

DO YOUR JOB PART 7

The leadership of an institutional Church possesses the option to create a Church as an organization structured on the teaching of Jesus or to create a Church as an organization structured on the model of a corporate bureaucratic business or on the model of a state. But, to choose the corporate model or the state model is to abdicate utterly the task of creating an institutional Church structured in conformity with the teaching of Jesus.

A person can be a bishop who is faithful to the commission given to him by Jesus or he can be a bishop-CEO. He cannot simultaneously be both. A person can be a pope faithful to his ministry as bishop and as the successor of Saint Peter or he can be a pope-head of state. He cannot simultaneously be both.

“Jesus left no instructions on how his Church should be governed; he left instruction on how his Church should not be governed, and that is according to the model of secular power. As long as this corrupting influence is excluded he seems to have little interest in how the leaders of the Church were to exercise their leadership. Jesus commissioned the Church to find new forms and new structures for an entirely new idea of human association—a community of love”

-Rev. John L. McKenzie, *Authority in the Church*, (Imprimatur 1966)

The above quotation pinpoints the single most all-pervading, deep-rooted, severe, longstanding and destructive episcopal dereliction of duty in the history of Christianity. Because of the corrupting influence of institutionalized secular power the institutional Church and its rulers are absolutely impeded from proclaiming by word and deed what Jesus proclaimed by word and deed, namely, the Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies as an unalterable, nonnegotiable essential in the moral life of every Christians—as well as other teachings of His. From this primal dereliction of duty by bishops, a duty for which they were commissioned by Jesus, comes all just war theories, just capital punishment theories, just torture theories, just Inquisition theories, as well as, all the deceits and intrigues demanded by dominative power for the acquisition, preservation and enhancing of worldwide luxury wealth that runs into untold trillions of dollars. Luxury wealth can only be defended by the corrupting power of violence—the greater the wealth the great the structure of violence that must be in place to protect it.

To sustain any project that requires more than one person necessitates organizing the two or more people who are needed to make the project work into a logically ordered unit, organization or institution that can achieve the particular end desired. If an organization is formed to do carpentry, it does not hire astronomers to do the job. That would be illogical and would render the organization ineffective in relation to the purpose for which it exists. If an organization requires that a multiplicity of task be continuously done for it to be a means to achieve the objective that is the reason for its existence, then all of these tasks must be logically ordered so as to be in conformity with the organizations goal. Any intrinsic logical discrepancy between the end sought and the means the organization employs to reach that end must result, *de facto*, in the organization not achieving its purpose—although it still may achieve other ends.

The commission (Mt 28: 19-20) to a bishop(s) is to make disciples for Jesus, Baptized them and teach them to obey all that Jesus has commanded the Apostles to obey. This is not a complicated job description, nor is it one hard to understand. There is nothing in this commission that in any way

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suggest that a bishop has the right or the need to substitute the corrupt influence of the power of violence as an alternative for Christlike words and deeds. There is nothing in a bishop's commission to *teach them to obey all that I have commanded you* that necessitates or authorizes any bishop to substitute violence in any form for Christlike love (*agape*) against anybody for any reason— Christian or otherwise. When the Truth of the Gospel and Christlike love fail to bring a person to freely follow Jesus or fail to keep a person *a true follower of Jesus*, rules, laws and orders backed up by violence are no substitute.

There is nothing in a bishop's commission from Jesus that makes him a ruler in any sense in the Christian *ecclesia*, assembly, community, church. Jesus never refers to His Apostles as rulers nor does He call upon them to rule others. *“If Jesus had wished to say that those in authority in His Church should rule with justice and kindness, there are dozens of ways in which this could have been said. But such words as ‘rule’ are exactly the words he did not use,”* writes Rev. John L. McKenzie in *Authority in the Church*. Indeed Jesus is most definite, telling His Apostles and their legitimate successors the very opposite regarding what their position is in the Christian community. He is explicit in excluding violence based on secular models of ruling power as a way of fulfilling the commission He gave them. *“Jesus called them (the Apostles) to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not to be this way among you; whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave.’”* *“He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them like to be called benefactors. But not so with you.’”*

Jesus is here warning the Apostles of the universal human problem of human beings who satisfy their lust for power and passion for prestige by joining the culture of professional religious bosses and bureaucrats. Jesus instructs His Apostles in no uncertain terms that there is no place in His Church for them—or anyone else—to satisfy or exercise their *libido domanandi*: *“Be on guard against the leaven of Herod”* (Mk 8:15).

However, the pre-arranged institutional organization in which a person becomes a bishop has for most of Church history required that he not serve as Jesus his leader served but “serve” as the leaders of this world's political, financial, military, etc. institutions serve, namely, as a monarchical bishop employing secular and canonical violent power to get done what he wants done in that segment of the institutional Church, his diocese, which he rules.

The word monarch is derived from the Greek word *monarkhēs*, *monos* ‘alone’ + *arkhein* ‘to rule’. As noted above, nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus use the word “rule” in relation to the ministry of the Apostles. Nowhere in the New Testament can one find a monarchical bishop. *“The institution of the monarchical episcopate, in which each Church is governed by a single bishop, does not appear in the New Testament,”* states Catholic Biblical scholar John L. McKenzie (*Dictionary of the Bible, Imprimatur*, 1965). The first monarchical bishop is St. Ignatius of Antioch (d.108). He not only asserts himself to be a monarchical overseer, bishop, of the Christians in his area but he is also an active proselytizer for that understanding of the ministry of overseer within the *ecclesia*. He is a proselytizer for this understanding of the episcopacy because, beyond it not being the understanding in New Testament times, it was a disputed understanding of the ministry of overseer in the *ecclesia* at his time.

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It takes no special psychological training to see the telltale signs of the corrupting influence of the *libido dominandi* creeping up on the ministry Jesus gave to His Apostles and their successors. And, it takes little historical awareness to see the terrible, all pervading, corrupting influence it has had upon the Church since it became a *de facto* and a *de jure* part of the organizational structure of the institutional Church. Its trickle-down effect has not only poisoned the episcopate with the leaven of Herod, the leaven of Caesar, the leaven of violent power, but also has been a toxic agent infecting just about every structural ministry in the institutional Church.

The issue here, however, is not one person or several persons being the overseer of a Christian community. The issue is the corrupting influence of violent, dominative power in the episcopal ministry—a power that is in no way needed to fulfill the commission Jesus gave to His Apostles, indeed a power that is hostile to the mission of Jesus and to the commission He gave to His Apostles and their successors. “*As long as this corrupting influence is excluded Jesus seems to have little interest in how the leaders of the Church were to exercise their leadership.*” Not only has this corrupting influence not been excluded from the *modus operandi* of the episcopacy and the Church, it has been institutionalized and normalized in the Church as a form of power a bishop possesses just by being bishop. It is the need to theologize and morally justify before the Christian community and the world the use of this type of power by bishops and the institutional Churches they rule that is the root of all the deceitful moral justifications of violence by Christians in history. It is the primary reason that Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies has been anathema to bishops and calculatingly suppressed and squelched by every means available in the institutional Church for at least the last 1700 years.

However, the longevity of a falsehood does not convert it into a truth, and even less does the religious status of a person living a falsehood turn a falsehood into a truth.

(To be continued)

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy