

CHAPTER EIGHT

NARRATIVE AND ANALYSIS OF THE ROME-HUNTHAUSEN CONFLICT: THE LATE STAGE (NOVEMBER 1986-APRIL 1989)

G. Intervening Developments (November 1986-February 1987)

The bishops came to final agreement on the Malone statement during their morning session on Wednesday, November 12, which lasted for more than an hour. At 10:15 a.m., Malone reopened the conference room to the press. Television cameras recorded Malone's reading of the statement and the standing ovation he received from his fellow bishops in response (*The New York Times*, 11.13.86).

Several bishops offered commentary afterwards. Malone said he saw the ovation as a sign of full support for the statement from the bishops. Cardinal O'Connor of New York said, "I think it's a very well-balanced statement. It shows the unity of the bishops, it shows the loyalty to the Holy See and it demonstrates our explicit recognition that the Holy See has acted very charitably and very justly." Juneau, Alaska Bishop Michael Kenny was blunt in expressing criticism of the statement, saying: "I am not satisfied. Archbishop Hunthausen was never given a chance to adequately respond to anonymous charges made against him, nor was he provided an opportunity to even correct problems he was said to have caused" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 11.13.86). Archbishop Pilarczyk of Cincinnati challenged those who would judge the handling of the case based on the "Anglo-Saxon system" of due process. Canon law, he said, was designed "for the protection of the individual, the protection of the Church, the protection of doctrine and the protection of the rights of the Holy See" (*The Washington Post*, 11.13.86). Bishop Wuerl, who, along with Hunthausen, had refused interview requests since September 4, described the discussion during the bishops' meeting as having been "open, fraternal, respectful" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 11.13.86).

On the same day that Malone issued his statement, Hunthausen issued a written response (*The Progress*, 11.20.86, *Origins*, 11.20.86). Hunthausen expressed his gratitude to Malone and to the Conference administrative board for the opportunity to speak. "I am hopeful," he continued, "that this documentation has clarified matters for my brother bishops and, indeed, that it will now do so for all our people who are trying to understand what is surely a very complex situation."

Secondly, I want to say that I support the statement Bishop Malone issued this morning. Like any statement, it will probably not please everyone, but it is, in my judgment, a good statement, one that has emerged from a very honest exchange of many different points of view.

It addresses the issues in a manner that respects our identity as a Conference of Bishops united with each other and with the Holy Father. It also indicated a genuine readiness on the part of the conference to offer any assistance judged helpful and appropriate by me and by the other parties involved. This is a very hopeful sign for me. It is the kind of assurance I was seeking when I accepted the invitation to make a presentation to the conference in the first place.

Hunthausen closed his statement by conveying his hope for healing and the resolution of any problems that still remained.

On November 13, Hunthausen returned to Seattle, where he was welcomed by 350 enthusiastic supporters at the airport. The following day, Hunthausen gave a press conference (cf. *The Seattle Times*, 11.15.86, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 11.15.86, *The Progress*,

11.20.86), his first since the September 4 announcement of Wuerl's special faculties. At the briefing, Hunthausen's words suggested that the issues at hand were far from resolved. Hunthausen described himself as being "in the middle of a conflict that has the potential of causing a rift in the church" (with an accompanying qualification that working through tensions was "part and parcel of the Christian life"). The power-sharing arrangement continued to be, to his mind, "unworkable," and the source of inefficiency and confusion. Noting the bishops' conference's offer of assistance in the affair (and offering specific details of how the Malone statement had been reworked to omit the phrase "just and reasonable"), Hunthausen said that an appropriate type of assistance had not yet been decided upon, but that he would be discussing this further with other bishops and with the conference leadership. Especially troubling to Hunthausen was his perception of a media effort to portray the affair as "win or lose, me against the Vatican." And yet, he admitted that, while the words "apostolic visitation" are "very comforting words," the reality of having dealt with the visitation had been painful and made perhaps less effective through a shortcoming in the Holy See's understanding of American culture. "There are different approaches to making judgments in different cultures," he said.

Few public reactions to the recent developments in the Hunthausen case came forth from the Vatican, but those that did expressed satisfaction with the way the U.S. bishops had handled the matter. An Associated Press report (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 11.14.86) quoted a Vatican official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, as saying that "the U.S. bishops came out surprisingly strong on the side of the Holy See on the Hunthausen affair. They were on the right track." Another official, also unnamed, said there was a "general sense of relief and satisfaction" at the Vatican regarding the Malone statement, which he called "amicable and satisfactory."

The Pope's only public comment on the affair came on November 19 aboard the papal plane, en route to Bangladesh (cf. the 11.19.86 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*; the 11.27.86 *Progress*). Asked about a possible rift between U.S. Catholics and the Vatican, the Pope replied, "Sometimes one creates divisions that do not exist" by "talking and writing." "Our task – that of myself and the bishops of the United States – is the same, the good of the church. It is our common ministry... The American Church is part of the universal church and still wants to be a part of the universal church." When asked specifically about the Hunthausen case, the Pope said, "I know only the statement by the (bishops' conference) president, and it was correct."

Further action in the case, however, was slow in coming. Four weeks after the bishops' conference meeting, newly elected president of the conference, Archbishop John May said there were reasons to hope "that the NCCB offer may be accepted to help work out a method of restoring peace and unity to the pastoral administration of the Seattle Archdiocese" (*The Progress*, 12.8.86). In Seattle, Hunthausen reiterated his willingness to go with Wuerl to Rome to discuss the situation, if Vatican officials would extend an invitation. "That has really been the intent we've had all along," Hunthausen said (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 12.13.86). But Hunthausen acknowledged that even if the opportunity for such a trip were to develop, it could be "months away."

In the aftermath of the confrontation in Washington, Hunthausen had become a well-known figure in the culture at large and not simply in the Catholic community. For better or worse, Hunthausen would be chosen as one of *People* magazine's "25 Most Intriguing People of 1986." Hunthausen placed seventh on the list, after the Duchess of York, insider-trader Ivan Boesky, Dr. Seuss, entertainer Bette Midler, Lt. Colonel Oliver North and Nicaraguan

President Daniel Ortega.

Amid this period of waiting and newfound notoriety, came a different sort of unsettling development for Hunthausen. On December 10, he entered Providence Medical Center in Seattle for tests. Six days later Hunthausen underwent major prostatic surgery. The surgery successfully removed the tumor, which had spread in a microscopic amount into some of the lymph node tissues as well (cf. Archdiocesan news release, 12.16.86). After the surgery, Hunthausen's physicians said they expected Hunthausen to recover completely, and Maury Sheridan, director of the archdiocesan office of telecommunications, announced that Hunthausen would probably be hospitalized for 2 ½ weeks (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 12.17.86). In fact, because his convalescence went smoothly, Hunthausen left the hospital sooner than expected, on Christmas Eve. During his hospital stay (on December 22), Hunthausen received a telegram from the Pope. It read: "I have been informed of your recent operation and I wish to assure you of my fraternal solicitude for your speedy recovery. I shall remembrance (sic) you in my prayers, especially as we celebrate the mystery of the incarnate word of God" (cf. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 12.25.86).

Hunthausen returned to work in the middle of January, initially at less-than-full capacity. At the end of January, Archbishop Laghi granted an interview to the *New York Times*, which revisited certain points Hunthausen had made in his NCCB statements (see the 1.30.87 issue of the *Times*: the 90 minute interview took place at the Vatican Embassy in Washington), Laghi commented, with reference to the Hunthausen case, that Americans have a "complex of Watergate," which is reflected in an insistence on candor in judicial matters. "When something is behind the door, there is the impression that something is wrong." Laghi said that the Vatican believed more in the "principle of charity" and sensitivity to the need for privacy for those involved in an investigation. Application of this principle explained the Vatican's two-year silence concerning the case (broken by Laghi's release of the Vatican chronology in October of 1986). Issuance of the Vatican chronology, Laghi said, came at the urging of several influential American bishops, some of whom had complained that Hunthausen was being punished without a clear sense of the charges against him.

According to the *New York Times* interviewer (Joseph Berger), "Laghi seemed to acknowledge that the episode, if handled differently, might have had a less fractious outcome." Laghi was quoted as saying, "I am learning also." But in the same discussion Laghi observed that critics of the handling of the Hunthausen and (theologian Charles) Curran cases often focused on the Vatican's disciplinary procedures rather than on the doctrinal deviations that were at the heart of Rome's concern. "Our procedure, canon law procedure, does not match American procedure. But we cannot follow the procedure of a given country if we want to be a universal church."

In other remarks related to the Hunthausen case, Laghi said that the Vatican was well aware that many of the attacks on Hunthausen came from conservative groups, such as Catholics United for the Faith. Laghi resolutely denied that the Vatican had given these voices improper weight when making its assessments. Laghi also said that Hunthausen's stand on nuclear weapons had played no part in the case. Hunthausen offered no comment in response to the Laghi interview.

Less than two weeks later (February 9, 1987), Laghi issued an announcement (see document 8, below) that the Holy See had appointed an *ad hoc* commission of three American bishops to assess the situation in the Seattle Archdiocese. The two-sentence statement, which was

relayed by a spokesman for Laghi in Washington, D.C., noted that Archbishop Hunthausen had expressed his concurrence. Background information provided by the nunciature along with the statement cited the offer of the NCCB to provide “any assistance judged helpful and appropriate by the parties involved,” but referred, also, to the conference’s observation that it had no power to intervene formally on Hunthausen’s behalf. The spokesman for the nunciature who presented the statement to the press would not speculate on whether the committee’s work could lead to the restoration of Hunthausen’s power, but he said, “There is a wide scope of possible recommendations that could be made.” He also observed that, while Pope John Paul II would have the final say in the matter, the input of the committee would be significant. “When they examine the situation, they will be in a better position than anyone to make a recommendation” (*The Wanderer*, 2.19.87).

In a telephone interview from Dallas, Laghi insisted that creation of the commission did not come in response to criticism of the Vatican’s handling of the case. “This is just an assessment,” he said (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 2.10.87). “This was foreseen when he was given the auxiliary in January 1986. It’s an internal helping, an assessment.”

G.g. Conflict Functionality of the Intervening Developments (November 1986-February 1987)

After the NCCB meeting, all parties involved respond and offer interpretations of what has transpired. The first response is the standing ovation the bishops offer for their own statement, which Conference President Malone reads to the world at a televised press conference. The ovation provides symbolic “proof” of the conference’s unity. But as the statement’s contents show obliquely, and the press statements of individual bishops after the closed session show explicitly, the conference is more divided than it wants to let on. Juneau Bishop Michael Kenny’s remarks are notably disputatious. Hunthausen’s first reaction is haltingly pacific (“like any statement, it probably will not please everyone, but it is... a good statement”), but as soon as he arrives back in Seattle he restates his charge that the current situation is “unworkable” and he observes that the conflict “has the potential of causing a rift in the Church.” Still more contentiously, he highlights the bishops’ removal of the phrase “just and reasonable” from the Malone statement.

Other individual bishops offering early reactions defend the center party intervention in the local Church. Cardinal O’Connor disingenuously proclaims that the Malone statement explicitly recognizes that “the Holy See has acted very charitably and very justly” – exactly the conclusion the bishops had decided not to include in the statement. Archbishop Pilarczyk, for his part, challenges Hunthausen’s “due process” argument and provides a defense of Church juridical procedures that is similar to what Laghi argues on other occasions (see, for example, Laghi’s 1.30.87 New York Times interview). Church procedures, he argues, though distinct from the Anglo-Saxon procedures of legal justice, are fair and legitimate in their own right. Hence, we see that the immediate fallout from the NCCB debate is a willingness to take sides openly, as opposed to the more noncommittal statements that bishops issued before the debate.

Reactions coming from the Vatican show a uniform inclination to view the outcome positively: the press is invited to believe that the NCCB has sided with Rome and there is no reason for Rome to worry. Two officials who speak on the condition of anonymity pronounce the results satisfactory to Rome. Even the Pope, for the first and only time, makes specific reference to the affair. The Pope suggests that there is less to the conflict than some (apparently he means the media) would have us believe: “Sometimes one creates divisions

that do not exist” (*minimize the appearance of conflict*). The Pope emphasizes that the American Church and world Church are unified, and that the American bishops and the Pope himself share a concern for “the good of the church” (*associate self with the best interest of the Church*). In his most direct reference to the Hunthausen case, the Pope offers a comment that is puzzling and even startling. What is puzzling is the Pope’s declaration that the Malone statement is “correct.” In what sense is it correct? Is it correct as a description of the NCCB’s experience? (How would the Pope know?) Is it theologically correct? Is it functionally correct, staying within the bounds of what the conference should and should not say under the circumstances? The Pope does not elaborate. What is startling is his profession that Malone statement is all he knows about the case. Obviously this is not true. Part of the difficulty of making sense of the Pope’s statements on this occasion may lie with the way the question was formulated and later reported in press accounts. But still, it is clear that the Pope is unready to talk publicly about a conflict that is the preoccupation of a large and influential national Church and three hundred of his fellow bishops. The Pope’s strategy here is to keep silent and reserve the handling of the affair to a private forum (*secrecy*).

