

PORINGLAND MEETING, 1973

M I N I S T R Y

A SCHEMA FOR DISCUSSIONINTRODUCTION

The purpose of our meeting is to provide a draft s t a t e m e n t which represents our understanding of the f a i t h of our respective Churches regarding the Christian ministry. We both regard the ministry, however it is specified, as an essential element in the life of the Church because we believe it exists by the will and design of Christ.

It is a matter of history that the Reformation involved the mutual rejection of the ministries of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches - and in particular the ordained ministry centred on the celebration of the Eucharist. It is important, therefore, to point our disagreements where they are really situated, without at the same time ignoring particular points of controversy that affect other churches. Nevertheless, it is the particular purpose of the Statement to show (if this is true) that we can agree, at the level of faith, on the nature of the Ordained Ministry which we both assert Christ wills for his Church.

We have, of course, achieved such an agreement regarding the Eucharist but without asserting or denying that the Eucharist, in which we confess substantially the same belief, is actually celebrated on our respective altars. We abstained from any judgment of fact and restricted ourselves to common doctrine and like understanding. It remains to be seen whether this is possible as we approach the question of Ministry.

The following Schema is no more than an attempt to conflate the findings of the three Subcommissions and the one Report accepted at Gazzada, 1972. These reports are:-

1. Ministry in the New Testament (Gazzada) (NT)
2. Apostolic Succession (Oxford) (OG)
3. Ministerial Priesthood in Relation to Christ and the Church (North America) (NA)
4. Ordination (South Africa) (SA)

They are not such as to provide of themselves an integral statement but, in spite of some coverage of identical matter, they do treat of what the Commission considered to be the areas in which, because of past disagreement, great effort should be made to achieve a substantial

consensus. The result has been considerable convergence, and though critical appraisal has already shown some dissatisfaction by various members of the Commission at the final drafts of the Subcommissions' work, it is worthwhile attempting to bind them together into some sort of common testimony.

As a general rule only the work of the Subcommissions and comments of individual members of the Commission have been inserted into the text. In the notes work on the same subject in dialogues other than our own or by individuals is referred to and cited when it has appeared helpful.

Finally, the Schema is not an attempt to draft the Statement we hope to achieve, but only an instrument to focus the discussion on what the Subcommissions, in obedience to their instructions, consider essential matter. To this has been added any problem or question which arises - for we cannot ignore the quest of other dialogues which, put simply, is the mutual recognition of ministry consequent upon substantial agreement regarding its nature and purpose. No one of us is unaware that an Agreed Statement of this kind does not of itself demand such mutual recognition, but it is a central element in its achievement.

When it comes to producing a draft document, our terms of reference are as before: "to seek a deeper understanding of the reality of the ministry which is consonant with biblical teaching and with the tradition of our common inheritance" (Agreed Statement on the Eucharist, Para.1). We are not seeking to produce a history of ministry or a history of the doctrine of the ministry, but an historically informed document on the ministry. (Minutes, Gazzada, p.13).

Alan C. Clark

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE
OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

The following positions would seem to have been adopted in the Sub-commissions:-

A CHRIST EXERCISES A PRIESTLY MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

He is the unique High Priest of the New Testament.

"According to the New Testament, Christ alone is our High Priest. By his offering, foreshadowed in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, the Levitical priesthood has been superseded by him, the one High Priest of a new order (Heb. 7:23-24)" (NT n.4,p.2)

TILLARD (1) notes that "the most ancient documents never get to the point of affirming explicitly that Jesus is a Priest - not even in the accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper (2).

(1) What Priesthood has the Ministry? Grove Booklets, No.13; p.9

(2) Cfr. Herman VOLK, The Priesthood Today, International Catholic Review, 6/72, pp.340ff:-

"To inquire how the foundation of the priesthood is to be found in Christ himself is not merely to ask whether the New Testament calls Christ a priest and whether he therefore is one. We know that we can and must refer to the Letter to the Hebrews here: it certainly describes Christ insistently and in detail as the definitive and eternal High Priest ... Christ's priesthood is fully acknowledged in the New Testament, and it is evident that New Testament priesthood is and can only be a representation of the priesthood of Christ ...

The Letter to the Hebrews describes Christ's self-abandonment to the Father in the death of the cross as a sacrifice, and speaks of Christ as the eternal High Priest ...

Christ's priesthood is a new kind of priesthood, because his sacrifice is a new kind of sacrifice ... If Christ's death on the cross is a sacrifice, its difference from the sacrifice of the Old Testament does not mean that it is a faint image of them, but that it is the culmination to which the Old Testament sacrifice pointed ... Once we recognise the specific feature of Christ's sacrifice to consist in his self-giving for the sake of the Father, we find this specific priesthood attested frequently in the New Testament, because we find frequent testimony to Christ's total self-giving for the sake of establishing the Kingdom of God. The ephapax, the "once for all" (Heb. 9:12) is a keyword for understanding Christ, not only his death but his whole life, the whole New Testament ...

Christ does not refer to himself as a priest, but he describes and accomplishes his life in a way which according to the Letter to the Hebrews is a novel but highest and definitive kind of priesthood ...

The New Testament evidence shows rather that the priesthood of Christ consists in the free self-sacrifice of his life in order to fulfil his mission and establish the Kingdom of God, which is what we must recognise as the fundamental character of Christ's activity."

HEBREWS is the most explicit document regarding the High Priesthood of Christ. TAVARD (3) expresses the opinion that Hebrews 3:1-2 sees the titles of "apostle" and "High-Priest" as correlative, so that what is true of the latter applies to the former. As a consequence, if there is only one high-priest (which the Epistle clearly states), there is only one Apostle.

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The uniqueness of Christ's priesthood consists not only in the fact that he is the one High Priest but that it is unique (i.e. sui generis) and new.

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B THE WHOLE CHURCH PARTICIPATES IN THE ONE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

"A priestly ministry, the fruit of the sacrifice of Christ, is exercised by the whole People of God" (NT p.3)

"All the members of the Church ... participate in the one priesthood of Christ" (NA p.1)

Though this fundamental assertion is in no way disputed, considerable divergence is evident as to how the priesthood of the whole Church is to be interpreted.

The NA Subcommittee describes it as a "royal priesthood":-

"Mankind is called into a community of faith in Christ to offer to God the true worship of sacrificial self-offering, that is, to be a 'royal priesthood'. This is the offering of a 'reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to God', a spiritual sacrifice which, precisely because it is spiritual and directed to God the creator of the world must also manifest itself in sacrificial stewardship of material things and service to God's world (diakonia). It must be in union with and according to the pattern of the one authentic sacrifice of Christ" (NA p.3)

This definition is not regarded as satisfactory by TAVARD (4) if only because he does not recognise in the overall Report a sufficient

(3) Comments on Oxford Group Report, cfr. A/R.C.I.C.70, p.1

(4) Comments on "Ministerial Priesthood in Relation to Christ and the Church" (ibid)

distinction between the priesthood of "all members of the Church" and that of those "in holy orders".

TILLARD has some relevant passages in his booklet. The priesthood of Christ (and, secondly, of believers) has nothing to do with liturgical acts, but with the 'sacrifice' or offering of holiness of life (5). 'Priesthood' is used to express the function of the People in toto in its life of obedience 'coram Deo et pro hominibus', its mission as witness to God in the face of the world (this is the true exegesis of I Peter 2: 9-10) (6).

He further asserts that in the New Testament there is no explicit relation between the Priesthood of Christ and that of the Church as a whole other than the following:-

"Because of the Priesthood of Christ, the faithful can offer sacrifices acceptable to God (Hebrews); because of the Sacrifice of Christ, the baptised are the People who bear the holy priesthood which is exercised in spiritual sacrifices (I Peter). Nowhere is it said that the priesthood of the Church (a royal priesthood, a priesthood of holiness of life) constitutes a participation in the priesthood of Christ. Nowhere is there any question of a relationship between this priesthood of the Church and that which is exercised in ritual worship." (7)

Cfr. NOTE (8)

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(5) op.cit. pp.10-13

(6) ibid, p.14

(7) loc.cit. p.14

(8) It would seem that the Commission needs a deeper clarification of the "priesthood of the baptised", the so-called common priesthood, and how the idea relates to the 'accepted' position that the whole Church is in m i n i s t r y because of its m i s s i o n. A failure to do this may be an obstacle to a clear presentation of ordained ministry, the prime purpose of our draft document. It could be that imprecise terms are being used and we must indicate what meanings we attach to them.

