



THE FURROW:

A Journal for the Contemporary Church: Maynooth

Feb 1999: Volume 50 No. 2

Title: On Proclaiming Sound
Doctrine: A Theology of Method

(Fr. Eugene Duffy)

Pages: 77-89

On Proclaiming Sound Doctrine

-a theology of method

Eugene Duffy

In this article I would like to look at some of the difficulties which can be associated with the publication of important teaching by episcopal conferences and I will be suggesting that the context in which the teaching occurs and the methodology used in its promulgation play a very significant role in the actual reception of the teaching. These reflections are occasioned by the publication of two important pastorals in the past year by the Irish Episcopal Conference. The first, *Conscience*, received very little attention. The second, *One Bread One Body*, a joint document issued by the three conferences in Ireland, Scotland and England and Wales, was the source of much negative comment. The latter occasioned negative comment in the media, not so much for its doctrinal content, as for its timing, when ecumenical agreement on the Eucharist and ministry have made significant strides forward, and especially in Ireland at a time when major progress had been made in the Northern peace process, a conflict with very strong religious and ecumenical dimensions. Here, I propose to look at how another episcopal conference, namely, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States (NCCB), has exercised its teaching mission and in the light of this exploration to suggest that there are important cultural and theological realities which need to be reckoned with in the very exercise of this teaching task. The proclamation of sound doctrine alone, however important, is not sufficient if the exercise of a teaching function is to have a significant effect in the lives of those to whom it has been addressed. There can be no doubting that the influence of American socio-political culture is far-reaching and it does significantly colour how we view all our own civil and ecclesial institutions, and the expectations which we have of these institutions. There are also good theological reasons to support some of these expectations.

Eugene Duffy is priest of the diocese of Achonry. He is Director of the Western Theological Institute, 16 University Road, Galway.

THE FURROW

TWO APPROACHES TO EPISCOPAL TEACHING

In the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council the Church in the United States went through a period of intense turmoil. The situation was such that Edward Schillebeeckx thought at the time that the Church in the United States was on the brink of schism. The situation was indeed serious and the future direction of the Church there anything but certain. The bishops were at a loss as to how to deal with the situation. Eventually they decided, as an episcopal conference, to issue a pastoral letter, *The Church in Our Day* (1967), which would clarify for the people of the United States the main points of the Council's teaching on the Church and, in particular, the place of structure and authority in the Church. It was a very serious, comprehensive document , invested with the full weight of the Conference's teaching authority. However, it had no impact. In fact it was rarely mentioned after its publication, either in popular articles or in the more academic literature. The reasons why this document failed to achieve its purpose, despite the soundness of its doctrine, lay mainly in its preparation and promulgation. In this regard the first pastoral produced by the United States Episcopal Conference stands in strong contrast to the majority of the other pastorals which the bishops wrote.

The Church in Our Day was written by John Wright, then bishop of Pittsburgh, and a young theologian, Anthony Padovano . They were essentially left to their own resources by the bishops to write the document. A final draft was circulated to the entire Conference for comments or amendments . The only ones made were of a stylistic nature and practically nothing of doctrinal or theological import.

The President of the Conference, Archbishop Dearden, wrote an introduction to the pastoral , in which he stated explicitly that this was 'a major doctrinal statement on the Church'. It set out to provide a doctrinal underpinning for three issues which were being widely debated in the United States at the time: the institutional and charismatic elements of the Church; the essentials of priestly life and religious dedication; the relationship between the freedom of conscience and religious authority.

The bishops regarded what they had to say as a matter of urgency because they were dealing with grave matter 'involving salvation, namely the doctrine of the Church'.

I. *The Church in Our Day* (hereafter, *CIOD*). Foreword: #1. The full text is in Hugh J. Nolan (ed.), *Pas/Oral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops*. 1962-1974. vol. III. pp. 98-154.

2. *Ibid.* #6.

ON PROCLAIMING SOUND DOCTRINE

We speak because we must. Even though our words may not, in every case, be heeded, they still have to be spoken.³

The bishops' worst suspicions were indeed fulfilled. The document as such was not heeded despite its truth, its authority and its consistency with the most recent teaching of the universal magisterium. The bishops soon learned, through other controversies, that their method and style of teaching were as critical to the success of their teaching role as the truth of their message and their own role as authoritative teachers. This can be illustrated by comparing the response of two later pastorals published in the 1980s, viz, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All* (1986). These documents had the same doctrinal weight as *The Church in Our Day* but because the method used in their preparation and publication was very different they enjoyed a far wider readership and evoked a much more favourable response. The bishops used a wide consultative process in preparing these later documents, involving theologians, philosophers, economists, military personnel, government agencies, scientists and the American public. Several drafts of the documents were published for comment before the definitive texts were promulgated. The process used ensured that there was an awareness of the bishops' role in giving authoritative guidance on important pastoral issues. Even if some did not agree with the advice given, most commentators spoke very positively about the way in which the bishops exercised their ministry. At the end of the process there was a much greater awareness among American Catholics of the need for careful moral evaluation of one's involvement in economic or military activities. It should be mentioned here, too, that the style adopted by the American bishops in the production of these two pastorals on issues of public morality was not confined just to moral issues. In the majority of its teaching documents the NCCB has followed a similar approach to good effect.

In the years following the publication of *The Church in Our Day* the bishops came to see the importance of issues other than the purely doctrinal content of their statements in the exercise of their teaching office. Three issues in particular can be noted which affect the success of a teaching document apart from its specific content. The issues are: inculturation, the *sensus fidelium* and the reception of doctrine. These are serious theological issues which are often neglected when it comes to the issuance of pastoral letters or teaching documents. The points can be illustrated again by reference to the American context.

3. Ibid. #7.

THE FURROW

JNCULTURATION

The American bishops in 1967 had not reflected sufficiently on the culture within which they were attempting to teach. In the post-Kennedy era the Church in the United States was a lot more confident than it had been at any time in the previous two centuries. American Catholics in the late 60s felt more at home in their socio-political milieu, they were more self-assured, and they had begun to appropriate the secular values of the nation in a way which made them less likely to obey uncritically even the dictates of the hierarchy. American Catholics had begun to apply the values of the democratic ethos of their society to their Church, a fact which led to some of the tensions and difficulties mentioned at the outset.

The democratic ethos of the United States is a very firmly rooted and deeply cherished aspect of life. It was proudly articulated by John Courtney Murray when he said:

Americans agreed that they would consent to none other than their own legislation, as framed by their representatives, who would be responsible to them. In other words, the principle of consent was wed to the equally ancient principle of popular participation in rule.⁴

The authors of *Habits of the Heart* have shown that the American desire for participation in public life is still an important feature of the American temperament. The image of the small town with its hearings and the voluntary participation of its members in the organisation of civic life still holds an attraction for a large number of Americans, even those who are employees of large multi-national companies based in the big cities of the nation.⁵ This phenomenon of discussion and debate among the citizens was at the heart of civilization according to Murray. He called it the concept of conversation and described it simply as 'living and talking together'.⁶ Allied to the concept of conversation is the principle of consent. From the outset Americans agreed that 'they would consent to none other than their own legislation, as framed by their representatives, who would be responsible for them'.⁷ Murray claims that they had a remarkable faith in their capacity to govern themselves and, in his view, this was well founded. If people are to be called upon to obey they have first a right to be heard and to make their judgements known on whatever matters are to affect them. Above all Murray was convinced that the American con-

4. *We hold These Truths* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 33.

5. Robert Bellah, et al (eds.) (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 204.

6. *We Hold These Truths*, p. 13.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

ON PROCLAIMING SOUND DOCTRINE

sensus about democratic government was consistent with the best Catholic principles on the matter 'because the contents of this consensus – the ethical and political principles drawn from the tradition of natural law- approve themselves to the Catholic intelligence and conscience'.⁸

More recently, John A. Coleman has addressed the problem of democracy and democratization in the Church and concludes that while the Church of its very nature is not a democracy, in the sense that it depends on the will of the people, it can embrace the ethos of democracy. Once it is clear that those who hold office or who exercise authority have this as a gift from above, as a call by God, through Christ in the Spirit. Once this position is clear then the question of a democratic ethos or the call for greater democratization in the Church can be more easily discussed. What is good in democracy can be of service and value to the Church. As Paul VI observed in his encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*, 'the Church cannot remain indifferent to or unaffected by the changes which take place in the world around it. They influence, modify and condition its course of action in all sorts of ways.'⁹

The ethos of democracy demands a participatory, dialogical and expressive style of communication. It is not about majoritarian rule as such, nor does it necessarily contradict the hierarchical nature of the Church. The American bishops have institutionalized a certain democratic ethos in their approach to teaching in their conference and done so to good effect.¹⁰

The late Cardinal Bernardin often stressed the need for a consultative process on the part of the bishops with theologians and scholars, and significantly with those whose opinions were likely to differ from those of the bishops themselves. He pointed out that if the scholarly community was to be involved in the teaching of the doctrines being proposed by the bishops, then it was appropriate that these scholars should be involved in the production of the documents to be promulgated. Bernardin also suggested that the style of the bishops' teaching was important, and that it should take into account the culture of the people being addressed. When the American bishops were called to Rome for a discussion with the Pope on the work of their Conference, a summons occasioned by the methodology being employed in the preparation of *The Challenge of Peace*, Bernardin reminded the Roman authorities

8. Ibid., p. 41.

9. London: CTS (1964), #42.

10. 'Not Democracy but Democratization', in *A Democratic Church*, Eugene Bianchi, and Rosemary Radford Ruether (eds.) (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 228-9.

THE FURROW

that 'as US Bishops we value highly the founding principles of our country and its democratic traditions'.¹¹

SENSUS FIDELIUM

The term *sensus fidelium* is often used to describe three distinct aspects of the virtue of faith. These are: (a) the *sensus fidei* which refers to a supernatural instinct for the truth in matters of faith (*fides qua*); (b) the *sensus fidelium* which refers to what it is that is believed (*fides quae*); (c) the *consensus fidelium*, which refers to a belief shared by all the faithful.¹² Although these distinctions are made they are not always maintained because all three aspects are so closely interconnected as the following outline will indicate.

Lumen Gentium 12 provides a key for understanding the idea of the *sensus fidei* in the post-conciliar era, although the concept is one deeply rooted in the life and tradition of the Church.¹³ Walter Kasper commenting on this article of LG has said:

[This passage] maintains that the witness to the truth of the Gospel is not only the task of the magisterial office of the Church in the narrow sense, but is also the task of the whole People of God ... The day-to-day experiences of the faith by believers, therefore, are constitutive of the Church's witness to the faith ... Belief and fidelity do not depend in the first instance on a person's giving assent to specific propositions and concepts which have been invested with authority. What is truly normative is the entire life of the whole Church.¹⁴

The *sensus fidei* is rooted in the Spirit of God who animates the entire Church giving to all its members a variety of gifts and charisms for the upbuilding of the community and the spreading of the Kingdom in word and deed. Each believer is led by the Spirit into a knowledge of the truth that is meant for the benefit of the whole community. Rather than seeing the Spirit as first communicating to the hierarchy alone the full truth which is then later

II. 'Opening Comments by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin', in *Evangeliization in the Culture and Society of the United States and the Bishop as Teacher of the Faith: Meeting of His Holiness John Paul II with the Archbishops of the United States, March 8-11, 1989* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1989), p. 2.

12. Christopher O'Donnell provides a very helpful survey of the concepts in his article 'Sense of the Faith – Sense of the Faithful', in *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church* (Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press, 1996), pp. 422-4.

13. For a good overview of the understanding and development of the *sensus fidelium* see Jean M. R. Tillard, 'Sensus Fidelium', *One in Christ* II (1975), pp. 2-29. The related issue of the *consensus fidelium* is treated by Robert Eno in his 'Consensus and Doctrine: Three Ancient Views', *Eglise et theologie* 9 (1978), pp. 473-83.

14. Quoted in John Buckhard, 'Sensus fidei: Meaning, Role and Future of a Teaching of Vatican II', *Louvain Studies* 17 (1992), p. 18.

ON PROCLAIMING SOUND DOCTRINE

passed on by them to the faithful, one can see that the whole ecclesial body by an interaction and complimentarily of charisms and functions, enters into the truth.¹⁵ Furthermore the faith which the believers come to possess is not just a grasp of the truth which remains at some intellectual level but it finds expression in the very way in which the believers live their lives. Thus the *sensus fidei* and the *sensus fidelium* cannot be easily divorced from their lived expressions and the cultural forms which they assume. It is precisely because the faith germinates in specific cultural situations that one must be attentive to the cultural forms which it assumes and in which it is expressed. This attentiveness is required of those who wish to discover what the truths of faith are; it is also required of those whose task it is to communicate that truth.

These considerations of the *sensus fidei* and the *sensus fidelium* are important in the present discussion about the methodology followed by the American bishops. Apart from there having been a sound cultural basis for extensive consultations on matters to be spoken about by them, there was also a profoundly significant theological reason for so doing. The theological foundation for their method has to be a serious regard for the *sensus fidei* and the *sensus fidelium* which are gifts and characteristics of the entire membership of the Church by virtue of baptism. All the members share in the life of saving truth and live from its resources. Thus it is only fitting that the American bishops should attempt to see and hear how that faith is lived, understood and expressed by the faithful in the United States before they make any pronouncements on it.

RECEPTION

Apart from the content, one has also to take serious account of how the teaching is presented and appropriated in any discussion of the Church's teaching ministry. In theological discourse this aspect of ecclesial activity is considered under the heading of reception. Cardinal Johannes Willebrands provides a useful description of the concept:

In Catholic understanding reception can be circumscribed as a process by means of which the People of God, in its differentiated structure and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and accepts new insights, new witnesses of truth and their forms of expression because they are deemed to be in the line of the apostolic tradition and in harmony with the *sensus fidelium* of the Church as a whole.

15. 'Sensus Fidelium'. *One in Christ* II (1975), p. II.

THE FURROW

Because such witnesses of new insights and experiences are recognized as authentic elements of apostolicity and catholicity, they basically aim at acceptance and inclusion in the living faith of the Church.¹⁶

The process of reception in the Church is one which embraces all the members and all aspects of the faith as lived and communicated in the community of believers. All are involved in the unfolding truth of God's word: the theologians do so by means of their research work; the general body of the faithful by their perseverance in lives of fidelity and service; the bishops through their witness to the tradition and their judgements of the authentic faith of the Church.¹⁷

One could say that reception is a characteristic of the Church in so far as the Church is born from a process of reception. It receives its life from God, through Christ in the Holy Spirit. It also receives shape and form from the history and culture of the world in which it is incarnated. In turn, the world also receives from it the gift of God's love shown forth in Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit's The Church exists so that what it has received can in turn be received by the world: the gift of divine love. This gift is communicated in the Gospel and in the Creeds of the Church but also in a very concrete fashion in and through the people who embody that love in the circumstances of their lives. Therefore, reception involves more than the handing on and acceptance of propositional truth statements. It is rather the integration of the message of divine revelation by each succeeding generation and cultural grouping into their particular contexts. In this way the saving truth is kept alive and prevented from becoming merely archival material to be studied. Each generation and each cultural grouping has to recognize for itself and actualize in concrete circumstances what has been offered by God, once for all in Christ Jesus.

It should now be obvious that this is not a one-way movement, from the hierarchy to the body of the faithful. Reception operates in two directions. This two-way dynamism of reception has important consequences for an understanding of the role of episcopal conferences in the teaching ministry of the Church. In fact it conditions the way in which all of the Church's teaching ministry is understood. The focus shifts from the magisterium in itself to the truth which is being taught. It is the truth which has the priority. Congar has shown how important this inversion is for the

16. 'The Ecumenical Dialogue and its Reception', in *Ecclesia*, p. 400.

17. Christopher O'Donnell, 'Reception', in *Ecclesia*, p. 400.

18. John D. Zizioulas, 'The Theological Problem of Reception', *One in Christ* 21 (1985), p. 189.

ON PROCLAIMING SOUND DOCTRINE

life of the Church.' For him reception 'derives from a theology of communion, itself associated with a theology of local Churches, a pneumatology and a theology of tradition and a sense of the profound conciliarity of the Church'."¹⁹ If attention is given simply to the magisterial aspect of reception to the exclusion of these other important considerations then one obscures the role of the Holy Spirit and ends up with a view the Church 'as a mass totally determined by the summit'.²⁰ This in turn would lead to a primacy of authority over the primacy of the truth.

A further consequence of an impoverished ecclesiology is that one could easily reduce reception to a matter of obedience. If the Church is simply understood in terms of a monarchical society then the only way to understand reception is in terms of obedience to an authority. A more helpful way to approach the question is in terms of the search for the truth which takes place in the Church, the discernment process which is involved and the consequences which this has for the whole ecclesial community.

RECEPTION IN THE CONTEXT OF *COMMUNIO*

The search for the truth is conducted in the lived experience of the community which is a communion of love among the members themselves and between them and God. Indeed the procession of the truth is verified in the love which the members show towards one another (1 Jn 4: 16). This is the essential teaching of the Gospels on the living of the dual commandment of love, which assures one of a real participation in the Kingdom of God (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34; Lk 10:25-37). It is also the foundation for understanding the sacramentality of the Church in the opening paragraph of LG and for the Church understood as *communio*. This approach to the Church as a communion leads to another important ecclesiological idea, one which was particularly strong in the early Church namely, that the Church is a communion of communions or a community of local Churches. This is to respect the incarnational nature of the Church, the fact that the self-communication of God takes place among particular people in specific times and places. So the Church finds its most immediate self-expression and self-understanding in the local community. Yet this is never adequate because what it finds to be true of the love at the heart of a local community it must express in relationship to the neighbouring community. It is called out to share that local experience of love with those around it and ultimately with the whole community of Churches which constitute the universal

19. 'Reception as an Ecclesiological Reality', *Concilium* 77 (1972), pp. 58-68.

20. *Ibid.* p. 60.

21. *Ibid.*

THE FURROW

Church. This love at the heart of the Church is a sign of the Spirit's presence animating it. And if the Spirit leads people into all truth (Jn 16: 13), the Spirit does so in accord with the Spirit's primary work, effecting communion. This means that the experience of deep communion in love clarifies the truth of the divine self-communication in Jesus.²² So any attempt to grasp the truth of revelation apart from the life of Christian communion is false. Moreover, the teaching of the Church must then be seen not as some static formulae or conciliar decrees which have been transmitted from one age to the next, but as something which is continually developing as it is lived out in new contexts with new opportunities and challenges.

Central to any consideration of the notion of reception is the role of the bishops. The bishops represent the local Churches of which they are the appointed leaders. The individual bishop is placed at the heart of the local Church which he serves and on whose behalf he speaks, representing it within the communion of Churches. At the same time he represents the wider communion of Churches to his own community. However, even when he articulates the faith of his own local Church he speaks the mind of the whole Church because each local Church is an embodiment of the universal Church. Just as the local bishop embodies the local Church so does the pope embody in a special way the unity of the whole Church and consequently of the college of bishops. Thus any statement which is to speak the mind of the Church must take this collegial, conciliar structure of the Church into account; it must at once respect the local expression of the ecclesial reality and its unity across space and time.

Finally, the contemporary discussion of reception suggests that it is not a juridical category. Reception does not confer validity on a teaching, nor does the lack of reception mean that the teaching was untrue. Michael Himes makes an important observation on this point:

Reception has to do with the efficacy of a doctrinal decision. The community recognizes a doctrine as for the good of the Church and incorporates that doctrine into its life and its worship. Decisions which are not received are not rejected; they are simply ignored in that they do not call forth any living power and in fact fail to exert any influence within the community. Non-reception does not mean that doctrine is false, merely irrelevant.²³

22. Michael J. Himes, 'The Ecclesiological Significance of the Reception of Doctrine'. *Heythrop Journal* 33 (1992), p.152.

23. Ibid., p. 155.

ON PROCLAIMING SOUND DOCTRINE

What has been established here on the basis of a consideration of the notion of reception throws significant light on the methodology followed by the American bishops in their teaching ministry. The bishops' pattern of consulting widely in the course of preparing their statements shows an implicit recognition of the fact that the Church, in all its members, is a Spirit-filled and gifted community. It is not a question of simply consulting the members of the Church but of testing the faith of the Church on the matters of which they wished to speak. The process of dialogue and conversation which characterized so much of their activity was an important means of establishing how that faith was being lived, expressed and articulated. At the same time they also listened to the faith of the Church at large as that was expressed in the teaching of Vatican II, post-conciliar decrees, papal teaching and in the teaching experiences of other episcopal conferences. So, in addition to attempting to hold a vertical consensus in teaching with the past, the bishops also attempted to find and express a horizontal consensus with the living faith of the Church in the United States and with the Church at large.