In an intriguing move in the other direction, however, the Pope’s nuncio in America proves himself ready to be more forthcoming and open than he has shown himself to be up to this point. Though Archbishop Laghi offers no comment in the immediate aftermath of the NCCB debate, two months later he gives an interview to the *New York Times* that is more highly personal than any of his previous communications in the affair. There Laghi admits that Hunthausen case could have been handled better (“I am learning too”). This type of frankness is more akin to Hunthausen’s usual style of first-person discourse and contrasts with the bureaucratic facelessness typical of Laghi’s “official” statements. Perhaps Laghi, observing the effectiveness of Hunthausen’s *assertion of personal identity*, seeks to counterbalance that by giving a more human face to the Vatican position? Most of Laghi’s commentary in the interview responds to specific questions Hunthausen raised in his NCCB texts (*persuasive argumentation*), but Laghi does not initiate any new attacks.

This reluctance to further escalate the conflict is not limited to Laghi. After Hunthausen’s ripostes immediately after the November meeting, he too settles into a period of nonconfrontational communication (which consists mostly in *silence* regarding the conflict), as do the American bishops in general. The period is one of stalemate, with all parties waiting to see how the Vatican will respond to the NCCB debate and the conference’s offer to help find a more workable solution in Seattle.

Hunthausen’s battle with cancer reminds all involved that Church politics is not everything. The Pope’s telegram exemplifies a *personal form of fraternal solicitude*. Hunthausen’s recovery allows the conflict handling to run its full course. Shortly after Hunthausen’s return to work, Laghi announces that the Vatican has formed a three-man commission to assess the current situation in Seattle. With this announcement the Vatican signals its readiness to engage in a new form of *problem solving*. The announcement also serves as an implicit acknowledgment that the Vatican takes seriously Hunthausen’s complaints and sees value in the NCCB’s offer of assistance.

8.1 Document Number: 8

Laghi Announcement of Commission Appointment (2.9.87)

Source: *The Progress*, February 12, 1987.

8.1.1 Summary of Contents:

Here is the full text of the statement:

The Holy See has appointed an *ad hoc* commission composed of Cardinals Joseph Bernardin and John O'Connor and Archbishop John Quinn to assess the current situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen has expressed his concurrence.

8.1.2 Conflict Functionality of the Laghi Announcement of Commission Appointment

Laghi's announcement marks a turning point in the conflict communication. It comes in the midst of a *stalemate* and signals the possibility of *de-escalation*. Laghi, however, avoids suggesting that the Vatican is committed to any particular course of action. Thus, the announcement is minimalistic: it is short and businesslike in tone.

In terms of content, the key items are the composition of the commission itself and the indication of Hunthausen's concurrence. Most observers at the time characterize the make-up of the commission as promising for Hunthausen. Quinn was considered to be rather progressive in Church matters, much in the way of Hunthausen. Bernardin was viewed as more of a moderate than a progressive, but nonetheless one who would have sympathy for Hunthausen. Only O'Connor was thought to be too strongly in Rome's camp to side with Hunthausen. The indication of Hunthausen's concurrence suggested that he, too, could imagine the commission's involvement as having favorable consequences.

Two word choices in particular stand out: "assess" and "situation." Both bespeak neutrality. "Assess" lacks the threatening finality of "judge," and "situation" sounds less worrisome than "conflict." But a conflict it was, and Hunthausen and his supporters were well aware that an assessment could bring unwanted outcomes. As proof of this, Hunthausen supporters needed only recall the statement of Archbishop Hickey's secretary, Fr. Maurice Fox, at the time of the visitation. Fr. Fox announced that Hickey "was not given any specific agenda or area of concern" but was rather given only a general mandate to "assess the situation" and report his findings back to the Holy See (*The Progress*, 11.3.83).

H. Intervening Developments (February-May 1987)

Following the announcement of the commission appointment, Hunthausen offered no comment and Archdiocesan spokesman Russ Scarce said, "We're not saying anything" (*Seattle Times*, 2.9.87). The timing of the announcement coincided with a gathering of most of the American bishops in Dallas, Texas for a workshop on medical ethics. Another topic of discussion at that gathering was the forthcoming visit of the Pope to the U.S., in September. It was not lost on observers that the bishops had incentive to bring the Seattle situation to a less volatile state prior to the Pope's arrival.

On February 10, Bernardin, O'Connor and Quinn issued a joint statement, saying that they had been notified of their appointment in a January 26 letter from Archbishop Laghi. The commission members noted that the formation of the commission was in keeping with a longstanding plan of the Vatican. The assessment "was envisioned by the Holy See and agreed to by Archbishop Hunthausen when the auxiliary, Bishop Wuerl, was appointed more than a year ago." The work of assessment was already underway. "We initiated our task in Dallas and will make our report to the Holy See when it has been completed." (The commission report, document 9, below, says that Hunthausen and Wuerl met with the commission in the presence of the pro-nuncio on the morning of February 10 in Dallas. Further meetings, without Laghi, took place between the commission and the Seattle bishops that same afternoon and evening. See also the 2.20.87 *National Catholic Reporter*.) The

commission added in its press announcement that there would be “no further public statement” (*The Progress*, 2.12.87).

Taking the discussion of the case in a somewhat different direction, but only adding to the intrigue, was a 2.13.87 report that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had kept a file on Hunthausen and on another well-known “peace bishop,” Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit (cf. the *National Catholic Reporter*, 2.13, 2.20 and 2.27.87). The *National Catholic Reporter* had filed a request for information from the FBI under the federal Freedom of Information Act and thereafter reported on the materials that had been released. Not everything in the bishops’ files was made public. The majority (the great majority in Gumbleton’s case, where only 26 pages were provided and 129 were held back) of items in the files were not released by the agency, for security and confidentiality reasons. According to the FBI declaration, the file on Hunthausen contained 10 pages in total, four of which were turned over for inspection. The four pages given over consisted of two newspaper articles on Hunthausen’s activity of resistance to the use of nuclear weapons. The first was a 3.1.83 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article on a U.S.-Soviet cultural exchange in which Hunthausen was briefly mentioned. It attributed to Hunthausen a statement that nuclear weapons are immoral, even as a deterrent. The second was a 5.8.69 article in the *Montana Standard*. It concerned Catholic priests who were criticizing the installation of antiballistic missiles in Montana. Hunthausen was bishop of Helena, Montana at that time. An FBI statement said that the files on the two bishops were “cross-reference files,” which are kept on individuals who are not necessarily under investigation but whose names appear in connection with other investigations. (A subsequent *National Catholic Reporter* article, 4.3.87, would reveal that U.S. Naval Intelligence also kept a file on Hunthausen. This file focused on Hunthausen’s planned participation in a June, 1982 anti-nuclear submarine demonstration in Puget Sound and included a 6.8.82 article of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* describing Hunthausen’s plans.)

Upon learning of the FBI’s monitoring of his activity, Hunthausen said he was “surprised and concerned” that the FBI would feel compelled to “keep records on occasions or events when I simply exercise my right as a citizen to speak on public issues.” In the context of Hunthausen’s conflict with the Vatican, news of the FBI file furthered speculation that the Vatican action against Hunthausen was somehow related to Reagan administration displeasure with Hunthausen’s peace activism. This theory had been previously voiced in a number of forums (cf., for example, Colman McCarthy’s nationally syndicated column in the 11.18.86 *Seattle Times*, and Shelby Scates’ column in the 9.7.86 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*). The *Seattle Weekly*, in its 1.13.87 issue, framed the speculation this way:

Conspiracy theorists note that the same Archbishop Laghi who implemented the pope’s discipline is the Vatican’s first-ever delegate to the U.S. [sic: actually, Laghi was the first to have the status of an ambassador; apostolic delegates had previously represented the Vatican in the U.S.], sent when the Reagan administration and the Vatican established formal diplomatic relations in 1984. They figure that reining in the tax-resisting archbishop was part of a quid pro quo for those formal ties. Laghi’s statement that “at no time did the Holy See pursue with Archbishop Hunthausen the criticisms it received on controversial issues, e.g., nuclear weapons and the payment of taxes,” is accordingly taken as evidence that the opposite must be true.

Was it possible that churchmen were “protesting too much” when they said that the visitation had nothing to do with Hunthausen’s stand on nuclear arms and the payment of taxes? Throughout the conflict, the Vatican position on this issue remained consistent. On November 2, 1983 the apostolic visitator, Archbishop Hickey, said explicitly that the visitation had nothing to do with this issue. Then Laghi reaffirmed this in the Vatican chronology and in his *New York Times* interview, and Bishop Wuerl did so as well in 1987, when he was quoted as

saying, “In none of the concerns listed at any point by the Holy See was the archbishop’s political activity ever mentioned. Matters of Church teaching and practice were the only things indicated” (*Pittsburgh Catholic*, 6.19.87). (Perhaps most notably, the 9.30.85 Ratzinger letter makes no mention of Hunthausen’s stand on nuclear weapons.)

In the absence of any conclusive proof for this “conspiracy theory,” news of the FBI file on Hunthausen at least provided food for thought by supplying evidence of the government’s interest in Hunthausen’s activity. Still missing, however, was evidence that the Holy See would be willing to cut a deal to pressure one of its own bishops in exchange for favors from the U.S. government.

Another version of the conspiracy theory held that persons in the Seattle archdiocese who were unhappy with Hunthausen for political reasons sought to attack him on other grounds that were more telling for the Vatican: i.e., doctrinal and pastoral issues. Though its population was politically liberal in many respects, the Puget Sound area was also home to a number of key military bases (including the nuclear submarine base at Bangor, of course, but also including major installations such as the Ft. Lewis Army base and McChord Air Force base) and was a good example of the military-industrial economy at work, with military contractor Boeing being the most prominent local employer. Thus, any number of persons would have reason to be unhappy with Hunthausen’s challenge to stop building and deploying weapons that were not only part and parcel of the nation’s security strategy but also the source of paychecks to tens of thousands of local citizens. This theory may have been more plausible, and certainly was being discussed as the controversy continued, but again it seemed to result more from speculation than from hard evidence that emerged at the time.

Within days after meeting with the assessment commission in Dallas, Bishop Wuerl was in Rome, where he met privately with Pope John Paul II (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 2.17.87). The fifteen-minute audience, in the Pope’s study overlooking St. Peter’s Square, came in the midst of a week Wuerl spent in Rome to carry out a study of the North American College. This task was in keeping with Wuerl’s Vatican-assigned participation in an assessment of the state of American seminaries. Though many press accounts wondered whether the visit might have some special significance for the situation in Seattle, Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls called Wuerl’s meeting with the Pope “routine.” Wuerl declined comment.

In Seattle, Hunthausen’s supporters continued their activism on his behalf. A favored activity was sending letters to influential members of the hierarchy. The Seattle-based groups Concerned Catholics and Catholic Network Northwest circulated lists of addresses for key American bishops, the pro-nuncio, and heads of Vatican congregations, along with suggestions of possible topics to be taken up in the letters. The same tactic had been and continued to be practiced by groups opposing Hunthausen as well. (This tactic for applying pressure on Church leaders is discussed in Reese 1996, 252-253 and Reese 1989, 332-334. Many copies of letters sent to American bishops and Vatican officials, and the actual letters received in response, are contained in the Wasden Price collection.) On the national level, a Hyattsville, Maryland group called Catholics Speak Out lobbied for reinstatement of Hunthausen’s powers. One of its tactics was to release a petition in a full-page advertisement in the 1.9.87 *National Catholic Reporter*. Critics of Hunthausen (prominent among them being Erven Park, editor of the newsletter, *The Catholic Truth*, and William Gaffney, president of the local chapter of *Catholics United for the Faith*), meanwhile, complained that thus far the visitation and presence of Bishop Wuerl had done little to correct abuses within the local Church (*Seattle Times*, 3.14.87).

Behind the scenes, the Vatican-appointed commission carried on with its work of assessment (See the commission report; the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 3.9.87; *The Progress*, 3.12.87). On March 6-7, 1987 the commission interviewed a select group of archdiocesan leaders and Northwest bishops at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California. This group was comprised of eight bishops, seven members of the Archdiocesan Board of (Priest) Consultors and five members of the archdiocesan staff. The commission interviewed the invitees separately, for at least thirty minutes each. The bishops interviewed were Archbishop Levada (Portland, OR), Archbishop Power (retired, Portland, OR), Bishop Connolly (Baker, OR), Bishop Treinen (Boise, ID), Bishop Curtiss (Helena, MT), Bishop Murphy (Great Falls-Billings, MT), Bishop Schuster (retired, Great Falls-Billings, MT) and Bishop Skylstad (Yakima, WA). The priests interviewed, who held the status of priest consultor in the archdiocese, were Revs. Anthony Domandich, Richard Hayatsu, Joseph Kramis, James Mallahan, Theodore Marmo, Gerald Stanley and William Treacy. The archdiocesan staff members interviewed were Rev. Michael McDermott, archdiocesan director of administration; Rev. Michael G. Ryan, chancellor and vicar general; Rev. David Jaeger, director of seminarians; Patrick Sursely, associate director of administration; and Ned Dolejsi, director of faith and community development.

After the gathering, Revs. Stanley, Treacy and McDermott described their interview experience in positive terms. Fr. McDermott said the meetings were "very pleasant, helpful and hopeful." In McDermott's recounting, the commission members emphasized that they were making an assessment of Seattle "at this moment" and were not in any sense resuming the process of apostolic visitation. According to Mr. Sursely, the commission members left the impression that they did not foresee a need to make a personal visit to Seattle. Sursely noted that, while the interviewees had not been sworn to secrecy, they had agreed among themselves not to discuss specifics of their conversations with the commission in order to "respect the process and allow the commission the freedom needed to do its work."

Standing out by reason of his absence at the Menlo Park gathering was Bishop Wuerl, who was not asked to participate. (The reason is unclear.) But on March 12, Wuerl and Hunthausen met individually with the commission and the pro-nuncio in Chicago. (Again, none of the participants commented on the meeting.) Shortly thereafter, the members of the commission, together with several other American bishops, travelled to Rome for meetings (March 18-21) with the Pope and leaders of key Vatican congregations in preparation for the Pope's forthcoming U.S. visit (*Origins*, 4.2.87). The Hunthausen case was reportedly not on the agenda.

The commission report also tells us of subsequent consultations the commission pursued in the course of its assessment. On March 19, Archbishop Quinn interviewed Fr. William Lane. Lane was an archdiocesan consultor who was not present at the Menlo Park gathering. Then Quinn and Bernardin met with Archbishop Hickey on March 25 in Washington, D.C. On March 29, Quinn met with (Anchorage Archbishop) Hurley and on March 31 Quinn met with Hurley and Juneau bishop Kenny.

The assessment process for the two succeeding months (according to the commission report) was as follows:

During the entire month of April and into the month of May, a number of visits and telephone conversations, as well as an exchange of letters with individuals who had previously been interviewed took place. In addition Archbishop Hunthausen met with the Commission in Chicago on April 8, 1987.

Since then the Commission has been in continuing contact with the Archbishop by telephone.

The commission also studied voluminous documentation, all of which was available to Archbishop Hunthausen and Bishop Wuerl.

Between the announcement of the commission's formation in February and the early part of April, little news came forth in the case. Then, on April 15 (in its issue dated 4.19.87), the *National Catholic Register* (a Catholic weekly that was a conservative alternative to the *National Catholic Reporter*) published a lead story declaring that, "according to highly placed sources," Wuerl was about to be reassigned to another diocese. Hunthausen's would be retired from office after a face-saving grace period in which his powers would be fully restored. Thereafter a new ordinary would be appointed "with an eye to calming hostilities between those who support Hunthausen and others who saw Wuerl's arrival as a welcome attempt at restoring order and direction" to the local Church.

The first official reaction (*Seattle Times*, 4.15.87) from the archdiocese came from public affairs director Russ Scearce. "It is a speculative story and we do not have a comment." He added, however, "This is not the kind of news we were hoping to receive during Holy Week." Increasing the plausibility of the *Register* report was the fact that Hunthausen had met with the commission the previous week, on April 8, in Chicago. Also, unnamed sources at the chancery described Hunthausen as appearing burdened of late and they noted that he had spent the weekend praying and consulting with trusted advisers. Archdiocesan Vicar General and Chancellor Michael G. Ryan immediately sent a letter to the priests of the archdiocese, which was released simultaneously to the press, that urged the priests to "disregard the *National Catholic Register* article, because not only is it speculative; it is incorrect (*Origins*, 4.30.87). The information that formed the basis of the article was apparently leaked to the reporter by an uninformed and irresponsible party in Rome or Washington, D.C...." Ryan went on to "assure" his readers that "the Archbishop has not been asked to retire or resign, nor are any 'deals' being made in that direction." Ryan also suggested that the story may have been intended as a sort of "trial balloon" to test acceptance among the U.S. bishops of a solution forcing Hunthausen's early retirement; or, conversely, it might have been meant to head off a commission proposal to restore Hunthausen's full authority (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4.17.87; *Seattle Weekly*, 5.5.87).

The reaction among Hunthausen supporters in the archdiocese was to organize quickly to voice their strong disapproval of the sort of resolution suggested by the *Register* article. In the first days after the story emerged, groups of priests, nuns and laypersons met separately within the archdiocese to formulate and express their concerns. According to Fr. David Jaeger, archdiocesan director of seminarians, many Hunthausen supporters had been kept silent in the recent past for fear that speaking out would only damage the prospects for a favorable outcome. But now in the face of a near-at-hand, possibly unacceptable outcome, many felt compelled to speak out forcibly. Jaeger himself offered some of the most contentious comments. He said, "This is a call for help. Do not let the Holy See do something that is going to do damage to the Catholic Church here and beyond. Stop them." Jaeger went on to say that "loyalty means more than consenting to something that is wrong" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4.21.87).

On April 20, priests of the archdiocese gathered at St. Paul parish in Seattle to prepare a statement of support for Hunthausen (*The Progress*, 4.23.87; 4.30.87; *Origins*, 4.30.87). The statement affirmed the priests' conviction that Hunthausen was a "faithful and orthodox teacher of the Catholic faith" and it condemned the Vatican action against Hunthausen. Hunthausen, in the priests' view, had been "evaluated improperly, inadequately, and

unjustly.” The priests characterized the “remedies” applied to Hunthausen as having “all but been forced upon him through a form of moral persuasion based more on coercion than on evangelical obedience.” The statement closed with a plea for the full reinstatement of Hunthausen’s powers. (Eventually the statement would be signed by 150 of the 179 archdiocesan priests in active service at the time. It was published with the names of the priest signers in the 5.14.87 *Progress*.) On April 21, the archdiocesan Sisters’ Council prepared a similar statement of support. The text from the sisters observed that “witnessing such scandalous actions against a highly respected prelate causes doubts and questions about the Catholic Church’s commitment to living out its own principles and pronouncements about justice.” The statement speculated that it might take “more than a generation” to overcome the confusion and divisions which had arisen because of the present arrangement. As in the priests’ statement, the sisters (328 of approximately 500 active sisters signed it) called for full restoration of Hunthausen’s powers.

The *Register* article proved to be by no means the final word of speculation about how the Hunthausen case would be resolved. The 4.24.87 edition of the *National Catholic Reporter* challenged the Register’s information and declared that, in fact, an alternate kind of resolution was in the making. According to the *NC Reporter*’s own sources, the assessment commission had proposed a solution to Rome which had been accepted after the Pope had amended it. The agreed-upon solution involved no expectation that Hunthausen would retire early. Rather, the sticking point was the determination of the commission (and Rome) that a coadjutor archbishop be appointed to assist Hunthausen. While the coadjutor would have no special powers (these would be fully restored to Hunthausen), he would have the right of succession once Hunthausen did finally retire.

The *NC Reporter*’s sources said that

Hunthausen was taken aback and would not agree to the proposed compromise during his meeting with Bernardin in Chicago. The commission members are irritated, even angered, by what they perceive to be Hunthausen’s recalcitrance, the sources said. Though neither side is altogether happy with the compromise plan, sources said, it is the only way Hunthausen will be able to stay on as archbishop of Seattle. If he rejects the compromise, Rome will appoint an administrator and ask Hunthausen to step down, the sources said.

The 4.25.87 *New York Times*, citing “several Roman Catholic officials,” also reported that a solution featuring the appointment of a coadjutor with right of succession was in the works. As in the *NC Reporter* version, Wuerl would be reassigned and Hunthausen’s full powers would be restored. But, the *Times* pointed out, the plan for the coadjutor had “not been fully approved by the top Vatican officials.” And, it was “unclear whether the plan was a harsher or more lenient measure against Archbishop Hunthausen than the ones taken against him in 1985 and 1986.” The *Times* characterized the plan on the table as a “compromise.” Whereas it would meet Hunthausen’s goal of having his own power fully restored, the placement of a coadjutor would nonetheless provide a means for the Vatican to “maintain some control over the archdiocese.” A new detail which cropped up in the *Times* account was word that Hunthausen was pressing for the right to decide whom the coadjutor would be, a request that the commission was not willing to grant.

On May 8, in an interview with the National Catholic News Service at the apostolic nunciature, Pro-Nuncio Laghi said he hoped the Seattle controversy would come to a conclusion soon (*The Progress*, 5.14.87). “I am the first one to hope there will be some reconciliation, but reconciliation without compromising” on principles, he said. Laghi stated

that he expected the *ad hoc* commission to give its assessment soon and possibly make a recommendation. Implementation of the recommendation would depend on the approval of both Rome and Hunthausen.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere in Seattle was thick with expectation (*National Catholic Reporter*, 5.8.87). There appeared to be “no other issue, no other concern in the Catholic church save for resolution of the Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen affair.”

There is a feeling in western Washington that the end may be near. News reporters covering the story have cancelled scheduled trips out of town. A few from distant cities are prepared to fly into Seattle. Church people are staying close to home, too. They say they want to be here if and when something happens.

No account of the commission negotiations with Hunthausen has ever been issued by any of the direct participants. The most comprehensive record of the hidden proceedings comes from Briggs (1992, 337-341). As Briggs tells it, negotiations between Hunthausen and the commission broke down in the second half of April and first week of May. The solution proposed by the commission would restore full power to Hunthausen but would also require him to accept a coadjutor archbishop with right of succession. Moreover, it meant accepting the commission’s report on the state of the archdiocese. But Hunthausen was reluctant to accept this solution because agreeing to a coadjutor would be a tacit admission that Seattle needed Rome’s help to correct problems locally; and he disapproved, too, of the sharply critical tone of the preliminary draft of the commission report.

Under the provisions spelled out by Cardinal Bernardin, the archbishop would have partial control over the selection of a coadjutor. The three names normally forwarded by Rome by the papal pro-nuncio, Archbishop Laghi, would be approved by the archbishop. That did not mean he would pick all three, only that he go along with whatever names made the final cut.

...[Hunthausen] forwarded to the commission three preferences of his own: Bishop Michael H. Kenny of Juneau, Archbishop Francis T. Hurley of Anchorage, and Bishop William S. Skylstad of Yakima. The commission scratched Bishop Kenny as too much a liberal in the Hunthausen mold. Archbishop Hurley was crossed off because, according to church protocol, the move to coadjutor would be considered a demotion for someone already an archbishop. That left Bishop Skylstad. After much jockeying, the commission agreed to submit two names, Bishop Skylstad, of the archbishop’s choosing, and Bishop Thomas J. Murphy of Great Falls-Billings, Montana, a man the archbishop liked and respected but had some immediate qualms about placing in that role...

The commission had also considered criticisms of its first evaluation and was busy revising it to rectify the tough-minded quality imparted to it by Cardinal O’Connor...

[....]

By the first days of May, the tension between the archbishop and the commission was at the breaking point. The archbishop remained adamant that his acceptance of a coadjutor was contingent on his choice of both nominees. The commission refused to back down from its offer. At this point, the four of them were wearing down each other’s nerves daily during long, gruelling conference calls.

[....]

Though the settlement seemed rational, even generous, to [the commission] and the Vatican, it did not strike the archbishop that way. As the commission tried to seal the deal, an exasperated archbishop threatened to go over their heads by flying straight to Rome, only to have the Vatican put the kibosh on his plans. There would be no meeting with the pope or top Vatican officials, they informed him, without what amounted to a signed confession and a pledge to mend his ways.

[....]

Alarm was growing on both sides. But from the commission’s perspective, the jittery impasse could not go on much longer. What resulted amounted to an ultimatum: accept the assignment of a coadjutor, agree to submit the names of Skylstad and Murphy, and go along with a final, revised assessment. He held out for the choice of both names. Without agreement, the settlement talks would break off. The consequences appeared dire. Archbishop Hunthausen would be forced by the Vatican to leave the archdiocese.

On May 4, all indications were that Archbishop Hunthausen would reject the package and, in effect, quit.

But on May 7, the archbishop “accepted that which he had nearly spurned.” Briggs, citing the reports of persons close to Hunthausen, attributes this turnabout to Hunthausen’s belief that he owed it to the Church of Seattle and to his loyal backers to stay on. More fundamentally, doing so was “God’s will as he understood it.” Briggs also notes the contribution of a “skilled lay intermediary” (unnamed), who played a crucial role in helping Hunthausen sort out the issues and make peace with the commission’s proposal. “With the archbishop’s acceptance in hand, the commission scheduled a trip to the Vatican to talk it over and nail down additional details.”

The first official declaration that a decision in the case was imminent came on May 21 (cf. *National Catholic News Service* bulletin, 5.21.87). In a press conference at the Vatican, Cardinal Bernardin reported that the commission had met with Vatican officials (of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for Bishops – cf. the *National Catholic Reporter*, 6.5.87) and with Archbishop Laghi on May 19-20. An audience with the Pope took place on May 20. During these meetings, which Bernardin described as a “positive exchange,” the commission delivered its assessment of the Seattle situation. Bernardin said: “We came over to present our report and in due time the Holy See will be making its recommendation. They are reflecting on it now. Our specific mandate was to assess the situation and present a recommendation, and that is what we did.” Later that same day (May 21), the Pope agreed to the commission’s recommended solution. The *National Catholic Reporter* (6.5.87) quoted him as saying to the commission: “If this is the way you want to do it, then this is the way we will do it.” (Briggs 1992, 341 reports that Cardinal Ratzinger was more reluctant to endorse the plan.)

The commission’s assessment report to the Vatican was dated May 20, 1987. The commission and pro-nuncio left Rome with instructions to implement the plan. Thereafter, the commission prepared a cover letter, dated May 25, 1987, to accompany the release of their report to the American bishops and to the press. Also included in the packet was a copy of the 9.30.85 letter from Cardinal Ratzinger to Hunthausen detailing the visitation conclusions, which the Vatican had authorized for release.

In the cover letter accompanying their report, the three bishops observed that on January 26, 1987 they had been appointed by the Holy See to “assess the current situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle” and that they had also been “invited to suggest a plan for resolving the difficulty.” This task was now completed and “the Holy See has made its decision based substantially on the proposal we submitted.” The letter then summarized the commission’s main recommendations:

- (1) that full faculties be restored to Archbishop Hunthausen;
- (2) that he be given a Coadjutor to assist him in carrying out the provisions of the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (enclosed);
- (3) that our Commission continue to assist him in fulfilling this responsibility during the course of the next year.

Hunthausen released the commission report at a 45-minute press conference in Seattle on May 27, 1987, his first formal meeting with reporters since November of 1986. Alongside Hunthausen at the press conference was newly appointed Coadjutor Archbishop, Thomas Murphy. (Murphy had been notified of his appointment on May 23.) Both bishops took

reporters questions. Up to that time Murphy had been serving as bishop of Great Falls-Billings, Montana. (Hunthausen had met with Murphy in Great Falls on May 26.) Auxiliary Bishop Wuerl was not present at the news conference but did release a written statement. (Wuerl did conduct at least one individual interview on May 27, with the National Catholic News Service. See *Origins*, 6.4.87) Hunthausen and Murphy also released written statements at the press conference.

H.h. Conflict Functionality of the Intervening Developments (February-May 1987)

From the time of the commission appointment to the release of the commission report, the conflict handling activity of center, periphery and primary third party (the commission) stays mostly invisible. More easily observed is the activity of Hunthausen supporters and critics who are not part of the hierarchy. While the bishops attempt to hammer out a new accord in secret, other concerned parties pressure the decision makers to come to an agreement that is in keeping with their own interests.

Rome's appointment of the commission accomplishes several things at once. First, it pushes the parties beyond the impasse resulting from the NCCB debate by providing an alternate (once again *secretive*) avenue for conflict handling. Second, it places a new third party in the critical intermediary position of the conflict handling. The commission effectively displaces the NCCB itself, replacing it with a small body that symbolically represents the conference (Bernardin, O'Connor and Quinn are recognized leaders of the conference and recognized representatives of a cross-section of Church-political viewpoints). But now, instead of dealing with the entire conference, Rome is able to engage a much smaller group of its own choosing, according to a mission that Rome has determined. Third, it allows the pro-nuncio to take a *step back* (partially *withdraw*) from direct negotiations with Hunthausen. If the power-sharing arrangement with Wuerl was "unworkable," the same might be said of Hunthausen's bargaining with Laghi, following the misunderstanding about the faculties and their exchange of criticisms.

The decision to appoint the commission shows us that Rome agrees with the judgment that the current arrangement in Seattle is not working. (Wuerl's difficult relationship with the priests of the archdiocese is the strongest evidence of this.) If it had been working better – and if the public outcry had been less, Rome might simply have told the bishops and the local Church to learn to accept the decisions that had already been made. The commission appointment also signals Rome's intention to be sensitive to Hunthausen's preferences. Hunthausen could rightly perceive that Bernardin and especially Quinn would be sympathetic to his position, given their moderate (Church) politics and pastoral sensitivities (cf. the *Seattle Weekly*, 5.5.87). From the outside, the make-up of the commission hints of no intention by Rome to "crack down" on Hunthausen. One could almost argue the opposite. Given that, the Holy See's creation of the commission shows a *flexibility* on the part of Rome and a genuine interest in *problem solving*, and it suggests that Rome's primary need in the conflict is not simply to demonstrate its power to make Hunthausen submit to centralized control.

For Hunthausen, the establishment of the assessment commission is a promising sign but not unequivocally so. Though the composition of the commission could be more threatening, the commission's reason to be comes from Rome, and ultimately the commission will submit its recommendation to Rome and seek Rome's stamp of approval. Moreover, with the introduction of the commission, the conflict negotiations now return officially to a private forum, where Hunthausen's success in pursuing his own objectives has been mixed. Hunthausen offers no public comment about the commission itself.

The apostolic commission has the least to lose in the conflict handling. While a successful resolution brings enhanced prospects for future remuneration (more influence in Rome, perhaps a cardinal's hat for Quinn), failure can likely be blamed on intransigence from Hunthausen, and at worst probably brings only a loss of prestige and influence. For Hunthausen, the optimal outcome is a complete restoration of authority, with no threats to that in sight (other bishops who might potentially encroach upon his power). Less palatable options are regaining power, but with conditions (as in the appointment of a coadjutor with right of succession) or leaving office, either through resignation or forced retirement. Hunthausen must consider not only the consequences to his own person if he leaves office, but also to the local Church (turmoil, probably, but also freer reign for Rome to impose its own style of pastoral leadership locally and the likely removal of Hunthausen friends from leadership posts). For Rome, the most desirable outcome is to have Hunthausen accept, in appearance and in fact, Rome's vision for the future of the local Church. But since Hunthausen seems not to share that vision on the level of specifics of governance, the Holy See faces a choice between making Hunthausen back down and backing down itself. By making Hunthausen back down, it "wins" the administrative conformity issue and shows that it is in charge, but it loses the public relations battle with a large sector of the Church (including the target archdiocese) and likely stirs further unrest and confrontation. By backing down itself, Rome admits that it is not all-powerful and must retreat in a confrontation with one of its own bishops, but it comes out better on the public relations front and avoids further controversy in this corner of the Church.

Once the commission's work is underway, both the Vatican and Hunthausen remain tight-lipped in public. Archbishop Laghi meets with Hunthausen, Wuerl and the commission on at least two occasions early on, but most of the commission's work involves exchanges with Hunthausen, Wuerl and other parties. The practical challenge for the commission is as follows. To appease the Vatican it needs to find a mechanism for addressing the pastoral problems (a means for monitoring and correcting abuses) in Seattle, while quieting the public outcry there and elsewhere. To appease Hunthausen it needs to restore his power and remove Wuerl (not necessarily because Hunthausen has personal difficulties with Wuerl, but because Wuerl is unavoidably linked in people's minds to the unwanted Vatican intervention).

In the course of seeking a new arrangement agreeable to both parties, certain questions are more easily resolved than others. Apparently, there is no disagreement about moving Wuerl (even Wuerl himself later admits that the situation were "unworkable" once his faculties became known – see section I, subsequent developments). There also seems to be little disagreement about the restoration of full decision-making power to Hunthausen. Hunthausen insists on this, and it appears the Vatican is open to the possibility. The sticking point is how Rome – at a minimum symbolically, but preferably in effective practical ways as well – will maintain its own control over the local Church while exiting the conflict gracefully.

The commission's coadjutor plan offers a creative resolution to this difficulty. It offers to Hunthausen the restoration of his power (no special faculties are involved) and the removal of Wuerl. To Rome it offers a means for establishing tighter control over the archdiocese in the future: by appointing someone of its own choosing, by having that person in office alongside Hunthausen, and by having that person inherit the position of ordinary once Hunthausen retires. It also offers to Rome the face-saving advantage of replacing one "helper" bishop with another (who has the potential to be more easily accepted). Thus, Rome shows it has not beaten a complete retreat: it retains control.

For Hunthausen, there are several problems with the coadjutor solution. First, as a matter of appearances, a coadjutor appointment is worse than an auxiliary appointment, since auxiliaries normally come as a reward to a bishop, but a coadjutor appointment often signals leadership trouble in a diocese. Second, a coadjutor has right of succession, which gives the appointment long-term implications. Third, Hunthausen has just had a bad experience with an assistant bishop, one in which the arrangement turned out to be other than expected. Could the same situation recur? Finally, and perhaps most crucial of all: Who will the person be? If Hunthausen must, for the Vatican, have a bishop serve alongside him, Hunthausen wants the right to decide who he is. The most difficult questions in Hunthausen's negotiations with the commission appear to concern whether it is necessary for another bishop to come to Seattle, and if so, whether Hunthausen will be able to guarantee for himself that it will be someone he finds compatible.

The Briggs account gives us a glimpse of the exchange of arguments (*persuasive argumentation*) that occurs behind the scenes. A key tactic the commission employs is to give Hunthausen freedom of choice within a predetermined range. Hence, he is allowed to give input into the selection of a coadjutor by forwarding names and "approving" the final selection of names to be sent to Rome. But the impact of Hunthausen's contribution is minimalized, since two of the three names he proposes (Hurley and Kenny) are rejected before submission to Rome and the final name (Skylstad) is rejected in Rome. Though Hunthausen agrees to submit Murphy's name, he does so only under (*social*) *pressure* and after first *resisting*.

The hidden negotiations reproduce the pattern of earlier conflict developments. *Contention* by both parties (Hunthausen's resistance, the commission's insistence) escalates the conflict until a *stalemate* is reached. The stalemate is broken when one party (Hunthausen) *yields*. *Settlement* (agreement) follows. A difference, however, is that, following the more open conflict handling of the NCCB debate, Rome yielded to break the stalemate. Here, however, in much more private negotiations, Hunthausen yields.

The commission is not inflexible. According to Briggs, it meets Hunthausen's request (*yields*) by toning down the language (*face saving*) of the assessment report somewhat (though obviously not to Hunthausen's satisfaction, since he later criticizes the report). And while Murphy is not one of the choices that Hunthausen himself advances for coadjutor, his naming shows willingness by the commission to find someone reasonably acceptable to Hunthausen. On the other hand, in the face of resistance from Hunthausen, the commission shows it can also stand firm, and increase the pressure on Hunthausen as necessary. Eventually Hunthausen is left with a take-it-or-leave-it offer: accept the submission of the two names and the commission's assessment or be prepared to step down.

When Hunthausen expresses the intention (*threat*) to fly to Rome to deal directly with the Holy See, it becomes clear that Rome is ready to back up the decision-making authority of the commission. Rome refuses to grant permission for Hunthausen to come unless he meets certain conditions (in effect: gives in completely) first. This is a pronounced example of *territorial control* by the Vatican. The doctrinal or legal basis for the Holy See's *refusal to grant* to a fellow bishop *access* to the Pope and the Vatican bureaucracy is unknown. (Note on the question of territorial control. It is striking that the commission never visits Seattle during its assessment. The assessment information gathering and negotiations take place almost exclusively on what might be described as *neutral territory*: that is, not in Seattle, but not in

Rome either.)

The key to Hunthausen's decision to yield appears to be his perception that no better outcome can be obtained otherwise. Since he does not have the option of bypassing the commission's authority with an appeal to Rome, his only options are to further escalate the conflict by taking his complaints to the press (likely consequence: removal from office and chaos in the local Church), step down without protest (likely consequence: chaos in the local Church), or give in and make the best of the commission solution (likely consequence: personal dissatisfaction but the possibility of returning conditions to normal in the archdiocese in the near future). Hunthausen chooses to submit rather than rejuvenate the conflict.

The seal of secrecy put on the conflict negotiations between Hunthausen and the commission proves to be not inviolable. The April 15 story in the *National Catholic Register* (declaring that Wuerl would leave and Hunthausen would be retired after a face-saving period of restoration of power) shows that some person familiar with the negotiations was willing to go to the press to influence public discussion of the case. On behalf of the archdiocese, Fr. Michael G. Ryan denies the story. He also suggests that the story may have been put forth as a "trial balloon," to see how American bishops would react to the prospect of Hunthausen retiring early or, alternatively, to try to raise protest against the possibility that Hunthausen's powers would be fully restored. This concept of the leak as a "trial balloon" is plausible, but we lack evidence to ascertain the specific intention(s) behind the leak.

The *Register* leak does not prove to be the last. Quickly, in answer, news stories with inside information appear in the April 24 *National Catholic Reporter* and the April 25 *New York Times*. Again, the source of the leaks is unknown, but there is little room for doubt that the leaks constitute intentional efforts to influence the public debate by controlling the flow of information. One more notable example of this is the apparently autonomous action on the part of the *National Catholic Reporter* to inquire about and then report on the FBI's surveillance of Hunthausen's peace activism. The *NC Reporter* never made a secret of its support for Hunthausen, and this sidelight investigation and report appears to be an attempt to generate support for him by winning him sympathy. Probably, too, it is the product of a genuine curiosity about possible ties between the Vatican and the Reagan White House.