C THE CHURCH, DEPENDENTLY ON CHRIST, EXERCISES AN APOSTOLIC MINISTRY (APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION)

The position here developed in that 'apostolicity' is a quality of Christ's own mission and, consequently, of the mission of the Church as a whole. The apostolicity of the ordained ministry and its historic embodiment (apostolic succession) are to be located within the apostolic character of the whole Church. It is rightly taken for granted that "all churches agree that the Church needs to be apostolic. They differ, however, on how this apostolicity needs to be visibly expressed ..." (9)

1. Christ is the Apostle of the Father (the 'Sent') (10)

He acts on his own authority but as s e n t by the Father

- as his representative
- with authority to save the world (OG n.1,p.1)

TAVARD'S comments have already been noted (cfr. supra) regarding the appellation of 'Apostle' to Christ. He feels that the New Testament evidence does not give a uniform picture of this quality of "being sent" ('sendness'), particularly in the follow-through to the apostles (whoever they be!).

The OXFORD GROUP shows how this idea is present to early tradition (loc.cit).

2. The Church is the Apostle of Christ

The whole Church is, in a general sense, apostolic because of:-

(a) The action of the Father and the Son

"God the Father ... accomplished his purpose through the sending of the Son; and the world comes to believe on him through whom the Son sends to proclaim the truth"
(OG n.1,p.1)

(9) The Ordained Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective, Faith and Order, vol.VIII/No.4/1972,p.6

(10) "Among the attributes of ministry, apostolicity has a central place. This apostolicity is rooted in God's sending his Son into the world. Christ is the true Apostle" (Ecumenical Perspective, p.6)

"In order to save us the Son of God became man; so God continues to use human agents ... All ministries are used by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Church as the sanctified community for the glory of God and the salvation of men (Eph. 4: 11-13). Within the Church, and in many cases through commissioning by the Church, those exercising these ministries are called and sent by Christ himself with the Holy Spirit's empowering" (NT n.2,p.1)

(b) The action of Christ himself

"The New Testament reports Christ as sending others in the light of his own commission.
(OG n.1,p.1)

3. The Apostolicity of the Church

The Church is clearly apostolic in the sense that it is founded on the apostles (11). But two problems require answers if this statement of faith is to be correctly interpreted.

(a) Who are the Apostles?

"In the New Testament there is no consistent picture of the apostle or unified concept of his office. There is however a striking unanimity in the sources on the point that the apostle of Christ is someone who has been sent as witness to the risen Jesus" (OG n.2(a), p.2)

TAVARD feels that a clear distinction should be made here between the XII and the other Apostles (Paul and others). "The Twelve, it seems to me, have a purely eschatological function ... They have no meaning for the later Church or succession, beyond the one mentioned in Ephesians 2:20: they are the basic stones around the corner-stone, together with the prophets. The (missionary) Apostles, typified by Paul, are the ones who start the commissioning of others for ministry" (Comment)

He notes, in his article in THE JURIST (A Theological Approach to Ministerial Authority, p.313) that bishops and priests, as the Catholic Church now knows them, are

(11) "According to the unanimous tradition of the churches the Church is apostolic because it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Rev. 21: 12-14; Eph. 2: 20)" (Ecumenical Perspectives, p.6)

not descended directly from the Apostles, whatever typographical relationships may obtain between them and the Missionary Apostles of the New Testament or even, more remotely, with the Twelve. They succeed the bishops and priests of the second century.

The SA Group are likewise confused by a certain lack of specification regarding the term 'apostle' in N.2 (cfr. Comment), but they would want the unique position of the XII stressed more, and something of their important symbolism indicated.

(b) What is their connection with the continuance of the Church?

