

Annotated Table of Contents

Introduction

“You would need to be an atheist to work for a so called Catholic newspaper” —Poet, Patrick Kavanagh. Author’s background. This book is a critique of the Roman bureaucracy which resists reform. A note about words that have changed their meaning or have multiple meanings.

Chapter 1: Uncertainty.

Uncertainty spawned touchy, vindictive, pagan gods, insecurity, tribes. Bureaucracies are tribal that provide comforts. Pournelle’s Iron Law of bureaucracy. Group dynamic dominates and is worse with homogenous staffing. System rewards ambition and obedience, compromises truth. Prioritising obedience to system erodes personal responsibility. The curia has pursued the ambition of every large bureaucracy —to grow bigger, more powerful, more secure. It is now the effective government of the Church. Pope John Paul said so: “The curia is the pope”.

Chapter 2: Incarnation, Church Founding & Purpose

Jesus changed everything. Amazing message of the Incarnation: Only one God and he loves us. Wants us to love one another. Love depends intrinsically on freedom of decision and cannot be forced. Jesus taught with words and by example. His message and mandates. Faith is rational. Founded a church to protect and disseminate the good news and promised to be with it forever. But he never overrides our freedom. “There is no greater heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it” (Acton). Not a micro-manager. Left the details to human ingenuity. We will be judged on one criterion only. While decrying sin he linked forgiveness with love.

Chapter 3: Church Structure Develops

Mankind is rational but finite. Jesus and truth. Gradual emergence of episcopal structure, and priests in the fourth century. Influences of surrounding cultures. Local synods and councils provided mutual monitoring and accountability. Emergence of offices, hierarchical dignities and pecking order. Relatively recent elevation of papacy undermined episcopal authority. Pursuit of power. Jesus’ novel management style not generally followed. Harrington’s Law. Centralisation, oaths of loyalty, and obedience foster rigidity. Continuing ambition to be ‘the greatest’. Central control enables authorities to ignore or distort.

Chapter 4: The Roman Contribution.

Persecution gave way to adoption. Constantine favoured Catholicism. Theodosius made it the State religion. Much inherited from Roman Law, imperial civil structure, and historical Roman centrality, including an ordered professional, life-time priesthood, focus on ritual sacrifice, and an authoritative managing bureaucracy. Loss of domestic celebration of Lord’s Supper regrettable. Early Roman claim to primacy among the patriarchates conceded. What it means has been contentious. List of the effects, good and bad. Over-reliance on law which tends to be binary, whereas love and unity are gradations.

Chapter 5: Alternate Demo Site on the Fringe.

An alternate structure developed on the unconquered Western edge of the empire. Less influenced by Roman Law and administrative system. Centred on monasteries led by elected abbots rather than dioceses governed by powerful bishops. A nursery of selfless service. The Island of Saints and Scholars becomes a great missionary powerhouse which lasts for 600 years. Disproportionately great contribution to re-Christianisation of Europe. Era ended with conquest. Monasteries that survived Henry II succumbed under Henry VIII. The Irish experience proves that the Roman structure is not the only possible implementation of God's eternal plan for his church.

Chapter 6: Bureaucracy builds its power base .

Locus of power within the papacy. As the state religion of the empire, Rome was the administrative centre of the Church. The papacy survived the collapse of the Western Empire. Tensions between Rome and patriarchates of the East. Scripture interpreted to meet secular ambitions and enhance power. Inability to listen to *sensus fidelium* or admit error. 20 key papacy decisions over 1400 years reviewed, each one enhanced the power of Rome. Zenith of ambition almost achieved in the two dogmas of Vatican I.

Chapter 7: Infallibility and its Genesis

The original meaning of 'Apostolic Succession'. Irenaeus, against the heresies supported the primacy but not infallibility of Rome. Rejection of papal infallibility in 13th century. Ambition of Pope Pius IX traced through strategic campaign of twenty-four years. Juggling agenda and changing voting tradition to get it passed at Vatican I. Thunder and lightning over St Peter's. Infallibility defined subject to conditions. Winners and losers. Enforcement of dogmas on opponents.

Chapter 8: The fruits of Vatican I – EXTERNAL

The external effects: temporal. Own goal. Predictable political backlash provoked. Kulturkampf in Germany copied, to much lesser extent, in other countries. Church loses members, property and influence. Leaders blame everybody but themselves.

The external effects: ecclesial. 'Irreformable' new obstacles to Christian unity knowingly created.

The internal effects. Authority of bishops undermined. Effort to circumvent the conditions for infallibility leads to widespread use of pseudo-infallibility, defence of which demands deception and coercion. Modernist crisis. Inquisition persecuted theologians who were seeking to make the Church relevant in a changing society. Distrust of modern research methods. Secret spy ring within clergy. Appointment of bishops monopolised to reflect policies of Roman establishment. Anglican Orders 'null and void', the implication being that among Anglicans the Eucharist is a 'sham' and Jesus does not honour his word.

Chapter 9: The fruits of Vatican I – INTERNAL

The dogma of infallibility caused another schism, was widely abused. The authority of bishops undermined. Oaths of fidelity, coercion. The appointment of bishops was monopolized. A new category of doctrine emerged: those widely accepted teachings that had never been infallibly defined. The scope and precision of infallibility was extended making virtually everything unchangeable despite the fact that more than 50 (listed) doctrines have changed. Rigidity reduces management options. 'Creeping infallibility' is more accurately named pseudo-infallibility. Its defense has proved costly in terms of integrity.

Chapter 10: Deceit, Coercion and Hypocrisy.

Vatican II tried to limit the extent of infallibility to the deposit of faith, but the CDF circumvented this by adding to the deposit! Ecumenical status of Councils in the second millennium is questionable now that the other denominations are deemed to be Christian. The curial manipulation of popes. Attempts to deceive the faithful over teaching on contraception led to the loss of authority—exactly what the deceit was intended to avoid. Ongoing deception. The CDF use of coercion to defend dubious positions. The hypocrisy of invoking 'fidelity to the Lord Jesus' just once when it suited their case. 38 comparative examples of where this fidelity might be applied.. Pragmatic deception and shoddy scholarship. Own goals and the common factor underlying them: the curia forgets that Christianity is a voluntary way of living characterized by unselfish love. It focuses instead on policing a multiplicity of rules some of which are designed to empower itself or protect the privileges of the profession.

Chapter 11: Authority over the Sacraments.

The Council of Trent settled the number of sacraments at seven. It stated that the Church has the power to modify the details provided the substance remains the same. The authorities have interpreted this authority accommodatingly, even to the point of making twenty changes in relation to the Eucharist. Which have taken it from being a social and prayerful gathering of like-minded people over an evening meal, to an individual obligation to be physically present under pain of mortal sin. The understanding of 'substance' has been reduced to a minimum. The papacy, that derives so much authority from Jesus' words to Peter, "Feed my lambs and my sheep", is prolonging a situation where large numbers of the faithful suffer an unnecessary eucharistic famine and inability to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. There are several remedies for the situation, but each would involve a breach of some pseudo-infallibility.

Chapter 12: The Priestly Ordination of Women

Extended debate since 1971 which Rome has been losing. In 1994 a new doctrine based on authority instead. Two magisterial documents on the issue hopelessly inadequate, even misleading and contradictory. Fallacious reasoning. Shoddy scholarship required to support prejudgement by Paul VI in correspondence with Canterbury. Equating practice with revelation. Overlooked relevance of 'ex opere operato' to issue. With arguments bankrupt, repeated attempts to rely on different formulas for infallibility. The two magisterial documents do not withstand the 'careful reading' recommended by Pope Francis. To support exclusion, truncation and misrepresentation of scripture. Curia makes plans to lie in an Apostolic Letter. The question: "Can a woman be ordained?" is a different question now because our understanding

of what it is to be a woman has changed. The embarrassing issue of the substance of the sacrament. Is ordination really necessary? Failure to link teaching with general gospel values.

Chapter 13: Unwinding a Council

The Roman Curia saw Vatican II as a threat to its hegemony and was in damage limitation mode from the day Pope John XXIII announced his intention of summoning it. They prevented the 'supreme authority' in the Church from having a reasoned discussion of celibacy and contraception, issues that have haunted the Church ever since. The curia formed the core of the small minority resisting reform. They gained control of subsequent implementation by getting the Pope to set up a Synod of Bishops under curial control. The long-delayed updating of Canon Law ensured that Collegiality was still-born. The warmth of ecumenism was quickly chilled. The curia ignored the potential of the 'hierarchy of truths' and obstructed the recommended rethink of moral theology. The common element in every action is the need for the bureaucracy to protect its own power. Basic to this is the need to keep the bishops from acting together.

Chapter 14: Rethinking Moral Theology (MT)

The need to free MT from its subjugation to Canon Law and ground it in scripture was one of the courageous insights of Vatican II. It was proposed as a suitable area for joint study with other denominations. Theologians who started work on the issue, however, were silenced and persecuted by the curia, in a manner itself immoral. Their work was threatening to undermine or unmask a lot of pseudo-infallibility. The encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* cynically misused *Lumen Gentium* in an effort to refocus MT on law and precept, with particular reference to the widely rejected teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. The Synod of Bishops would have been more constructive and enduring had the revision of MT been allowed to happen first. The cart before the horse. A Christly moral theology would probably focus on virtue rather than sin, and see the ecological movement as caring love for one's neighbour. It might inspire more people to be less self-centered and live their Christianity.

Chapter 15 : Systemic Management Weakness

The combination of inherent bureaucratic self-centredness, widespread pseudo-infallibility and the policy of never admitting an error or wrongdoing has left the curia in a state of management paralysis. The papacy is incapacitated in relation to eucharistic famine, shortage of ministers, loss of credibility, shrinking congregations, ecumenism, its own part in the sexual abuse cover-ups and lack of proper financial controls. Ten examples of systemic management failings are reviewed.

The restriction of recruitment for positions of authority to ordained personnel with seminary formation perpetuates these problems. It makes group-think pervasive and ensures that committees are homogenous and compliant. Experts consulted to help with financial control and the response to the pedophile crisis have been fired or resigned, in frustration at being blocked.

Chapter 16 —Unity Among Christians.

Divine wish for unity is admitted. Shared responsibility for break-up now implied. Many obstacles but 'the boulder on the line' is papal infallibility. Can the irreformable be reformed? Yes! A dozen possible formulas offered. Only one is needed. Pope John Paul II publishes *Ut Unum Sint* but papacy's desire for unity is conditional on 'in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission'. The 'essentials' are not identified. There's the rub. Inevitably some will have to be re-prioritized. What kind of unity? Certainly not a uniformity of opinions, or of governance system but a unity of hearts and purpose. By this shall all men know, etc. Retired Archbishop of San Francisco responded facing up to 'the costly call to unity'. Can management learn from him or from other churches or international organizations?

Chapter 17 —Putting the House in Order.

Jesus always took the initiative. Given its provenance and its founder, the Roman Church and the pope form the only credible centre for greater unity. The desire is shared by other Christians but not by the bureaucracy that fears loss of hegemony. The papacy should take the initiatives and dismantle the greatest obstacles to unity by making belief in the dogmas optional as it was up to 1870. Any one of 12 formulas would allow the dogmas to be reformed. Infallibility, would scarcely be missed. Ending Universal Jurisdiction would allow the local churches some initiative, reverse centralism and end sacramental famine quickly. Release the creativity and energy of 4000+ bishops. The Synod on Amazonia was an opportunity to find new pathways. It almost succeeded. The bishops with the pope should govern the Church ingenuine synodality as recommended by Vatican II. The pope could then concentrate on his unique role of signifying and building unity. These initiatives would make unity less terrifying for other Christians.

Chapter 18 —Summary and Recommendations

After a limited summary, 29 draft proposals for discussion and action are offered. All are referenced and hyperlinked back to the text. These are followed by some terminal remarks.

Glossary

A glossary of Latin and French phrases is provided.