The public debate fueled by the news media places a continuous pressure on the conflict handling. So, too, do letter-writing campaigns to members of the hierarchy carried out by Hunthausen supporters and opponents. And finally, there is the impending pastoral visit of the Pope: at the start of May it is only four months ahead. It is not surprising that the conflict negotiations come down to an ultimatum.

By agreeing to the commission's proposal, Hunthausen accepts a *compromise*. Though he does not get everything he wants, and he remains frustrated, he nonetheless finds himself in a significantly improved position at the end of May, 1987: he has the final word in his archdiocese again, and he has an assistant bishop in place who is more familiar to Hunthausen and more likely to be effective than his predecessor. The commission has reason to be pleased, or at least relieved, that agreement has been reached. It has achieved its most important objective of getting an agreement in timely fashion that avoids further escalation of the conflict and that offers face-saving for both sides. The Vatican, too, has reason to be satisfied. Though it is doubtful that Hunthausen's pastoral vision is significantly more "Roman" than it was prior to the conflict (the opposite may even be true), it has at least established greater control over the archdiocese and has sent a strong signal of its expectations

to the American Church. Most importantly of late, it has removed itself from a conflict that was quickly becoming more costly than it was worth.

With the press conference announcing implementation of the commission solution, the principal parties share with the public the details of the plan they have worked out in private.

8.2 Document Number: 9

Assessment Commission Report (5.20.87)

Source: *The Progress*, 5/28/87, pp. 3-4; *Origins*, 6/4/87, pp. 39-41.

8.2.1 Summary of Contents:

The document is divided into four numbered sections. No title appears on the versions of the document published in *The Progress* or *Origins*, but a copy of the document distributed to the chancery staff of the Seattle Archdiocese (Wasden Price collection) shows the following title: "Report to the Holy See Presented by Commission Appointed by the Holy See To Assess the Current Situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle." No introductory remarks precede the first section. Concluding remarks appear in section IV. The section titles are as follows: I. The history; II. The assessment; III. Proposal for resolving the problem and concluding remarks.

Section I, "The history," begins with a statement of the commission's appointment and mandate. The commission was appointed by the Holy See, through a letter of the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, "to assess the current situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle." The rest of the section describes the history of the commission's activity. It consists mostly of a list of interviews conducted, each of which identifies the principal participants and date of the interview. The final two paragraphs of the section note that telephone conversations, letters, and "voluminous documentation" also served as information sources for the commission.

Section II, "The assessment," declares that, in the absence of a mandate regarding the *procedure* for conducting the assessment, the commission has adopted informal methods in order to arrive at what it believes to be a "common sense judgment." As a "context" for its approach, the commission has chosen two documents, "both known to Archbishop Hunthausen, to the Holy See and to everyone concerned," these being a summary of Archbishop Hickey's interview with Hunthausen, dated 8 November 1983, and Cardinal Ratzinger's letter to Hunthausen, dated 30 September 1985. Section II also contains an explicit statement of the commission's procedural decision to base its conclusions "only on documents seen by Archbishop Hunthausen and on discussions with persons designated by him or consulted with his knowledge and concurrence." The remainder of this section lists, in numbered subsections, the nine "judgments" unanimously decided upon by the commission. The judgments:

- 1) Archbishop Hunthausen has taken "laudable steps" to carry out "certain of the provisions" in the 9/30/85 Ratzinger letter.
- 2) In spite of these steps, confusion still exists among some in the Archdiocese about certain "clear" magisterial teaching, and some teachings have been "modified arbitrarily" by archdiocesan leaders.
- 3) The Archdiocese "suffers an inadequacy in communications" which may be interfering with reception of the Archbishop's articulations of magisterial teaching.
- 4) Though the Archbishop, who is well known for his compassion, "seems generally to balance compassion with the law," some in the archdiocese neglect Church law "under the

aegis of compassion.”

5) In sum, though the Archbishop himself may be firm in his teachings and practices, “he is *perceived* as generating or at least accepting a climate of permissiveness.”

6) One could supply examples of all of the observations above, but the Commission has decided not to because “it is the overall attitudinal ‘climate’ or psychological and ecclesiological orientation of the Archdiocese which is the ultimate key to the situation. No substantive changes will perdure until this climate or orientation changes.” This climate has remained unchanged since the Visitation and Ratzinger’s letter.

7) The Commission finds Ratzinger’s 9.30.85 letter “reasonably clear in both specifics and intent.” The Commission speculates that the Ratzinger letter did not provide an “exhaustive” list of “concrete points for correction” because he too was more concerned with broader perspectives or attitudes that inform specific decisions about practice. Ratzinger’s preference was to write to Hunthausen “as bishop to bishop.”

8) The Commission concludes that the Ratzinger letter should stand as “the primary guide” for future action. The Commission has, in a separate forum, provided Hunthausen with specific examples of problems in need of correction and will supply more if necessary.

9) Bishop Wuerl merits “highest praise” for his dedication in carrying out his responsibilities in such difficult circumstances.

Section III, “Proposal for resolving the problem and concluding remarks,” begins with a statement that the proposal was developed “in consultation with the Holy See taking into account both the concerns of Archbishop Hunthausen as well as those of the Holy See.” It then declares that one point of near unanimity among persons interviewed by the Commission was that the present arrangement of “divided authority” was “not effective and should be changed.”

The Commission report then identifies five “essential elements” of its proposal. I reproduce the list below, retaining its exact wording.

- 1) The Auxiliary Bishop should be transferred to another See.
- 2) The Archbishop should recover his faculties as diocesan bishop.
- 3) A Coadjutor Archbishop should be appointed to Seattle.
- 4) The Holy See should establish target dates for the completion of the tasks referred to in the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
- 5) The Commission should be mandated for a period to be determined by the Holy See, to assist in the accomplishment of these tasks.

The final paragraphs of the Commission report assert the report represents the “best, most honest and unprejudiced judgment” of the commission members, who unanimously agreed on the findings therein. The Commission also pledges future assistance to the Holy See in carrying out elements of the report, however that may be deemed necessary.

No steps taken by the Holy See or the present Commission were, in the Commission’s view, intended to be “punitive, regardless of perceptions to the contrary.” Throughout its own involvement, the Commission has sought to keep before its eyes “the need for charity and compassion, the need for fairness and openness, the need to reach decisions and to make recommendations.” It has also been mindful of the Second Vatican Council’s perspective on the role of a bishop, wherein he is understood to be both one who exercises power in his own right in caring for his flock (he is not simply the Pope’s vicar), and one who is a member of the College of Bishops under its Head, the Pope. But since the first century, it has occasionally been necessary for the Pope to intervene in local situations for the good of the

Church. “If the Church, spread through many cultures and existing on all continents is to remain one and maintain its identity, the Pope must make decisions which must be binding on the whole body of the Church.”

The Commission document supports this last point with a quote from the well-known Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, which emphasizes the papacy’s place in “the binding content of our faith.” The quotation proceeds to observe that “the Church cannot be a debating society: it must be able to make decisions binding on all within it. Such a demand cannot be *a priori* contrary to man’s dignity if... he is indeed a social being. And then a supreme point at which all reflections and democratic discussions are turned into universally binding decisions cannot be without meaning.”

The final paragraph of the report offers the hope and prayer of the Commission members that humility, obedience, charity and peace will prevail in the acceptance of the Holy See’s decision. The signatures of the three Commission members appear at the end of the report.

8.2.2 Conflict Functionality of the 5.20.87 Assessment Commission Report

The assessment report tells the public, and fellow bishops in particular, what process the commission has followed in making its evaluation of Seattle, what conclusions it has drawn, and what recommendations it makes for the future. Its primary purpose appears to be one of *legitimation*: of the commission itself, and of the commission’s process and conclusions. Beyond this, it seeks to persuade all involved of the efficacy of the recommendations. The text saves face for both Rome and Hunthausen, sparing both parties direct criticism but not indirect criticism.

In order to sell the agreement, the report establishes the legitimacy of the commission and the assessment process it has employed. The first words of the report tell us that the commission was “appointed” and given a “mandate” by the Holy See (*deference to the order and mindset of the Church*). Official notification of this appointment took place through the bureaucratic apparatus of the Church (the communication of the pro-nuncio, prot. n. 317/87/2). The remainder of section I and much of section II offer a rationale (*persuasive argumentation*) for the chosen assessment procedure and a description of how this was carried out. Legitimation takes several forms in these sections. Section I suggests that the assessment process was extensive in time, carefully documented and varied in its information sources (not only in the people consulted but also in the forms of information: visits, telephone conversations, letters, documentation; see also section III’s comment that “we listened to many voices and weighed many views”). Section II suggests that the means of making the assessment were acceptable to the conflict parties themselves. Thus, the commission explains how it interpreted and carried out the mandate given it by the Vatican in a manner that was open to Hunthausen’s concerns as well (*fraternity*): the commission would speak only with Hunthausen, Wuerl and persons designated by Hunthausen; the commission would refer only to documents known by Hunthausen, the Holy See and everyone concerned; and the assessment’s conclusions would be based only on these personal and documentary sources. A further legitimation of the commission’s process is the minor aside that “shared prayer” would be an element in the assessment procedure (*God talk*). In section III, we have an additional attestation in the same vein as the mention of prayer. After setting forth the heart of its assessment and proposals, the three bishops declare: “By signing this document, each Commission member testifies that it represents his best, most honest and unprejudiced judgment...” In other words, the bishops are willing to assert their own personal integrity (*personal identity*) as one more guarantor of the report’s legitimacy. On the whole, however, the commission members play down their

own personal identities in this report. The commission typically refers to itself in the third person (as “the Commission”) or in the first person plural and their individual identities are distinguished only in the report of who met with whom when. They also stress the unanimity of their judgments (*fraternity*). These tactics of self-presentation minimize the reminders that human fallibility and personal biases are a factor in the assessment process.

Strikingly, the commission report states explicitly that the commission understood its assignment to be to conduct an “assessment,” not an “Apostolic Visitation.” One has to wonder at the significance of this distinction. (I pointed out in section 4.8.2, above, that the word “assess” was used by Archbishop Hickey’s secretary to describe the visitation process.) What exactly is the difference between an assessment and a visitation, since the Vatican seems to have been at pains to present the visitation as a rather detached form of looking into the archdiocese? One key difference appears to rest in the matter of whether the archdiocese actually receives a personal visit from the official enquirer. The commission, according to its own report, never visited Seattle. All personal meetings took place elsewhere.

The commission’s rationale for its manner of proceeding takes an interesting turn in section II, when the following connection is made.

It [the commission] was asked to provide an *assessment* of the “current situation” in the Archdiocese of Seattle. In common sense terms, it seemed quite clear that the Holy See was looking for a common sense judgment, and this is all the Commission attempts to provide here.

One wonders how the second proposition “quite clear(ly)” follows from the first. In the first sentence, the commission highlights the words “assessment” and “current situation.” According to the commission, this common-sensically leads to the conclusion that a “common sense” judgment is sought. The connection between the two sentences is puzzling, as is the meaning of common sense in this context. What sort of reference frame is implied by “common sense” here? Does this mean doing away with all technical, theological arguments (like those in the 9.30.85 Ratzinger letter)? We might translate passage as: We heard the Vatican telling us to resolve the conflict as quickly and efficiently as possible, not to go over old ground or to engage in theoretical reflection. So that is what we have tried to do.

In the remainder of the report are three key components. The first (completing section II) is the statement of the commission’s “judgment,” expressed in nine numbered points. The second (in section III) is the statement of the commission’s proposals. And the third (completing section III and the document itself) is a set of concluding remarks which serve as a guide for interpreting the document. Some comments are in order about how these messages are packaged for public consumption. Essentially, the legitimation work of the first third of the document should place the reader in a position to accept the findings and proposals contained in the middle third. Lingering questions about whether the conflict is being validly resolved by the present means are taken up in the last third of the document.

The nine numbered points in section II, declaring the “unanimous judgment of the Commission,” are the findings uncovered by the commission’s work of assessment. Of chief importance in these points is that the commission offers no direct criticism of Hunthausen or the Vatican (*courtesy*). Hunthausen, for his part, is given the benefit of the doubt in regard to his carrying out of the visitation instructions received from Cardinal Ratzinger, his readiness to balance the prescripts of compassion and the law, and his personal firmness as a leader. And yet, at the same time, doubts about his leadership are *sustained* by this report. Praise and exculpatory comments in regard to Hunthausen’s leadership are invariably qualified. Almost

every sentence appears to carry a double meaning. To illustrate, I will reproduce a portion of the passage and insert indications of constructions that appear to show favor (indicated with an H+) or cast doubt (H-) on Hunthausen's leadership. In some cases, a given construction may bear positive and negative implications at the same time (H+, H-).