The Oxford Group recognises, as part of our common faith, that, whatever eventual meaning is to be given to the term Apostolic Succession as applied to the ordained ministry, there is what others have called 'an apostolic succession of the whole Church' (Cfr. DOMBES):-

"The Church is called apostolic, for the mission which the Father entrusted to the Son and which Jesus Christ accomplished once for all is carried out in the world by the Holy Spirit through the Church (cf. Jn. 20,21). As the apostles in their ministry were enabled by the Spirit to be faithful to the teaching and ministry of Christ, so too the Church, empowered by the same Spirit, is committed to the same task and enabled to fulfil it faithfully. She demonstrates her apostolicity by her faithfulness to the apostolic commission and by obedience to the apostolic teaching as contained in the Scriptures. By these two touchstones must her worship, belief, life and ministry ever be judged." (OG n.2(b), pp.2-3)

It may be queried (and this is my own comment) whether the use of the phrase, 'the apostolic succession of the whole Church' is helpful rather than its APOSTOLICITY. In any case, TAVARD has some serious criticisms of this section of the OG documents:-

- (a) It is largely non-biblical and would appear to go far beyond the biblical evidence adduced,
- (b) Hence the criteria of apostolicity (faithfulness, obedience) appear to be arbitrary.
- (c) The proclamation of belief in "the apostolic Church" is only in the Creed of Constantinople.

- (d) He is inclined to agree with the dissentient comment regarding the penultimate paragraph of P.3, though his reasons for this do not seem to be those expressed at Oxford (i.e. the uniqueness of the apostles, grave hesitancy about the transmission of their functions, and the need to express apostolic succession primarily in terms of fidelity to apostolic teaching) (12)

The SA Group were critical of the third paragraph (p.3).
(Cfr. Comment)

4. The Apostolic Succession of the Ordained Ministry

- (1) The existence of an ordained ministry in the Church from earliest times is historical fact. This is taken for granted by the Oxford Group who restrict themselves to a doctrinal exposition of its point and purpose.

"The Church understands her apostolic mission to be in some sense dependent on the apostles. For first her faith is confessedly that of the apostles and second at no time has the church existed without a commissioned ministry. The succession of ministers in office has been seen to be a further sign of loyalty to her commission and of identity with the apostles, their teaching and their work" (OG 2(b), p.3)

- (2) The Southern African Group assert their faith as follows:-

"We are led by the New Testament to believe that the Holy Spirit does inspire the covenant community, the Church, and in that sense the Holy Spirit, through the Church, does commission and empower those called by God to discharge particular functions in the Church's life. (John 20: 22-23)" (SA II, p.2)

- (3) Apostolic Succession, as applied to the ordained ministry, implies an historical dependence on the apostolic church of the New Testament. R.H.FULLER puts the problem as to how this was achieved in the context of the situation facing the Church at the close of the New Testament period:-

(12) For an attempt to answer the presuppositions of this argument against apostolic succession, in the Catholic sense, cfr. L. BOUYER: Ministère Ecclésiastique et Succession Apostolique - my transcription and résumé (Clark)

"How would the Church remain apostolic when the ranks of the apostles (?) were being progressively depleted by death? This was a vital question if the Church was to maintain its identity, which rested on its creation and fidelity to the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ" (13)

The question is answered, of course, by the emergence of the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. But the further question arises as to how far, at the level of faith, this is normative for the ministry.

The problem facing the Commission (it seems to me) is how we must face AT THIS PRESENT MOMENT OF OUR DIALOGUE the fundamental questions which are raised here. No one is doubting that the post-apostolic Church saw the ordained ministry as an essential historical embodiment of her Apostolicity.

TAVARD has his own thesis here. The growth of authority in the earliest times of the Church has no definite pattern but shows accommodation to the historical circumstances of the early Church in process of development. Presbyteroi and episcopoi seem to refer to identical offices. The bearers of this office later came to be conceived as hierarchs, i.e. sacred persons, connoting hierateuma or sacerdotium. This was not a borrowing from pagan sources but the result of the non-occurrence of the expected Parousia. For in the New Testament hierateuma etc. are essentially eschatological terms, belonging to the heavenly kingdom. In the second century the heavenly model is applied to the terrestrial Ecclesia as a theological necessity. ("The cultic priesthood is required now by the eschatological dimension of the Church's life." Cfr. THE JURIST, art.cit. p.313). His conclusion is:-

"Christian ministry derives from the convergence of the care and administration of the Churches with the eschatological function of sacerdotium upon one type of officer" (art.cit. p.314)

(13) Apostolicity and Ministry, New York, 1971: p.68.

The question, then, appears to be: by what criterion, given the multiplicity of ministries in the New Testament, may spiritual authority be institutionalised in the second century pattern of the ordained or commissioned ministry?

Another way of putting the underlying question is: is fidelity to the Apostolic witness what we mean by Apostolic Succession? What are the so-called biblical terms of reference here? What is Apostolic witness?