The American bishops showed a keen sense of how the Christian faith was expressed in their own unique cultural context. Faith is always taught and lived in particular cultural incarnations. It is therefore important for the teacher to be sensitive to those lived expressions of the faith, to highlight what is positive in them, to correct what does not accord with the deepest insights of the tradition, and to find the appropriate language in which to address the encouragement or correction.

In the light of the procedures which the bishops followed then, one can see that implicitly they were working with a communion understanding of the Church rather than with a juridical monarchical one. Such an approach was better suited to the American context and in the end bore much fruit. The effectiveness of their method can be seen to be firmly rooted in a sound contemporary ecclesiology as well as being sympathetic to the socio-political culture of the United States.

CONCLUSION

It would seem, then, in the light of what has been said here, that important teaching by a bishops' conference needs to take seriously the democratic climate in which we live. Those who are being taught need to feel part of the whole teaching process. People expect to be participants in the making and shaping of the various policies which affect their lives. In an ecclesial context it would seem that those charged with the highest teaching authority need to involve others, especially those who are engaged in the

THE FURROW

ministry of teaching and preaching, in the preparatory stages of a teaching document. Otherwise, as Cardinal Bernardin often suggested, how can those people be expected to promote and 'defend' that teaching if they have not been involved in its preparation? This is not to usurp the role of the bishops as final arbiters in matters of faith and morals. It is simply to suggest that an open dialogical approach could do much to enhance the promotion of valuable teaching offered by a Conference, teaching which is unfortunately all too often ignored, dismissed or forgotten.

In the case of *One Bread One Body*, priests were expected to promote and defend it once it had appeared. They had no prior warning that such a document was being prepared and there was no significantly wide consultation in its preparation. In such circumstances, given our expectations of a participative style of leadership, it is not surprising that these important documents fail to make the desired impact. When *One Bread One Body* appeared most people assumed that the only reason why the document was published was to deal with the public incidents of the British Prime Minister and the Irish President taking communion in Churches to which neither belonged. The bishops then found themselves having to say that this document was in preparation long before these incidents occurred. Had a consultation process about how to present eucharistic doctrine been known to be in place then the subsequent justifications would not have been necessary and a much wider group of people would have been in a position to explain and clarify the very valuable doctrine being presented.

Equally significant was the charge that the timing of the document was insensitive because it followed so quickly on the Northern Ireland peace agreement. People on both sides of the political and religious divides were delighted at the breakthrough which had been reached after long negotiations, much dialogue and participation by every concerned group. Again there was a clash of styles. In one case, people saw the value of a dialogical process, even where traditional adversaries finally sat down and spoke with one another. In the other, an authoritative statement emerged without any prior notice. Again the bishops found themselves having to explain that in fact this teaching document was in preparation long before the peace accord had been agreed. While this is true, would it not have been much more easily defended, in fact a defence would have been unnecessary, had a much wider Church membership been aware of the bishops' plans to offer instruction on eucharistic doctrine.

These examples illustrate some of the practical advantages of a consultative process in the preparation and publication of epis-

ON PROCLAIMING SOUND DOCTRINE

copal conference documents . In 1967 the American bishops found themselves saying that we are 'speaking because we must', but, as we saw, their words fell on deaf ears. The bishops often have to speak but it is a loss if their words are squandered simply because of a deficient methodology in presenting their teaching.

It has to be said that even if all the factors which have been outlined here were to be taken into account by the bishops in the exercise of their teaching ministry, their statements might still not always be welcomed. The truth can be hard to take. However, it does seem to make good pedagogical and theological sense that the bishops take more seriously the expectations of people to be more involved in the shaping and directing of matters which concern them intimately; that more recognition be given to the *sensus fidelium*, to the whole membership of the Church which is a Spirit-filled community genuinely seeking the truth.

Disconnectedness. People move around more than ever before. This may be because of their work: increasingly people are employed in companies with multinational interests. Further, information technology means that many people can live and work wherever they like, at home, in the car or overseas. But aside from the requirements of their jobs people seem to have a need to be on the move; to be somewhere else; not to remain too long where they are now. There is a reluctance to form community, to get to know neighbours, to become involved in a locality. Thus people may live in a so-called 'dormer' town, drive to work, and spend the weekends socializing somewhere else. We have not yet even begun to reckon with the implications of this in terms of Church, to which the concept of community is so vital and central.

-EAMONN CONWAY, *The Splintered Heart* (Veritas, Dublin) p.
73