- 1) Archbishop Hunthausen has taken laudable steps (H+) to carry out certain (H-) of the provisions of the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
- 2) In spite of such steps, certain clear teachings of the Magisterium seem to be confused (H-) in the minds of some, and certain practices mandated by the Holy See seem to be modified arbitrarily (H-) by some pastors and other persons charged with responsibility for Archdiocesan activities (H+, H-).
- 3) Archbishop Hunthausen himself observed that the Archdiocese suffers an inadequacy in communications (H-). It seems possible, therefore, that certain ambiguities exist because not everyone is adequately familiar (H-) with the Archbishop's policies (H+) or with his articulations of magisterial teaching.
- 4) At the same time, the Archbishop attributes great value to *compassion*. His own practice of compassion has become almost legendary (H+). While the Archbishop himself, however, seems (H-) generally (H-) to balance compassion with the law (H+), and asserts unconditionally his own commitment to formal Church teaching (H+), it seems that some who admire his compassion may not give similar weight to the place and demands of law (H-), bending it in important matters under the aegis of compassion (H-).
- 5) In sum, no matter how personally firm (H+) in his teachings and practices the Archbishop himself may (H-) be, without intending it (H+), he is perceived (H+, H-) as generating (H-) or at least accepting (H-) a climate (H-) of permissiveness (H-) within which some feel themselves free to design their own policies and practices (H-).

What I have tried to show with my marking of this passage is that while the report never offers outright criticism of Hunthausen, his portrayal here is loaded with implied criticism. A persistent ambivalence is seen in the fact that all praise for Hunthausen is qualified. Hence, Hunthausen has taken "laudable steps" to carry out Ratzinger's provisions, but (unfortunately) he has only done this in regard to "certain" of those provisions. And while Hunthausen himself seems to have a clear grasp of Magisterial teaching and a real commitment to it, he has, the document suggests, failed to inculcate this same attitude in the people of his local Church. And though Hunthausen himself is admirably (legendarily!) compassionate, while still managing to balance compassion with the law, some of his followers have taken advantage of the freedom entrusted to them.

Repeatedly the criticism is deflected away from Hunthausen himself to his archdiocese, but the implication (but only the implication) always surfaces that Hunthausen himself bears significant responsibility for having allowed these conditions to develop locally. Even criticisms of the archdiocese are relentlessly qualified, usually with the word "seems." Magisterial teachings "seem to be confused in the minds of some" and certain practices "seem to be modified arbitrarily." "It seems possible that ambiguities exist," the report tells us – a remarkably tentative assertion of ambiguity! And so on. Through this strategy the commission avoids being tied to particularities in its "unanimous judgment." The report points in the general direction of the problem, but not to specific persons or groups or problems. By this means, Hunthausen and his local Church are allowed to *save face*.

Saving face for the Vatican consists primarily in another strategy. A basic source of face saving for the Vatican has to do with the fact that the Holy See is mostly out of view in this document. The focus is on Hunthausen, not Rome. Hunthausen's volatile charges against Rome – that the decision to undertake the visitation was presented to him as a *fait accompli*; that secrecy does and should not work; that the process was unjust because Hunthausen was not given a chance to see the charges or his accusers; etc. -- are taken up here only obliquely. Hunthausen's more contentious word choices are not repeated in this report (e.g., secrecy, unjust). Nor are the Vatican's (e.g., Laghi's suggestion that the Holy See found Hunthausen lacking the necessary "firmness). The main points at which the report speaks (directly) to the Vatican's handling of the affair are in numbered subpoints 6-8 of section II (the 'unanimous judgment' passage); in section III, when the commission says that interviewees found the divided authority arrangement "not effective;" and again in section III, when the commission denies that any Vatican actions were intended to be punitive. In each case the report offers a defense of the Vatican's conduct.

Section II, subpoint 6, addresses the charge (placed in the mouth of persons the commission interviewed, not Hunthausen himself) that Hunthausen had been "unfairly asked to correct aberrations without being told what they were..." In answer to this the commission says that real issue is the "climate" of pastoral practice in Seattle. Thus does the commission reaffirm a central argument of Ratzinger's 9.30.85 letter to Hunthausen. For that reason, the report continues (in subpoint 7), it would not be sufficient to supply a list of concrete examples. Nonetheless, if examples are necessary, some have already been provided to Hunthausen by Ratzinger's letter (cf. subpoint 7), some have been provided by the commission itself, and the commission is prepared to offer more as needed (subpoint 8).

Left unanswered (as it was in the Ratzinger letter) is the question of how Hunthausen is to go about changing the archdiocesan "climate." What *is* clear, however, is that this is one of the more damning issues in the report for Hunthausen. According to the commission, the problematic "psychological and ecclesiological orientation" of the archdiocese "seems [seems!] to have remained substantially unchanged since the time of the Apostolic Visitation and the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith." Hunthausen is immediately given an out from this from this charge – this is "in no way to suggest a lack of sincerity or the presence of malicious resistance" on Hunthausen's part – but again we find that a denial can be an effective way, rhetorically, to make a charge that one purportedly is not making.

As for Ratzinger, the commission finds that his letter is "reasonably clear in both specifics and intent," a statement that constitutes an endorsement but less than a ringing endorsement. While admittedly Ratzinger "made no effort to provide an exhaustive list of concrete points for correction," this is understandable, the commission finds, because he was speaking to Hunthausen as "bishop to bishop, as between those who share one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Church." It is unclear why speaking bishop-to-bishop brings supersession of the need for specifics, but in terms of the discursive strategy of this report it answers the charge of insufficient detail in Ratzinger's letter.

Perhaps the most negative statement that focuses on the Vatican's actions occurs at the beginning of section III, where the commission report tells us: "Virtually all persons interviewed by the Commission agreed that the present arrangement of divided authority... was not effective and should be changed." In other words, the Vatican instituted an arrangement of power sharing that all agreed did not work. But the report does not put it so bluntly. The arrangement itself exists, here, independently of agency: the Vatican is not

named as the entity establishing the arrangement. And since it does not work, the commission concludes, someone, somewhere would do well to change it. Significantly, the report makes no attempt here to explain why the arrangement was not effective. It simply notes it in passing, disassociates the situation from Vatican action and moves on.

One more instance of the commission presenting Vatican decisions in a less than critical light comes in section III, where the report declares: “Thoroughly aware of the steps taken by the Holy See up to this point, the Commission is convinced that no steps were intended as punitive, regardless of perceptions to the contrary.” It is curious that (after asserting full knowledge of the history of the Vatican’s actions, and thereby its own legitimacy as judge) the commission wants to make this argument. In public discussion of the case there was little disagreement about the fact of punishment itself. Hunthausen, his supporters *and* his opponents generally saw the Vatican’s taking of power from Hunthausen as a kind of punishment. Even the undersecretary for the Congregation for Bishops had called the action “disciplinary.” The issue was not whether disciplinary action had been taken but whether such action was appropriate. So why does the commission want to insist that “no steps were intended as punitive,” and this “regardless of perceptions to the contrary”(!)? Is there something embarrassing in the idea that the primacy would punish a local ordinary? Or does this sticking point have something to do with the Vatican claim that Hunthausen *agreed* to give the faculties? In any case, it seems a moot point in light of Hunthausen’s obvious unreadiness to have this power-sharing arrangement posed on him. Notice that the commission says that no steps were “intended” as punitive. Is this to say that the intention was some higher motive (such as pursuing unity through a more efficacious form of collegiality – i.e., redistributing powers to those who are best able to dispose them) and the punishment was an unintended consequence? This question cannot be answered on the basis of the text, but what is apparent is that the commission wants to rhetorically disassociate the Vatican from the unpleasant practice of dealing out punishment.

Thus far I have gone to some lengths to describe how this report “sells” the commission’s own involvement and its findings, a persuasive effort that has been infused with an emphasis on saving face for Rome and for Hunthausen. Remarkably, however, there is no attempt to sell or even explain the five specific proposals themselves (i.e.: transfer Wuerl; restore the faculties; appoint a coadjutor; establish target dates; have the commission continue to assist). The report gives almost no context to illuminate why these specific recommendations are set forth. A minor exception applies in the case of the first and second recommendations, which seem directly related to the observation that the arrangement of divided authority has been found ineffective. But all in all, we have no rationale supplied to us for why these changes and not others should be implemented. Most especially, we are left to wonder about the rationale for appointing a coadjutor archbishop. Certainly the commission has reasons for this, reasons which have been shared with Hunthausen and the Holy See, but for whatever reason, this rationale is not shared with the public in the report. Another question surrounds the fourth recommendation (“The Holy See should establish target dates for the completion of the tasks referred to in the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith”). If the expectation is that Hunthausen will change the “overall attitudinal ‘climate’” of the archdiocese, how is his success or failure to be measured? There are more questions that can be raised, but of immediate significance for our analysis here is the silence kept here in regard to the thinking that informs the recommendations themselves. Since the overall orientation of this document appears to be to put an end to the conflict, it may well be that the decision to leave out the rationale for the recommendations was based on the sense that including the rationale would open up new issue fronts in the affair, an unwelcome prospect.

The portion of the document that follows the statement of recommendations and closes the document itself takes the form of a theological reflection on the office of bishop and the place of the primacy as the “supreme point” of decision making in the Church (*ecclesiological God talk; expert power; persuasive argumentation*). Here the document places the entire conflict in context, answering past arguments (specifically, certain arguments Hunthausen made in his NCCB address) and foreclosing future arguments at the same time. The reflection begins with a nod to Hunthausen’s authority and the authority of individual bishops. Citing the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* (itself an acknowledgment of Hunthausen’s preferred ecclesiological starting point), the report affirms what Hunthausen says in section IV of his NCCB address: that local bishops possess authority in their own right: they are not merely vicars of the Roman Pontiff. As a strategy of argumentation, there are clear advantages to beginning with the viewpoint and strongest argument that one wishes to refute, as the commission does here. And indeed refutation – or, to put it more mildly, counterbalancing of the argument – is what follows. “At the same time,” the report continues, “... No bishop is an independent agent, standing in isolation. As a member of the College of Bishops, he exercises his office only in communion with and obedience to the Head of the College of Bishops, the Pope, the Successor of Peter and Bishop of Rome.” The concept of obedience finds reiteration in the succeeding sentence, which notes that every bishop promises obedience to the Pope in his ordination (i.e., obedience is inseparable from the office of bishop itself).

We recall that in his address to the NCCB, Hunthausen argued that obedience should involve more than a simple acquiescence, and rightfully includes dialogue. The final paragraphs of the commission report (excluding the very last) answer this argument. The components to the response are the following propositions: (1) Tradition justifies such interventions by the primacy: the Pope has intervened in local churches since the first century. (2) This power to intervene is necessary to maintain the unity and identity of the Church. (3) The papacy “belongs to the binding content of our faith itself.” In other words, the papacy’s role within the Church is divinely sanctioned, permanent and of fundamental importance. (4) Democratic discussions have their place in the Church but there needs to be an end point for debates. It is meaningful to have a means for turning democratic discussions into binding decisions. (5) The papacy’s power to make universally binding decisions poses no threat to the dignity of the human person, who is rightfully acknowledged to be a social being. The gist of these arguments for accepting the commission’s recommendations is that doing so is in keeping with what the Church is (a hierarchical, divinely-sanctioned unity) and how it has always conducted itself (since the first century A.D.), and what it must do for its own good (“We are and we shall remain also in the future the *Roman Catholic Church*). Hunthausen’s desire to keep arguing is uncalled for (“the Church cannot be a debating society”) because it is not consistent with the Church’s identity, its traditional practice and its concern for its own well being (it is *not* in the *best interest of the Church*).

While making this response, the commission quotes extensively from a theological work by Karl Rahner. This instance of manifest intertextuality is striking for two reasons. First, Rahner is an academic theologian writing expressly in that capacity. No other such sources have been cited in the case documents analyzed thus far. Theological writings produced by the hierarchy (in the form of Conciliar documents, papal teachings, curial instructions, bishops’ pastoral letters) have been invoked, but no works of academic theologians. One can imagine why this has not been done in the past. Such works by definition lack the authority of teaching issued by the Church hierarchy (thus, they are not the best source for “proving” a point), and, contemporaneous with the Hunthausen case, certain theologians were in the process of being

taken to task by the Vatican (most prominently, Charles Curran and Leonardo Boff). Hence, the works of academic theologians were doubly suspect.

The second reason the commission report's citation of Rahner is striking is that the reference is highly intraecclesial. Rahner is well known among theologically educated Church insiders (i.e., the target audience of bishops), but the name would mean little to the general public. The choice to quote him in particular marks something of a departure from the commission report's overall approach, which seems to be to use straightforward, nontechnical language to persuade as broad an audience as possible to accept the conflict resolution here proposed.

So what is the Rahner passage doing here, then? It may be primarily a choice of convenience. The passage says what the bishops want to say, and there is always value in showing that outside authorities hold the same view as oneself. The commission is busy making the point that Hunthausen cannot simply go his own way as a bishop, he has to answer to Rome, and Rahner makes this point succinctly in this particular book. One need attribute only minimal significance to the fact that Rahner *per se* is chosen (as opposed to some other theologian or theological source). In any case, Rahner is a safe choice as far as the conflict parties are concerned. Rahner can be characterized as a forward-thinking theologian (acceptable to Hunthausen) who was not subject to Vatican suspicion (acceptable to the Vatican).