The Oxford Group is content to point to fidelity to the faith of the Apostles and to the fact that at no time has the Church existed without a commissioned ministry. "The succession of ministers in office has been seen to be a further sign of loyalty to her commission and of identity with the apostles, their teaching and their work" (OG 2(b), p.3). The Ecumenical Perspective Report is somewhat more specific when it asserts the apostolic character of the ministry is verified by the latter's embodiment of the essential characteristics of the Church of the apostles:-

faithful witness to the apostolic teaching,
transmission of ministerial responsibility,
community in love,
sacramental life,
service to the needy,
dialogue with and openness to the world,
sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each
(Cfr. op.cit. p.7. Cfr. also DOMBES, p.16)

It is clear that the Church must continue and that, even granted passing historical influences, a certain pattern is seen as necessary. Continuity and unity (i.e. SUCCESSION) are marks of Christ's Church and determine in some way Christ's ministry through the Church. Bishop BUTLER detects the presence of a principle of co-optation as basic to Apostolic Succession (cfr. infra). Can we ignore the evidence of a "handing down of ministerial authority through the historical process" (OG 2(b), p.3)? In the Catholic conception of ministry, "the

legitimacy of authority has been tied to the continued succession of ministers in office from the primitive Church to the present." (TAVARD, Art.cit., p.323).

However, the meaning of this process is to be found in due authorisation rather than in mere succession in office. This is attested by our concept of ORDINATION.

5. THE PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

- (a) "The office and function of ministers originate in the specific purpose of Christ for his Church. They are not simply a particular expression of 'the priesthood of all believers', but exist to promote the holiness and mission of the whole Church" (NT p.2)

"The basic purpose of ordaining a ministry is to help the Church to realise itself and to fulfil its total ministry" (SA I,p.1)

"... enables the Church to carry out its mission" (SA II,p.2)

- (b) Ministers are specifically ordained to represent sacramentally Christ's own ministry (Cfr. Ordination Rite: SA IV, p.4)

- for the preservation and actualisation of the apostolicity of the Church;

- for the orderly transmission of the apostolic ministry in order to preserve apostolic faith. (SA I).

The sacramentality of the ordained ministry is, therefore, firmly asserted - but I do not find it coherently developed in the SA Report except perhaps by the doctrine of the Holy Spirit under Section II - but I am left confused! The idea of "representing" - so analogous to 'memorial' in the context of the Eucharist - demands fuller treatment. (A.C.C.)

The SA Report also quotes the ambiguous statement from Faith and Order (Montreal) with apparent approval. Yet we have the unresolved contradiction of the words "normally" and "essential"!

The NA Report (p.2) sees the purpose of Ordination in the fact that bishops and presbyters have the chief

responsibility for the life of the Church and for the purity of the Gospel.

But both Reports see the sacramentality of the ordained ministry particularly realised in the Eucharist where the minister exercises a uniquely priestly (sacerdotium) rôle. (NA p.4: SA IV, p.5)

"He does what Christ did on the cross and represents Christ to the community. In this lies his priestly office" (NA p.3.)

Approaching this fact from quite a different angle, TAVARD sees the ultimate authority of the ordained ministry as residing in the Eucharist. "The only point which has consistently stood at the centre of the priestly function and life has been the Eucharist" (art.cit. p.324). "Ministerial authority is no less and no more than that of the Lord as present in the eucharistic ministry ... As the officer of a local Church in its universal dimension, the ordaining bishop conveys to the ordinand the eucharistic authority needed for the functions he is expected to fulfil." (ibid).

(c) The Rôle of Community

This aspect is particularly emphasised by the SA Group (cfr. also Comment). The point would appear to be that the inter-relation of ordained ministry and the community which it serves is one of complementarity:-

"Ministry is meaningless apart from the community whose faith it must serve and preserve. Community cannot exist as the sacrament of unity in Christ without ministry" (SA III, p.4)

but also:-

"Apostolicity includes both the community of faith and the ordained ministry" (ibid)

"The local community is part of the catholic community not only in virtue of its common faith but also because its ministers share in the collegial ministry that is part of the structure of the Catholic Church" (ibid)

(d) The Authority of the Ordained Ministry

(a) Not by delegation from the community:-

"It (the ministry) is the gift of God to the Church, instituted by Jesus Christ, and communicated through sacramental ordination"
(NA p.1)

(b) but by commissioning = ordination, i.e. not just an individual commissioning nor merely a local authorisation - but the co-option into a corporate ministerial structure belonging to the whole Church. (Cfr. SA II, p.2; III, p.4)

But for the ultimate source of ministerial authority cfr. TAVARD supra.

