

Church

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in the interest of the continued development of shared responsibility in the church. It relates to two areas: policy making and administration. By policy making we mean: "What the church should be doing." By administration we mean: "How we do it."

Shared responsibility in policy making provides that leaders in the church should utilize procedures of consultation, dialogue and participation in the development of policy.

Shared responsibility in administration requires that sufficient information be made available to the community so that administration can be evaluated.

Consequently, we strongly encourage the further development of both structures and practices of consultation and shared responsibility at every level of the church.

We emphatically propose that, in addition to their accountability to norms of law and orthodoxy, fidelity to an open consultative process should be a chief factor in accountability of church leaders.

4. That the church and church-related institutions, recognizing sincerely the pluralism that exists among us, work to eliminate every form of discrimination on the basis of race, language, sex, sexual orientation, culture, nationality and mere physical considerations. Responsible officials and committees should establish and regularly review concrete policies designed to realize this goal, and they should assign clear responsibility for the implementation of those policies.

5. The people of God have the right to competent pastoral care, biculturally where called for. Professional training should be provided in seminaries or special programs for men and women—lay, religious or clergy—preparing for or assigned to particular ministries. An adequate commitment of resources should be made to enable this professional training to be provided.

The preparation, continuing education and evaluation of the clergy should receive priority attention, particularly in relationship to the preaching of the Word. The people of God have the responsibility to further vocations to the religious life by prayer, by participation in religious vocation programs, and by active encouragement of those in seminaries and those training for the religious life. In addition, the local Catholic communities should actively support all those within their community who have been called to the vocation of priesthood, sisterhood or brotherhood.

6. That bishops insure that the faithful receive competent theological guidance by endeavoring to provide greater clarity in theological teaching, upholding the unity of faith while accepting differences of opinion on theological matters, insofar as these represent legitimate theological pluralism. Church authorities should protect the reputation and good name of every faithful member of the church, with particular reference to those working in ecclesiastical disciplines. The church should respect the right to responsible freedom of speech of all its members, and church leaders should provide channels of communication and dialogue between Catholic scholars and Catholic people.

7. That all members of the church earnestly and prayerfully seek to foster vocations to the priesthood. Above all, priesthood is a special relationship of love, that is, a unique community of life, with the people of God; its essence is not a role, functions, series of actions or stereotyped expectations.

8. Since the church does cherish the gifts and talents of laicized priests, the church and church authorities should recognize the right of those who have been laicized from the priesthood to function in non-sacramental ministries both because of the value of their gifts and the benefit accrued to the community.

9. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops take affirmative action to respectfully petition the Holy Father to change the present discipline in the western rite of the Roman Catholic Church to allow married men to be ordained to the priesthood and that they also initiate dialogue on this topic with such national groups as National Federation of Priests' Councils, Corpus Fellowship and Padres.

10. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops initiate dialogue with Rome to change the present discipline in the western rite of the Roman Catholic Church to allow women to be ordained to the diaconate and priesthood.

11. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops assign to an appropriate committee the task of studying the possibility of changing the present discipline of the Roman Catholic Church to allow priests to exercise the right to marry and remain in or resume the active priesthood. That the church and church authorities recognize the right of those who have been laicized from the priesthood to be fully accepted with dignity, as lay Catholics in good standing in all locales in which they choose to live and work.

RECOMMENDATION: WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Vatican Council II has called the church to a renewed sense of mission to the world, to its self-understanding of a people bearing responsibility for justice. The grave problems of the world challenge the church to remove inherited structures which prevent full participation of its members in ministry and, thus, to empower all of them for service according to their gifts and calls.

Traditional church life and practice have especially limited the freedom of women to share responsibility and ministry. The Church in the Modern World, No. 29, called for "elimination of discrimination based on sex."

Therefore, we recommend the following:

1. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in consultation with a body of representatives of each of the national Catholic organizations of women establish within the NCCBUSCC an effectively staffed structure to promote the full participation of women in the life and ministry of the Church and that this representative body design, develop and implement such a staff structure.

2. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops offer leadership in justice to the universal church by providing a process which facilitates the formation of a more fully developed position on the ordination of women to sacred orders.

To be credible, this position must evolve from an open exploration of the rights and needs of persons and of the Christian community, the action of the Holy Spirit in the church, and a collative and interpretive study of the human sciences, of the experiences of other Christian churches, of contemporary biblical exegesis of theological insights as well as of pontifical and episcopal statements. The study should involve appropriate organizations of scholars, lay and religious women, especially women who believe themselves called to the priesthood.

A planned process and time line sharing this interpretive study should be presented to the Catholic community by November 1977.

3. That an affirmative action plan

be developed by the NCCB and local ordinaries, together with representative women, to assure the equal status of women.

a) By effecting their participation in decision making and leadership at all levels of church institutions, agencies, committees, commissions.

b) By guaranteeing women equal access to professional theological and pastoral training in seminaries, schools of theology, or other educational programs available for those involved in the work of the church.

4. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic publishing houses act to insure that sexist language and imagery be eliminated from all official church documents, catechisms, liturgical books, rites and hymnals printed after January 1978.

5. That the church identify, formally authenticate, and expand ministries being performed by women in the church.

6. That women have equal opportunities for training as well as the authority and responsibility to perform the ministries effectively.

7. To insure that all women have equal access to and full participation in roles of leadership, service and authority in the life of the church, we recommend that structures be developed on diocesan and parish levels.

These structures should be developed after consultation with representatives of local Catholic women's organizations and other interested women.

8. That church law and prescriptions governing liturgical practices be reviewed and adapted to eliminate sexual discrimination.

9. That female children be granted the right and opportunity to serve at the altar in the role traditionally allowed to altar boys.

RECOMMENDATION: EDUCATION

To enable the church to carry out its mandate to teach as Jesus did with sensitivity to the needs of all its people, we recommend:

1. That within the context of building and developing the community of faith in the parish and its smaller groups, very high priority be given adult formation, appropriate to the needs and concerns of the total church and the people involved, respecting the principles of adult learning. Church offices—on national, diocesan, and parish (local) levels—must develop and foster an understanding and acceptance of adult formation and provide adequate funds, personnel and technical resources for such adult formation opportunities.

2. a) That the structures to insure participative decision making by the Catholic community (including parents, students, and educators) be established or strengthened to determine total Catholic educational policies at the local and diocesan level.

b) That in those programs dealing with the young, parents should share responsibility for program planning, implementation and evaluation. Pastors and bishops should facilitate dialogue and cooperation between teachers and parents and that in the forthcoming National Catechetical Directory, the rights of parents to discern the readiness of their children for the first celebration of the sacraments be explicitly protected and promoted.

c) That Catholic education be planned at the local and diocesan levels to meet the needs of all, with special attention given to such groups as handicapped, young adults and migrants. Particular attention should be given by all to the distinctive racial, ethnic and cultural concerns of the people.

3. That to allow the entire community which bears respon-

sibility for the church's education at all levels and dimensions, the leadership of the church is encouraged to raise funds for the support of independent, competent research and regular programs of evaluation of the effectiveness, costs, and possible alternatives to present educational programs.

4. a) That the diocesan church affirm the value and continue to support philosophically and financially Catholic schools where needed and desired, especially where the local community is too poor to support such schools.

b) The local church acting through pastoral councils (diocesan and parish) and boards of education should determine the priorities of schools in their areas and exercise full responsibility for their continuation and management. This responsibility should include an active program of desegregation, racial, economic and social in Catholic schools.

c) The church should take the initiative in founding a national organization representative of racially nondiscriminatory Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and nondenominational private schools and of parents with children in such schools and other citizens, for the purpose of working through the democratic processes for the enactment of state and/or federal legislation to provide tax funds to parents, especially poor Blacks, Hispanics, native Americans, Whites and Orientals to enable them to exercise their religious freedom rights in the education of their children in the schools of their choice.