Two other references to external texts – to the transcript of the 11.8.83 Hickey-Hunthausen interview and the 9.30.85 Ratzinger letter -- stand out in this report. These are the documents known to all parties which have served the commission's assessment process. The commission puts forth one of these documents, the 9.30.85 Ratzinger letter, as a guide for future pastoral action in the Seattle archdiocese. Use of the letter in this way is a cornerstone of the commission's proposal for addressing the situation in Seattle. This letter, which Hunthausen was not originally allowed to share with the public, has undergone a process of progressive revelation to the public (first through rewriting by Laghi, then by Hunthausen's sharing of the letter with his priests, then by Wuerl's mention of the letter in his own letter to priests, then by Hunthausen's mention of the letter obliquely in his response to the Vatican chronology, and finally by the commission report's provision of the letter itself in accompaniment to the commission report). What are we to make of this progressive unveiling? Does it constitute a minor success for Hunthausen, who wanted the letter released in the first place? This is hard to say. Since the letter was not especially favorable toward Hunthausen to begin with (it was less favorable, in fact, than the Laghi rewrite), it does not seem to benefit Hunthausen by polishing his image. Moreover, at this late date it may not even amount to a concession, since it is not clear that Hunthausen still desires its release. Seen from another angle, the Vatican's publication of the letter further chips away at the wall of secrecy, which has been one of Hunthausen's priorities. The handling of the Ratzinger letter runs as a thread through the conflict as a whole. The fact that references to it recur and that it finds an ongoing functional relevance make it one of the keys to comprehending the total conflict.

The Hickey-Hunthausen interview is the second key reference document the commission makes use of in its assessment. Like the Hickey visitation report to the Vatican, the Hickey-Hunthausen interview transcript has never been made public. It is interesting that Hunthausen never criticizes the Vatican's use of secrecy in regard to this document and that he never presses to have this transcript made public (nor does he release his own copy), especially since the quality of his responses to questions raised by the Vatican is a conflict issue. There are some reasons we can imagine for Hunthausen's not being interested in doing so. For one

thing, he already knows its contents, so the secret is not being kept from him. Another reason may be that he agreed to the use of secrecy in this interview ahead of time: so perhaps it is simply a question of keeping his word. A further reason could be a desire to protect the identities of persons mentioned in the interview. The most likely reason, however (and this does not rule out the relevance of the other reasons), for not releasing the transcript or excerpts thereof is simply that, for whatever reason, doing so would not, on balance, help his cause. It is probable that the contents of such a long interview session would prove to be a mixed bag. Apparently benign things said in private conversation may look very different when one considers the prospect of their widespread public distribution. We should note, too, that Hunthausen had no opportunity to edit the interview transcript. He was simply presented with a word-for-word transcript that he was asked to sign as an indication of accuracy. Thus, he was not offered the opportunity to rework his comments for a target audience.

I have sought to illustrate the apostolic commission's attempt to usher in the end of the Rome-Hunthausen conflict by means of its evaluation and report. The report itself answers a number of questions raised by the conflict exchanges, proposes a new arrangement in Seattle, and markets a vision of resolution that, the commission hopes, will be acceptable to the American bishops and the public at large. The success of the document in achieving these ends depends on public reception of the report and the cooperation of the direct participants in the affair.

I. Subsequent Developments (May 1987-April 1989)

At the May 27 news conference (*Seattle Times*, 5.28.87; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 5.28.87) with Murphy, Hunthausen appeared, for the most part, positively disposed to the settlement and at ease with his new coadjutor. Of the agreement he said, "I am so hopeful, so desirous of making it work. I just think it has tremendous potential. Calling Murphy "a friend and a trusted co-worker," Hunthausen said, "I have assurance that Archbishop Murphy comes without special faculties. I think you know that I could not and would not accept such an arrangement."

When Murphy was asked about his own understanding of his role, he answered, "Archbishop Hunthausen is my archbishop just as he is the (archbishop) of the others in the faith community of Western Washington. I really am looking forward to the experience of sharing this responsibility with a person I respect..." Does Murphy represent "the long arm of the Vatican?" Hunthausen was asked. Hunthausen patted Murphy on the back and turned the question over to him. Murphy replied: "I am here primarily because of a process where I was one of the people Archbishop Hunthausen felt he could work with and share ministerial responsibilities that are his in this archdiocese."

But despite the apparent satisfaction and good rapport between Hunthausen and Murphy, it was also evident from one of the written statements Hunthausen distributed that he had mixed feelings about the settlement that had been reached. Whereas Hunthausen's general press statement offered up only a minor indication of dissatisfaction and a lingering combativeness ("It is only honest for me to acknowledge that that [the commission and I] have not always agreed on every aspect of the work they have done – even some important aspects..."), his letter to priests of the archdiocese, which was also released to the press, was more explicitly contentious. There Hunthausen wrote, "I want you to know that, while I am not in agreement with a number of important aspects of the assessment and am therefore not prepared to endorse it, I have nonetheless come to the point of accepting the Commission's proposed resolution to our situation."

Even the letter to the priests, however, was essentially conciliatory. “For better or worse,” Hunthausen wrote, “we are at this particular moment in our history. While there are many thoughts and hopes in my heart at this time, my prayer is simple: that we will be able to see this new moment as a graced moment; a moment in which we are challenged as a Church to become all we strive and profess to be and more...”

In his general statement to the press, Hunthausen began by thanking the Pope for Murphy’s appointment. He then said he saw this as an “opportunity for us to move forward together as a Church after a long and very difficult period of struggle and uncertainty.” Hunthausen praised Murphy for his energetic and committed service to the Church; the assessment commission for their dedication to the good of the Church while carrying out their difficult assignment; and Bishop Wuerl for giving himself generously to his episcopal duties, which were made all the more demanding by the circumstances. The remainder of the statement offered words of thanks and spiritual encouragement to the people of the archdiocese.

Murphy’s statement called his appointment as Coadjutor Archbishop “a great honor.” Murphy said, “I have responded to this request of the Holy Father in a spirit of prayer and hope that I may be of help and service to the Church of Seattle.” Murphy went on to say that he looked forward to his assignment but that it would be difficult to leave the Church of Eastern Montana, which he had grown to love. Murphy pledged his “respect, loyalty and commitment to Pope John Paul II and the Holy See” and he also pledged his “support and service to Archbishop Hunthausen and the Archdiocese of Seattle.”

Wuerl’s statement called Murphy’s appointment “a welcome sign of the resolution of the difficulty and tension that has developed in this local church.” Wuerl described Murphy as “an energetic, gifted, prayerful and articulate bishop” and he expressed his hope that Murphy’s talents and gifts would “work to the healing and benefit” of the archdiocese. Wuerl noted that his own new assignment had not yet been specified but that he was grateful for the occasion to reflect on his own ministry in Western Washington. Most especially, he was grateful for the warmth of welcome and depth of kindness that had been shown to him by the people of the archdiocese during his period of service. Wuerl also extended his appreciation to Archbishop Hunthausen: “During the time we worked together, even though the situation was difficult, he was always considerate and kind.”

Cardinal Bernardin of the assessment commission also released a statement of his own on May 27 (cf. *National Catholic Reporter*, 6.5.87), saying, “I am very pleased with the resolution proposed by our commission and accepted by the Holy See.

I believe we have addressed the concerns of both the Holy See and Archbishop Hunthausen with sensitivity to the persons involved and to the needs of the universal and local church.

I know that many join me in prayer and good wishes for Archbishop Hunthausen, Archbishop-elect Murphy, Bishop Wuerl and the priests and people of the Archdiocese of Seattle. Those of us on the commission remain ready to assist in every way possible, confident that everyone involved is eager to move forward in truth, peace, unity and love.

Bernardin’s final sentence clearly relates to the intention for the commission to continue in existence (“for a period to be determined by the Holy See”) to aid Hunthausen and Murphy in carrying out the provisions of the 9.30.85 Ratzinger letter summarizing the visitation conclusions.

More generally, the first reactions to the settlement were typically expressions of satisfaction tinged with uncertainty. Interestingly, this was true of both supporters and critics of Hunthausen. Both sides seemed to struggle to discern what the full implications of the new arrangement were, while finding reason to be optimistic. Sister Chauncey Boyle, president of the 700-member archdiocesan Sisters' Council, said, "My reaction is really mixed. This is sort of the best we could get" (*Seattle Times*, 5.27.87). Some were puzzled by the decision to send a coadjutor archbishop who would not have special faculties, since coadjutors normally were appointed with possession of such faculties. Erven Park, an outspoken Hunthausen critic, said that restoring Hunthausen's power while appointing a coadjutor amounted to "a contradiction in terms." Hunthausen himself repeatedly resisted attempts to characterize the resolution as a matter of winning or losing. "That spirit comes out of a spirit of competition, and that's not where we are here."

The response to Murphy himself was, for the most part, positive. The two main local newspapers and the archdiocesan newspaper all reported that Murphy had made a good first impression on the priests of the archdiocese at a large gathering on May 29 (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 5.30.87; *Seattle Times*, 5.30.87; *The Progress*, 6.4.87). From his first moments in Seattle, Murphy had shown his talent for defusing troublesome questions with humor. When asked what might have possessed him to step into the Seattle mess, he attributed it to "the Gaelic spirit of adventure" (*Seattle Weekly*, 6.9.87). And at his first gathering with the priests, Hunthausen told of a young relative who asked him what it meant to be named "co-agitator." Early accounts noted, too, that Murphy had a knack for Church politics. During Murphy's years of service as a young priest in Chicago, he had "gained a reputation as a conciliator amid the ecclesial infighting rampant under the late Cardinal John Cody" (*National Catholic Reporter*, 6.19.87).

After the first flurry of news reports about the implementation of the commission recommendation in Seattle came a more extended period of reflection on what the developments meant. This discussion was carried on in the Catholic press, primarily, and among Catholic theologians. Contrary to Hunthausen's wishes, many observers were inclined to speak in terms of political victory and defeat. University of Notre Dame theologian Fr. Richard McBrien said, "On balance, Hunthausen is the victor. The bottom line is that he has full episcopal authority restored. It shows once again that the pope is much more a political realist than some of his right-wing supporters... and if people and especially the bishops confront him, the pope does back off, and he has backed off" (*National Catholic Reporter*, 6.5.87). Though not normally one to agree with McBrien, *Wanderer* editor A. J. Matt expressed the same view. "In the political sense, it certainly is a victory (for Hunthausen)," Matt said. "Whether it is a moral or spiritual victory, I would have serious reservations." James Hitchcock, a historian at St. Louis University, however, cautioned against overstating the extent to which the outcome favored Hunthausen. Not only did the commission report present "very strong criticism of Archbishop Hunthausen's governance;" it also established "target dates" that indicated an expectation of "measurable results." "There is already a mechanism in place," Hitchcock said, "whereby if the results don't come, then Hunthausen can be made to move aside" (*Seattle Times*, 5.30.87). Fr. Andrew Greeley of the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago called the settlement "a typical Cardinal Bernardin solution – one with which everyone can live, but with which no one is completely happy." Father Richard Hynes, president of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, described the settlement as a healthy "exercise of the collaborative process."

More of Hunthausen's thoughts and feelings about the outcome and the process that led to it emerged in a May 28 interview with *The Progress*, which was publicly circulated in the June 4 issue. The central point in Hunthausen's message was the need to move forward. "I think we are at the point where a decision has been made, and so there is nothing to be served by going back and saying, 'I wish that.... I think that....' I just don't think that is what we need to do or want to do."

Archbishop Hunthausen said the commission's report and solution were "obviously the result of a great deal of prayer. We have all been praying and I believe the prayers are answered.

"As they describe this church, it is not the church that I know," he said. "I don't view the ministry as they have viewed it; but they have come to this position by a process" which was open and honest.

The archbishop said that the process was a "constant dialogue. It was a discussion of pros and cons. They legitimately examined my wish list and honestly told me what was viable and what was not, and ultimately we got to this point."

"I am confident that this is what God wants and it will work for the best," the archbishop continued. "My own wish and will doesn't always identify with what God wants, and I think one has to be open to finding out what God wants."

[...] I am grateful that I was given the opportunity, and the freedom and the privilege to say what I felt about these developments as I went," he said. "To try and keep these those from being from being the center of public attention and the center of public debate... that's a hard thing."

"I guess in all this, one of the real tensions has been how to bring forth the reality of who we are and the truth of this church without giving the impression that we were setting ourselves up in opposition to our superiors," Archbishop Hunthausen said.

"That is a very, very fancy balancing act."

Questioning judgments made by church leaders, even when invited to do so, he said, can give some the impression of disloyalty and disobedience.

"If you give that impression, then you also run the risk of scandalizing some of the faithful," he said.