As regards the RITE (cfr. SA IV, p.5), one criticism has been of a failure to grasp more firmly the nettle of the question of form and matter in ordination - for this is an area of historic disagreement between our two Churches.

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6. VALIDITY

This idea is not frontally approached by the Subcommissions but it is a burning issue in other dialogues, and Bishop BUTLER has written expressly on the point (cfr, the three articles in January, February and March, 1973, in THE TABLET.

Among his central propositions are these:-

- I (1) "A 'valid' sacrament is one that is really guaranteed by God as a means of grace, and is really authorised by him" (p.148, col.3)
- (2) A sacrament can be inefficacious, even though valid.
- (3) It is possible to speak of an invalid sacrament that is efficacious, i.e. we cannot say that in these circumstances God denies the grace normally associated with the valid sacrament. (p.148, col.3 - p.149, col.1)

- (4) "The efficaciousness of sacraments is to some extent verifiable ... but the efficaciousness of 'sacraments' (i.e. alleged sacraments) is no proof, not even an indication, of their validity" (p. 149, col.2)

II In his second article he answers the concrete question if it matters whether a sacrament is valid or invalid.

- (1) He gives a vigorous affirmative because Christ instituted the Sacraments.

"Belief in validity of the sacraments one receives is a condition sine qua non of their efficaciousness." (p.174, col.3)

At the centre of his argument is the fact that the Redemption of Christ, which makes it possible for invalid sacraments to be efficacious, is a whole economy involving "the sacraments whereby the historical redemption is to be made historically actual for us in particular historical occurrences." (p.175, col.2)

- (2) Invalid sacraments can only be efficacious if there exist objectively valid sacraments (p.177, col.1)
- (3) Freedom of access to the sacraments of churches involved in a scheme of reunion (('intercommunion')) requires the conviction of all concerned that these sacraments are valid and their ministers equally authentic. (ibid).

III The Application to MINISTRY

The Bishop analyses the 'office' of APOSTLESHIP as portrayed in the New Testament:-

- (1) An 'apostle of Christ' is "a person commissioned by Christ (or God) to carry out a function or group of functions, or to represent Christ and his authority in determinate situations" (p.196, col.2)

- (2) One function of "the apostles" was "to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ and to Christ's own mission". As 'eye witnesses' they were especially equipped to do this.

But the function was to BEAR WITNESS in order to 'make disciples of all nations' - and Christianity would have been historically doomed if this function had been restricted to the EYE WITNESS

i.e. the essential function is transmissible (ibid).

- (3) A special ministry was instituted by Christ because the Church is, and was intended to be, a corporate entity, and a corpus of this kind requires within it a nucleus of special authority (cfr. the analogies of St. Paul).

The need for a nucleus was present within the apostolic college - hence PETER who is the principle of unity (p.197, col.3)

- (4) Though historical evidence is meagre regarding the survival of this structure after the apostolic age, "for a Christian its survival is a necessary inference from his faith in Christ" (p.198, col.1)

- (5) The authority of the apostolic college is "Christ-derived" and its purpose is "to make the authority of the historical Christ actual in times and places where Christ was not physically present himself" (ibid)

- (6) It is perpetuated by CO-OPTION.

"The episcopal office and college are part of the sacramental structure of the Church" (ibid, col.2)

- (7) The indispensable sign of this co-option is not any particular 'form and matter' but "the fact that it (i.e. the outward sign) is recognisable.

in the cultural context in which it is 'posited', as a conventional sign of the will of the ordained to co-opt" (ibid).

Historically, the imposition of hands seems to have been a regular feature of ordination.

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7. TOWARDS THE RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF MINISTRIES

This is obviously the intention behind our mutual work but as part of the process whereby we aspire to achieve 'full communion' in organic unity.

