. As we read in 1 Peter 3:15, we must always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope that is in us. Reason, however, is not an independent source of authority, but rests on Scripture and Tradition. In matters of faith, doctrine, and theology, Scripture and Tradition are the supporting foundations of reason, but reason must build on these foundations. A house which stops at its foundations is not comfortable to live in, and the nature and structure of the house that is built on these foundations must inevitably depend on the time and the place.

Fourth, the overseers and shepherds are to be a focal point of Church unity. Exactly how this is to be achieved must, again, depend on time and place. There are, for example, major differences between an urban ministry and a rural ministry, between an

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<sup>12</sup> George Westhaver, Lambeth: Interview with the Most Rev. Kallistos Ware, at <<http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=8803#.T2hxLxzoK68>> , and elsewhere on the Internet.

<sup>13</sup> Exod 32:9.

area of high population density and an area that is sparsely populated, between a monoglot and polyglot society, and there are bishops in the Middle East who are in much the same position as Ignatius of Antioch – trying to hold a Church together in the face of severe and continuing persecution.

16. It may be objected that this is a policy of perfection. So it is. But no more than the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament are policies of perfection. One thing that Jesus never taught – emphatically never taught – was mediocrity. A bishop is not, or should not be, primarily a middle-manager whose business is to smooth over unfortunate events as they appear and manage the decline of an institutional Church. The Church is in a state of dramatic change, of that there can be no doubt. There are some who welcome this; there are some who do not. But whether it be welcomed or abhorred, a crucial question in this matter is the nature of the Church. The Church is not an institution and it is certainly not a building. It is, as Saint Paul made eminently clear, the living Body of Christ, or, as so well explained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the People of God. Like any living entity, therefore, it *must* develop and change, otherwise the overseers of the Church are passing down to each other no more than a museum-piece, beautiful no doubt, but of limited usefulness. This, indeed, may be observed today in some churches in this Province, where the majority of the congregation would happily echo the words of an old friend of mine, a South Welsh councillor now long dead: “I love change, so long as everything stays the same.”

17. It may well be, then, that the institutional Church must die in order to be raised to a new and different life – “unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies...” (Jn 12:24) – and the onerous task of the bishops of the Church is to oversee and guide both this death and this resurrection. It is no small task and demands, above all things, dedication, selfless courage, and vision. It also demands humility. In the 1130s, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux wrote a long letter to Henri Sanglier, Archbishop of Sens, on the conduct and office of bishops,<sup>14</sup> and of its thirty-seven chapters, sixteen – almost a half – are dedicated to humility. As Martha Newman has said in her introduction to the most recent English translation of the work, “Humble bishops measure themselves by God’s standard rather than by the standards of the world, and they learn to preside over others by submitting themselves to a higher authority.”<sup>15</sup>

## PART TWO

### THE BISHOP IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

18. Until 1976, Newfoundland and Labrador was one diocese with one bishop, the Synod Offices being located in St John’s. The eighth and last bishop of Newfoundland and Labrador was Robert Lowder Seaborn, a native of Ontario, who died in 1993. In 1976, for a variety of reasons – some ecclesiastical, some political (a major force here was the

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<sup>14</sup> See *Bernard of Clairvaux: On Baptism and the Office of Bishops*, trans. by Pauline Matarasso, intro. by Martha G. Newman and Emero Stiegman (Kalamazoo, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

lawyer Clyde Wells, later Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador), some personal – the single diocese was divided into three: the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, the diocese of Central Newfoundland, and the diocese of Western Newfoundland.

19. At that time, western Newfoundland had received a certain stimulus with the establishment at Corner Brook in 1975 of what was then the West Coast Regional College of the Memorial University of Newfoundland (now Grenfell Campus, Memorial University). The area also benefitted from vibrant activity at Channel-Port aux Basques. In the Placentia area the American base at Argentia was still in operation (it would not close until 1994), as was the AbitibiBowater paper mill in Grand Falls-Windsor. The international airport at Gander, though impacted by the development of jet travel in the early 1960s (it was no longer required as a mid-Atlantic refuelling base), was still very much an active concern. As for the eastern portion of the province, especially the Avalon Peninsula, St John's was home to the Provincial Government and the main campus of the university. It was always more urban than the rest of the island and Labrador. And, of course, in 1976, forestry, the fishery, and (in Labrador) mining were all in full operation, being at that time the bases of the provincial economy.