d) That there be launched immediately a strong campaign to bring about federal and state government recognition of and respect for the parents' right of choice in the education of their children through a just distribution of taxes for the establishment and maintenance of nonpublic schools. This should be brought about even if it requires a constitutional amendment.

e) That we urge the Supreme Court of the United States to re-examine and reevaluate attempts to provide public aid for the education of students in the nonpublic schools in the light of the constitutional rights of parents to determine the education of their children within legitimately prescribed governmental criteria.

f) Untapped financial resources must be explored to the fullest possible extent.

5. The Church, in justice, must show its concern for public education. In view of the fact that approximately 77 per cent (1975) of Catholic children attend public schools, Catholic parents, as taxpayers, must show greater concern for the type and quality of the education. We recommend:

a) That efforts be made to evaluate the effectiveness of the religious education of Catholic students attending public school and that the improvement of these programs be constantly pursued.

b) That Catholics in commitment to justice should take an active leadership role in achieving racial integration in public schools.

c) That Catholics should be effectively concerned with the moral aspect of public education.

d) That Catholics, as citizens, participate in policymaking bodies that govern public schools and share their experience and traditions in education.

e) That the church provide pastoral care through adequate personnel and finances for campus ministry to all college and university campuses.

6. That church leaders, educators and laity actively, aggressively and immediately move to achieve racial integration in the faculties, student bodies and curriculum in Catholic schools. That church leaders and Catholic educators promote multilingual and multicultural values and incorporate them in all educational plans and programs. Appropriate ethnic groups and the parents involved must share responsibility with regard to the formulation and implementation of these programs.

7. Whereas most professional associations demand the updating and continual education of their members, we recommend that dioceses provide opportunities for their clergy to take part in programs in the academic, spiritual and pastoral areas of the ministerial life and assertively urge their attendance. Special emphasis should be given to enable pastoral ministers to give more effective homilies. Where needed this continuing formation through education should include special training for those working with racial, ethnic and cultural groups. In addition, clergy should give special study to the church's official teachings on social justice and incorporate these teachings in their ministry.

8. In recognition of the contribution Catholic colleges and universities make to the community and to the intellectual life of the church, we recommend support for Catholic institutions of higher education which demonstrate a commitment to the church's teaching on social justice. We especially urge that scholarship assistance be provided to poor and minority students.

9. That this conference support the efforts of the National Catechetical Directory to reiterate and concretize the Synod of Bishops' statement that action on behalf of justice is a constitutive element of the preaching of the gospel.

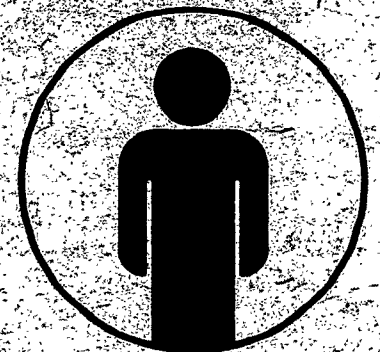
Personhood

RESOLUTION: CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The universal church proclaims that faith in Jesus as Lord and mutual care for persons foster the common life of the community and affirm the dignity of each Christian. This proclamation demonstrates the need for diversity within the church in faith, experience and in faith expression. This diversity respects the differences of race, ethnicity, language, sex, age, culture and the alienated. To assist the church to grow in unity and in understanding itself, we recommend:

1. That recognizing that community is essential to Christian life, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops should give priority to the development of community, especially at the parish level. Pastoral policies and model programs which promote the growth of community both on the parish and diocesan level should be prepared.

Church movements which unify persons in small communities in



worship, prayer, study, evangelization and apostolic service should be affirmed and encouraged. Such movements need to be supported and parishes should be encouraged to allow formation of small groups of such renewal movements and freedom must also be available for community formation beyond parishes.

2. That all Catholics foster an awareness of, and create an environment in which each person can recognize his or her vocation.

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