But there has been considerable comment on this theme throughout the ecumenical world, and some parts might helpfully be noted, but not in any special order:-

(1) From our own VENICE PAPER:-

To assert there is a new situation since Apostolicae Curae "we should have to show that a development of doctrine has occurred with regard to the theological presuppositions of the Bull ... consistent with the principals which had supported a quite different practice in the past ... If a consistent development of doctrine is to be demonstrated, we must show that no dogma has been denied, but that theological pre-suppositions have been changed" (p.67)

(2) Bishop BUTLER proposes two questions and offers his own answers:-

Can the Pope, with the College of Bishops, invalidate - for the future - a particular sign of ordination or consecration?

Yes, thereby declaring that the College does not recognise such or such a sign as signifying the transmission of Christ's authority (ibid).

But this "invalidation" cannot be retroactive - unless it was shown historically that what was at the time the accepted sign had not been posited. (ibid, col.3)

Can the Pope, as representing the episcopal college, "validate" the ministry of a whole separated communion, sine addito, (i.e. by a simple declaration)?

Provided that the list of those thus 'ordained' (or, in the case of uncertainty, conditionally ordained) was definite, and supposing that the Church had full authority over the form of the sacrament of orders, it might seem to some that the Pope could do this, and the idea is worth consideration. (ibid)

but recognition of the validity of an Order requires that it is shown to be already valid.

"My proposal is not 'recognition' but 'ordination'." (ibid).

(3) From THE ORDAINED MINISTRY IN ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE (Faith and Order):-

- (i) Because of its wide coverage, this document allows greater latitude than episcopal churches would normally accept.
- (ii) It states: "All churches agree, however, that the primary expression of apostolic succession is to be found in the Church as a whole" (p.6) (Is this true? - ACC)
- (iii) The Report notes the tendency of today to interpret episcopal succession "as an efficacious sign, not a guarantee" of the continuity of the Church in apostolic faith and mission. But an analysis of historical evidence does not inhibit the possibility of recognising in non-episcopal churches "a continuity of apostolic faith, mission and ministry" (pp.8-9)

It goes on to assert:-

"The only thing that is incompatible with contemporary historical and theological research is the notion that the episcopal succession is identified with and embraces the apostolicity of the whole Church."

- (iv) In its section entitled: TOWARDS THE RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF MINISTRIES, it offers a most interesting analysis of a possible progressive scheme of reconciliation and recognition:-

- (a) Mutual respect, in which the ministers of the Churches recognise each other as representative spokesmen of their respective communities, without any necessary theological implications.
 - (b) Recognition of the ministers of the other Church as raised up by God for the equipment of a genuinely ecclesial community, even though their ministry lacks the fullness which is promised to the apostolic ministry. Such recognition provides a basis for a measure of common witness and even, under certain conditions, for occasional joint celebrations of the Eucharist.
 - (c) Recognition of the ministry of the other Church as the apostolic ministry given by Christ. Such recognition might lead to full communion between the two Churches provided that agreement on other divisive issues could also be reached.
 - (d) Mutual recognition of the communities, each of which agrees to "recognise the other church as Christ's Church as much as they regard themselves as such".
- (v) Along with DOMBES it proposes that the question of the necessity or not of episcopal succession should be solved by the acceptance of the following proposals:-
- (a) Churches which have preserved the episcopal succession have to recognise the real content of the ordained ministry that exists in churches that do not have such an episcopal succession. In spite of the mutual separation of both kinds of Church, the God who is ever faithful to his promises gives to the communities that lack the episcopal succession but that live in a succession of apostolic faith, a ministry of the word and sacraments the value of which is attested by its fruits.
 - (b) The churches without episcopal succession have to recognise that, while they may not lack a succession in the apostolic faith, they do not have the fullness of the sign of apostolic succession. If full visible unity is to be achieved, the fullness of the sign of apostolic succession ought to be recovered.

The main thesis of both consultations is that episcopacy is the fullness of the sign of apostolic succession.

The DOMBES Group has made the point:-

The whole Church is apostolic, but within it there is a special apostolic succession in ministry instituted by Christ. "The fullness of apostolic succession in the ministry implies continuity in the transmission of the ministerial office, fidelity of one's preaching to the teaching of the apostles, and conformity of one's life to the gospel and to the demands of mission" (N.13)

It also required that the pastoral office must demonstrate "symbolically" the continuity of its mission as dependent on Christ:-

"This implies the union of the minister with those of other times and places in one and the same college, issuing from the apostles" (N.21)

(vi) Cfr. DOMBES Nos.38-46 for a scheme for reconciliation and recognition.

