

1.9.81:
2.0 p.m.

ARCIC 248/Conclusion/2

Link sentence with Authority I i.e. first para. of Authority II

In our conclusion to the Venice Statement we affirmed that we had reached 'a consensus on authority in the Church and, in particular, on the basic principles of primacy', which we asserted to be of 'fundamental importance' (para. 24). Nevertheless we showed that four outstanding problems related to this subject required further study since, in they remained unresolved, they would appear to constitute serious obstacles to our growing together towards full communion. The four difficulties were the interpretation of the Petrine texts, the meaning of the language of 'divine right', the affirmation of papal infallibility and the nature of the jurisdiction ascribed to the Bishop of Rome as universal primate. After five years of further study we are able to present a fresh appraisal of their weight and implications. This has given a new perspective to our conclusions.

Conclusion

39. It seems to us now that in our understanding of the Petrine texts, of 'divine right' and of universal jurisdiction any remaining differences between us in these areas need not impede a realistic coming together of our two Communion. We have come to realise that some of the problems which appeared to be confined to one or other of our Communion, are in fact common to both. Nevertheless our two traditions do not share exactly the same view of the teaching office of the bishop of Rome. Anglicans tend more to look to the content of a doctrinal statement and its coherence with Scripture while Roman Catholics initially look to its author and the conditions under which it

was made. After careful consideration given to this matter we are convinced that this difference is less serious than we had supposed.

Anglicans are also confident that the ministry of those who exercise episcopate is one of the means by which the spirit maintains the Church in the truth: they have reservations if this is claimed to be guaranteed by virtue of a gift necessarily attached to the teaching office of the universal primate. The rigorous conditions prescribed in the Roman Catholic tradition, which presuppose consonance with Scripture and the sensus fidelium ease the situation. Moreover, contemporary discussions of conciliarity and primacy in both communions suggest that we are not dealing with positions destined to remain static.

Recommendations

ARCIC 248

1. That paragraph 39, subpara. 1, as amended, becomes para. 1 of Authority in the Church II.
2. That paragraph 39, subparas 2 and 3, as amended, becomes concluding paragraph of Authority in the Church II.
3. That material from the Co-Chairmen's preface be used in the general conclusion to the four Statements.