20. Over the next few decades major changes would take place. The cod fishery collapsed in 1992. The American base at Argentia closed in 1994. AbitibiBowater closed its doors in March 2009. St John's International Airport replaced Gander as the most important airport in the province. And, on the positive side, 1997 saw the first barrel of oil come ashore from the Hibernia Oil Field. But what was more important, more important by far, was the impact of the digital revolution and all the ramifications of Information Technology (IT). 1976, the date of the sub-division of the diocese of Newfoundland and Labrador, was, effectively, pre-IT. The situation today could not be more different and the opportunities for easy and instant communication more available. The physical presence of a person is now no longer necessary, and the geographic distances which played an important role in 1976 are now of far less significance. What were the consequences of these changes and developments for the Anglican Church? We need to look at some demographics.

21. Between 2001 and 2016 the total population of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador increased by 8,082,<sup>16</sup> an increase of just over 1.5%. Over the same period the population of the St John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) increased by 41,011,<sup>17</sup> an increase of almost a quarter (23.2%). Since the population of the whole Avalon Peninsula increased by only 13.3%, from 247,406 to 280,410, it is clear that most people were moving to the CMA. Furthermore, when we compare the increase in the overall population of the province with the increase in the population of the CMA, it is obvious

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<sup>16</sup> From 522,046 to 530,128. Source: Population Estimates, July 1, 2001 to 2016. Census Divisions and St John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Newfoundland and Labrador, available on the Internet.

<sup>17</sup> From 176,443 to 217,454.

that most people were moving to the CMA not from outside the province, but from within it. That is correct, and it has had a profound effect on the Church.

22. Over the same period – 2001 to 2016 – of the eleven census divisions, only two on the island<sup>18</sup> (apart from the Avalon Peninsula) showed any increase in population, and both were insignificant. Humber District (no. 5) increased by just less than 1% from 41,184 to 41,539, and Central Newfoundland (no. 6) by 4.7% from 36,864 to 38,604. Decreases in population were recorded in the Burin Peninsula (no. 2), South Coast (no. 3), St George's (no. 4), Bonavista/Trinity (no. 7), Notre Dame Bay (no. 8), and the Northern Peninsula (no.9). None of these decreases was inconsequential, and range from between 9% and 10% (St George's and Bonavista/Trinity) to a massive 22% and 23% (South Coast and Northern Peninsula). There can be no doubt that the majority of people moving from these disaffected areas were either moving out of the province or to eastern Newfoundland. We should also note that, as of June 2017, Newfoundland and Labrador had the second highest rate of unemployment (seasonally adjusted) in the whole of Canada. It was 14.9%, with only Nunavut being higher at 16.3%. The Canadian Average is 6.5%. Unemployment figures of this magnitude place huge burdens on all forms of pastoral care services.

23. The consequences of all this – and especially of what can only be called the exodus to the east of the Province –for the Anglican Church in Newfoundland and Labrador are fivefold. First, and arguably the most important, is that the diocese of Central Newfoundland has become primarily a rural diocese in need of a rural ministry. It is prime ground for a classical *chorepiscopus*. The situation in Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor is obviously somewhat different, but the fact that there is no university campus in the central area, unlike western and eastern Newfoundland, must necessarily have an impact. It may be that Queen's College will need to offer more courses in rural ministry to take account of these changing times, and at the moment, the College, under the direction of its present Provost, Dr Richard Singleton, is engaged in ensuring that its IT services are the best available, and that communication with all parts of the island and Labrador is easy and effective. Second, eastern Newfoundland, and especially the Avalon Peninsula, has become the demographic focal point of the Province and has become ever more urbanized. The population of the Avalon Peninsula now accounts for over half – 52% – of the entire population of Newfoundland and Labrador. True, there are still plenty of places which demand a rural ministry, but they tend to be overshadowed by the great mass of the CMA, which alone accounts for 41% of the total population. Third, the western diocese, outside the major centre of Corner Brook and one or two other smaller places, is also becoming ever more rural. As we saw above, there have been major losses in population from the census divisions of the Northern Peninsula and the South Coast, part of which impinges on the western Diocese, and that diocese has been able to function only by bringing in clergy from outside the Province. This can have both positive and negative results. Fifth, Labrador remains much as it was: a sparsely populated region with but five Anglican parishes. For fairly obvious reasons, recruitment has always been