"I don't think there were ever instances of loyalty or disobedience," he added, "but if it is perceived that way, you run the risk of really alienating some people."

"That's been the tension," he said. "It's been extremely difficult."

Archbishop Hunthausen also emphasized that he has "never, never had the slightest question about my loyalty to the Holy Father or his right to act in this (local) church."

While questions about parts of the four-year process remain, the local church has its agenda for the next year: addressing the concerns in the Ratzinger letter with the assistance of the commission members.

"Obviously, this has touched the church well beyond Seattle, which means that it hit a sensitive nerve.... It says something about the way we view how the church ought to function," he said.

Archbishop Hunthausen said he would rather leave the lingering questions to theologians and historians to wrestle with. "We have to move forward or we will destroy ourselves."

On June 7, Bishop Wuerl celebrated his farewell Mass at Holy Rosary Church in West Seattle, the parish where he had been in residence. Wuerl's new assignment was not yet known. After the Mass, Wuerl said he felt no bitterness and was "glad it's over. I'm glad it's settled" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 6.8.87). One week later, on July 13, a formal service of welcome to Archbishop Murphy was celebrated at St. James Cathedral. In what was perhaps a Freudian slip of the liturgical variety, Fr. John Pinette, one of the masters of ceremonies, absent-mindedly handed the crozier to Archbishop Murphy at the end of the service. Murphy laughed, shook his head, and handed the crozier to Hunthausen.

A press conference followed three days later (July 16). Hunthausen and Murphy answered questions and said they would soon be meeting with the assessment commission in Chicago (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 7.16.87). They said the Chicago meeting would be their first opportunity to seek clarification and guidance from the commission since the settlement had been reached. Hunthausen and Murphy were jovial and appeared to quite at ease with one another. At one point Hunthausen was asked if events in Seattle had shed light on what had been called a tension between the "Roman Catholic" and the "American Catholic" views of

their church, Hunthausen sighed deeply. "I appreciate your question," he said. "It's a question I ask myself very, very often. I'm not sure I've found the answer" (*Seattle Times*, 7.16.87).

Back in his home diocese of Pittsburgh, Bishop Wuerl broke his extended silence regarding the Seattle controversy. In an interview with the diocesan newspaper, *Pittsburgh Catholic* (6.19.87), Wuerl said that certain "myths" had developed during his time in Seattle. In sum, these mistaken notions were "that he had arrived in Seattle with 'special faculties,' that there ever was a secret agreement unknown to Archbishop Hunthausen, that his appointment was an 'injustice' to the archbishop, and that Vatican decisions were designed to discourage the archbishop's well-known anti-nuclear arms activities."

Wuerl noted that he and Hunthausen had always enjoyed a good relationship personally, but that the assignment had been a difficult one. "I'm physically and psychologically tired," he said. Though his parish visits were as positive as his exchanges with Hunthausen, Wuerl admitted that some in the archdiocese had been less than welcoming, and some had shown him outright animosity. (The 4.30.87 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported that Wuerl had received death threats during his time in Seattle. In its 6.9.87 editorial on the occasion of Wuerl's departure, the same newspaper noted that Wuerl had even drawn fire from Hunthausen opponents, "who expected Wuerl to champion their cause to drive Hunthausen out.") A daily toll was taken by the fact that, "My very presence was an implied criticism. Some of them had difficulty with that," Wuerl told the Pittsburgh paper, "yet others tried very hard to keep the focus on issues and not the person. I said to a gathering of all priests and chancery staff that I don't think I was ever seen as an individual human being but more as a symbol of the visitation."

Wuerl observed that addressing the issues identified by the Vatican became impossible amid the controversy around his role. "From the time the faculties were granted in August (1986) until last week, the public furor over all this became so intense it was impossible to address the issues." Wuerl said that he had maintained his silence during the controversy because "my hope was to effect some healing in Seattle rather than add to the tension and division."

Sustaining Wuerl was the sense that the Church is bigger than "human misunderstandings," which are, in any case, "a natural part of life." "What is important is not that there are misunderstandings, but the manner in which you resolve them. That should always be done with patience, understanding and, above all, love." Bishop Wuerl was appointed ordinary of his home diocese, Pittsburgh, on February 12, 1988. (The apostolic visitor, Washington Archbishop James Hickey, was elevated to cardinal on June 28 of that same year.)

Starting on July 16, 1987 in Chicago, Hunthausen and Murphy met with the assessment commission quarterly to discuss their progress in addressing the concerns identified in the Ratzinger letter. The next meeting took place on November 10, 1987 in Washington, D. C. The third meeting was on February 26, 1988 in Seattle. Archbishop Quinn did not participate in this meeting. He was on a leave-of-absence at this time (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 2.26.88). Cardinal Bernardin offered a few remarks to the press during the Seattle meeting. Murphy and Hunthausen appeared to be working well together, he said: "things are going quite well. The situation has been very tranquil." Bernardin said he intended to make no formal statements in connection with the quarterly meetings that had been agreed upon by Hunthausen, Murphy and the commission. Bernardin also reiterated that "the only purpose of this commission is to assist Archbishop Hunthausen as diocesan bishop and Archbishop Murphy as his assistant in fulfilling the requests of the Holy See. There is no hidden agenda

here” (*The Progress*, 5.3.87). Two subsequent meetings occurred between the Seattle Archbishops and the commission (dates unknown. Apparently the last meeting took place during an extraordinary synod of bishops in Rome, March 1989: cf. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 3.15.89).

The exchanges between Hunthausen, Murphy and the commission concluded with Hunthausen’s filing of a set of formal responses to the concerns identified through the visitation and post-visitation process. The Holy See accepted these responses (*National Catholic Reporter*, 4/21/89).

The completion of the work of the apostolic commission was made public through an announcement of the papal pro-nuncio in Washington, D.C. and an announcement by Hunthausen in Seattle on the same day (*The Progress*, 4.13.89; see also the inter-office memorandum from Hunthausen to “Central Agency Employees,” dated 4.11.89, in the Wasden Price collection.) The statement from the nunciature reads:

Archbishop Pio Laghi, Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, announced today, April 11, 1989, that the work of the Apostolic Commission chaired by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin is completed and its mandate has been terminated in relationship to the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen has indicated that he, along with Coadjutor Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy, will continue to address the issues which have been of concern to the Church in the Archdiocese of Seattle by implementing the changes in the pastoral care of the Archdiocese which have already been initiated.

Hunthausen thanked Laghi and the commission, and put the conflict experience in a positive light.

I am grateful for the announcement by Archbishop Laghi of the closure of the work of the Apostolic Commission. I am also grateful to the members of the Apostolic Commission, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, John Cardinal O’Connor and Archbishop John Quinn, for their pastoral assistance.

Both Archbishop Murphy and I acknowledge the trial the Church here has faced over the past several years, yet we are also able to view the whole experience as a time of grace, a grace which, with the Lord’s help, will enable us to offer our leadership to the Church in Western Washington in the years ahead with renewed dedication and commitment to the Gospel and the Universal Church under our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. We ask for your prayers as we continue to meet the challenges of being a Roman Catholic community of faith here in Western Washington.

In somewhat less formal language, Hunthausen said at a press conference, “I rejoice in the fact that the apostolic visitation is over... We’re going to have a party” (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4.13.89). When asked what changes had been wrought by the prolonged review, Hunthausen said, “I’m not sure the ministry has changed. In those areas especially, we have deliberately examined what as archdiocese... we should be doing. We have reissued the guidelines, but if you look you will see there have been no substantive changes.” Hunthausen observed that violations which had taken place in the archdiocese had been limited to isolated instances. “Generally speaking, we have not been in violation. This has been a very limited thing.” Hunthausen also shared the view that Seattle’s pastoral policies were not notably different from those of other dioceses. “I’m not able to say precisely why we were singled out...” he said. Hunthausen indicated that he would continue to “redirect” his income tax and be active in the anti-nuclear arms movement. The years of visitation and assessment, he said, had not compromised his ministry.

From beginning to end, the process of active intervention by the Holy See in the Archdiocese of Seattle lasted five-and-a-half years. Archbishop Hunthausen retired from office on his

seventieth birthday, August 21, 1991, some two years after the conflict had run its course. That same year, Archbishop Laghi, who had served as pro-nuncio in the U.S. until 1990, was made a cardinal.

I.i. Conflict Functionality of the Subsequent Developments (May 1987-April 1989)

The release of the commission report and announcement of Murphy's appointment as coadjutor archbishop of Seattle marks the beginning of the end of the Rome-Hunthausen conflict. The announced agreement proves to be a lasting one, with no further escalations of consequence occurring beyond this point. The tensions between center and periphery never disappear entirely. At the time of the announcement itself, Hunthausen expresses his disagreement with certain aspects of the commission report, and even at the end of the commission's oversight, almost two years after the implementation of the new arrangement, Hunthausen continues to profess bewilderment about the Vatican's intervention. But for the most part, from the time of the agreement announcement forward, Hunthausen downplays his dissatisfaction, and couches any disgruntlement in abundant expressions of cooperativeness and hopefulness.

When Hunthausen presents the commission report and his new coadjutor archbishop to the press, he shows that he has not lost all taste for *contention*. Though he publicly welcomes Murphy with open arms, he puts in writing at the same time his opposition to important aspects of the commission report. This is a surprisingly provocative declaration, since it contradicts the public display of acceptance of the plan and resolution for the conflict. But Hunthausen buries his provocation in a show of loyalty and obedience (*deference to the order and mindset of the Church*), and indeed, the announcement ushers in a new period of *graciousness (courtesy)* all around. Hunthausen thanks the Holy Father and praises Murphy, the commission and Wuerl. Wuerl praises Murphy and thanks the people of the archdiocese. Bernardin offers his prayer and good wishes to Hunthausen, Murphy, Wuerl and the people of Seattle, and he expresses his confidence that "everyone involved is eager to move forward in truth, peace, unity and love." Significantly, Hunthausen's prickly comment prompts no response from the commission, the pro-nuncio or Rome: as a result, no escalation occurs.

Similarly, in April of 1989, when the pro-nuncio announces the completion of the assessment commission's work of evaluation of Hunthausen's ministry, Hunthausen gives the impression that center and periphery still do not see eye-to-eye. When asked what changes had resulted from the extended Vatican intervention, Hunthausen responds by saying that "there have been no substantive changes," except for in isolated instances. "Generally speaking, we have not been in violation." One can imagine that these remarks were received with some irritation in Rome and at the nunciature in Washington. But again, no retort comes from the center and no rise in conflict tension materializes in consequence. These comments suggest that, even at the apparent end of the conflict handling process, Hunthausen is not fully reconciled to the visitation and its conclusions.

Nonetheless, it is not to be denied that, once the commission plan is announced and he has voiced his immediate reservations, Hunthausen works determinedly to quiet the conflict (*minimize the appearance of conflict*) and put it behind him and the archdiocese. As part of the resolution plan, Hunthausen accepts the continued monitoring of his ministry by the commission (*surveillance*; or as Bernardin euphemistically puts it: "the commission remain(s) ready to *assist* [emphasis mine] in every way possible"). Apart from his comments in April of 1989, Hunthausen rarely ever speaks of the visitation experience again – in any case, not in detail and not in public. His *silence* is matched by other direct participants. Once it is over, it

is over for Laghi, Hickey, Wuerl, the assessment commission, and above all for the key players in Rome, who almost never spoke about the case in public anyway, even when it was in the fullness of intensity.

As before, Hunthausen's meetings with the commission (they are now joined by Murphy in place of Wuerl) take place in private (*secrecy*). Though the commission report recommends that the commission stay in its role of assistance role for a year, its service continues for almost two full years. No public record accounts for the content of the meetings or the reason for their extended continuance. The *bureaucratic act of closure* of the assessment process – Hunthausen's filing of formal responses to the Vatican's concerns – is also not open to public scrutiny, at the time or thereafter.

Implementation of the commission plan brings about a restoration of Hunthausen's power in the local Church (*territorial control*). No longer is there someone who can overrule him within the archdiocese. Over time, Murphy succeeds in the archdiocese (effectively contributes) in a way that Wuerl was unable to. Whereas Wuerl was widely seen to be "symbol of the visitation," as Wuerl himself put it, Murphy receives the benefit of the doubt from many in the archdiocese. Wuerl's strong ties to Rome and his rather formal personal style fueled suspicions, Murphy's prior period of service in the Northwest and his casual style and quick wit work to undermine suspicions. Most critical to Murphy's acceptance is the basic fact that his presence does not come at the cost of Hunthausen's own power to lead.

As the conflict experience recedes, the Holy See *remunerates* several who have served the center party cause. Pope John Paul II rewards for his efforts in a difficult assignment with an appointment as ordinary of his home diocese, Pittsburgh. The Pope makes Archbishop Hickey and Laghi cardinals. Archbishop Quinn retires without having been made a cardinal, as, of course, does Hunthausen. Upon Hunthausen's retirement, Archbishop Murphy succeeds him in office in Seattle, according to plan. Murphy dies in office of cancer in 1997, without having been promoted further.