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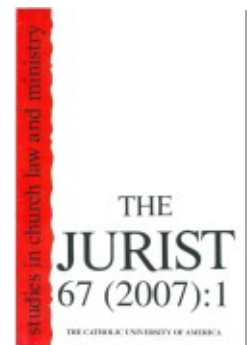
*Apostolicity Then and Now: An Ecumenical Church in a  
Postmodern World* by John Burkhard (review)

Jeffrey Gros

The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry, Volume 67, Number 1,  
2007, pp. 272-273 (Review)

Published by The Catholic University of America Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jur.2007.0030>



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While this work should interest all Catholic canonists, it may more specifically interest Latin canonists and those specialists engaged in the interpretation and application of the current Latin norms for the appointment of bishops.

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**APOSTOLICITY THEN AND NOW: AN ECUMENICAL CHURCH  
IN A POSTMODERN WORLD** by John Burkhard. Collegeville:  
Liturgical Press, 2004. Pp. 250, \$27.95.

Among the most challenging responsibilities before the churches in their task of reconciliation is the issue of ordained ministry and its relationship to the wider issues of ecclesiology, sacramentality, and authority. In the hierarchy of truths, the apostolicity of ministry relates to the more fundamental question of the apostolicity of the Church as a whole. The role of the bishop relates to the wider question of Eucharistic communion, continuity in apostolic ministry, and the oversight (*episcopate*) to be exercised by the Church. With the Second Vatican Council, the "fullness of the priesthood" is said to reside in the bishops, but the council fathers left to the theologians, to ecumenical dialogue, and to research in the sources of tradition to explain in what this "fullness" consists.

This volume is an important contribution to the clarification of the apostolicity of the Church, its continuity, and the role of ordained ministry within it. The book is divided into eight chapters. The first three cover the biblical, patristic and historic witness respectively. Chapter four surveys six categories of theologians: Congar, Küng, the Reformers, Pannenberg, Volf, and Zizioulas. In the next two chapters the author situates his discussion of apostolicity within discussions of methodology and the analysis of worldviews which inform faith and theology. He develops briefly the classical, modern, and postmodern approach to truth and history. The seventh chapter reviews the ecumenical bilateral dialogues of the Catholic Church with Anglican, Lutheran, and Orthodox churches, the World Council *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* text, and the Anglican/Lutheran northern European agreements on apostolicity.

The final chapter traces a systematic presentation of apostolicity addressed to the prospects of reconciliation in ecclesiology and ordained ministry. Here the author takes up the question of apostolic succession in Lutheranism, where bishops from the pre-Reformation church were not retained in all cases. The distinction between personal episcopacy and *episcopate*, current in the ecumenical and systematic conversations, is reviewed. Debates over validity of orders and various models of recognition and reconciliation of ministry are analyzed and evaluated. He ends the conclusion with an assessment of the implications of the council's affirmation of the Church as sacrament, the development of thinking about apostolic succession in the postconciliar church, and how the insights of postmodernism contribute to a theological perspective serving Church unity.

By taking a view of ordained ministry within a much broader ecclesiological understanding of apostolicity in which ministry is related to other dimensions of the Church's apostolicity in the hierarchy of truths, the author is able to recommend a reassessment of the ordained ministry in other churches that is more positive than was the case from the perspective of a more classical, or static modern perspective. His evaluation of a postmodern perspective attempts to avoid the relativistic temptation that attracts so many who rely on this understanding of the world. He uses the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas' relational ontology which is centered on the Eucharistic communion of the Church, rather than on the personal succession of the individual bishops. In this theology and that of the author, recognition is based not so much on the ritual succession of bishops, or even presbyters, but on the ecclesial succession in faith, life, sacramental reality, not excluding ordained ministry.

Undoubtedly adaptation of the Church in a postmodern context and developing ministerial structures and understandings compatible with the apostolic tradition will remain tasks before the churches together for some time to come. This volume will be an important resource in focusing the debate and clarifying the issues, as well as suggesting important insights towards resolving issues that have plagued the Church for centuries.

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