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<sup>18</sup> Division 11, Labrador Nunatsiavut, showed an increase of twenty people from 2,686 to 2,706.

difficult and remains so, for distances are long and the cost of travel to and from Labrador is absurdly expensive. Given that there are but three areas with substantial Anglican populations – Labrador City, Happy Valley/Goose Bay, and Mary’s Harbour – it will be the difficult and unenviable task of any bishop to determine how much of the limited resources of the Church should be devoted to the welfare of tiny communities with even tinier Anglican congregations. Added to this, and to make the matter more complicated, there is also the politically charged and very delicate question of the nature and role of the indigenous church. What, then are the consequences of these changes for the Anglican Church in Newfoundland and Labrador and its bishops?

24. In 1976 there may have been just cause to establish three dioceses in the Province in place of one. The matter is still disputed, and it is not the business of this report to examine the pros and cons. An examination of current trends and present circumstances would seem to indicate to the unbiased observer that this is no longer the case. Apart from major changes in population density, infrastructure, church attendance, and our understanding of the very nature of the Church, the economics of maintaining three independent and autonomous dioceses, each with its own bishop, synodal buildings, cathedral, and staff, would appear to many to be extravagant and unnecessary. Furthermore, in light of Jesus Christ’s own prayer in John 17:21, “that they will be one, as you and I are one”, the goal of the Church should be neither the creation nor the perpetuation of division. Three dioceses must inevitably lead to rivalry, competitiveness, and contention, whether of major or minor proportion. On consultation with various parties, both lay and clerical, the authors of this report can testify that, in this Province, it has indeed led to rivalry, competitiveness, and contention. Furthermore, given that one of the reasons for the 1976 division was to facilitate communication between bishops, clergy, and the whole People of God, the new world of Information Technology has made physical presence irrelevant. This is not to say that in certain circumstances a physical meeting may not be more rewarding than a meeting conducted by (for example) Skype, but as a reason for dividing one diocese into three it can no longer be regarded as particularly persuasive.

25. We would therefore suggest that the most apposite solution for these changing times is that the Province become once again one diocese, the Diocese of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that the Bishop (or Archbishop) of that Diocese have at least one suffragan bishop to assist him or her in his or her work. Informal consultations with those who are more experienced in financial matters than we seem to indicate clearly that, from an economic standpoint alone, this would be a great advantage and could result in considerable savings. The writers of this report are also convinced, however, that under no circumstances should there be a suffragan bishop for Labrador. This could only exacerbate any quest for independence and autonomy for that part of our Province, and what is needed above all for Labrador is a sense of inclusiveness and Christian unity with the rest of the ecclesiastical area. Given the population dynamics of the Province, it would seem only logical that the diocesan seat and Synod Offices should be located in St John’s. This leads us back to the first part of this report.

26. Some might say that this is too onerous a task for any bishop to shoulder. That is nonsense. Both John XXIII and Francis I were elected pope at the age of 76, and while one changed the Church irrevocably, the other is in the process of doing so. Both were – and are – men of immense courage and vision, and both were - and are – open to the awesome inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And it cannot be disputed that they exemplified and exemplify that humility so emphasized by Bernard of Clairvaux. They were and are true overseers and shepherds of the Church, and guardians of orthodoxy in times of rapid and sometimes dangerous change. They were not middle-managers whose main concern was dealing with the personal problems of clergy whose own short-sightedness had led them into error. On the other hand, if the new bishop of a united Province should seek the position for the gratification of self-love or self-will or out of any a sense of self-aggrandizement, then the result can only be disaster.

27. In a meeting held between 25-29 July 1833 at the parsonage of Hadleigh in Suffolk – a meeting which represented the very first steps in the creation of the Oxford Movement – the Reverend Hugh James Rose, the incumbent, expressed himself clearly and unequivocally. “That *something must be done* is certain.”, he said, “The only thing is, that whatever is done ought to be *quickly done*.”<sup>19</sup> What was true in 1833 is even more true in 2017.

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<sup>19</sup> Richard W. Church, *The Oxford Movement. Twelve Years, 1833-1845* (London, 1922), 104.