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APPENDIX (A)

A From a ms. by Avery DULLES, S.J. : Some Recent Ecumenical Statements and Controversies. (Submitted by Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J.)

- (1) The author reviews recent agreements (not ours) and especially commends the DOMBES Group and its work.
- (2) Though the universal impact of the 1973 Debate in Germany - between the working group of six university ecumenical institutes and the German Catholic Hierarchy - must be relatively small, it may help to focus our own inquiries to record the general terms of the discussion. The JWG produced a Memorandum: "The Reform and Recognition of Church Ministries" (Munich-Mainz, 1973), and is mainly the work of:-

Lutheran

Hans Heinrich WOLF (Bochum)
 Edmund SCHLINK (Heidelberg)
 Wolfhart PANNENBERG (Munich)

Roman Catholic

Heinrich FRIES (Munich)
 Peter LENGFELD (Munster)
 Hans KUNG (Tübingen)

This Memo (12 pages) consists of 23 theses:-

- I - the situation of Church ministries (Theses 1-5)
- II - the understanding of Church ministries (Theses 6-17)
- III - the consequences (Theses 18-23)

(3) Some of the Theses:-

- (a) From the beginning there was a multiplicity of ministries engaged in fulfilling the fundamental mission of the Church i.e. "to proclaim the crucified Jesus as risen Lord" - all gifts of the same Spirit.
- (b) "While episcopal ordination is not the exclusive way by which the apostolic succession of leaders is obtained and recognised, the imposition of hands is a help for safeguarding the apostolic succession and is a sign of unity and continuity"
- (c) "The difference between episcopal and presbyteral ordination is an historical development, and cannot be grounded in divine law. The question whether ordination is a sacrament is simply a matter of terminology" (Thesis 22)
- (d) "Apostolic succession is no longer seen as necessarily requiring that the ordained receive imposition of hands from a bishop."

(4) DULLES, after a full examination of the various propositions, remarks:-

- (a) "It seems to follow that in certain cases ordination is confirmatory of a ministry already exercised by virtue of a call from the community or an evident charism from the Spirit, rather than constitutive of a ministry that previously did not exist" (cfr. Thesis 22).
- (b) "With reference to methodology, the authors incline to attach little or no weight to post-biblical tradition. Various statements especially in Theses 4 and 14, give the impression that the New Testament alone is taken as the decisive norm of truth. Walter Kasper (the R.C. theologian, in his own comment on the Memo) speaks in this connection of "a 'salto mortale' over almost a thousand years" (31).
- (c) "The priestly or pastoral office is viewed primarily in terms of community leadership in modern democratic style". This is a playing down of the biblical and traditional notion that the pastor speaks and acts authoritatively in the person of Christ. Also seems to disavow the Vatican II distinction (of essence,

not merely of degree) between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained (p.33)

(d) "On the subject of apostolic succession, the Memorandum agrees that many other ecumenical statements in insisting that the succession of ministers must be situated within the larger context of the apostolicity of the entire Church. Like the statements of Dombes and Marseilles (Faith & Order), the Memo contends that a minister may in some real and important sense stand within the apostolic succession even though he has not been ordained by a bishop. Granting the correctness of this position, the question remains whether non-episcopal ordinations are as regular and efficacious as episcopal ordinations."

Dulles is especially critical of Thesis 22 (cfr. supra (3)(c)):-

"This assertion seems to imply that nothing which develops historically can be a matter of divine law. Catholics will find it hard to agree. As Cardinal Jaeger and others were quick to point out, Vatican II taught that episcopal ordination is a sacrament and is of divine institution." (pp.34-35)

He also approves of the comment of Walter KASPER:-

"The fulness of apostolic succession demands communion with the bishops who stand within that succession. In the absence of such communion, an ordination by presbyters or laymen can only be a deficient form (modus deficiens) of apostolic succession"

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APPENDIX (B)

A PANDORA'S BOX OF QUESTIONS

(1) DULLES writes that the main questions at issue in the overall Ecumenical Dialogue are:-

- The nature and necessity of ordination
- The sacramentality of ordination
- The sacramental character
- The divine institution of the episcopate
- The manner of assuring apostolic succession in the ministry.

"Apart from the papacy, the most difficult questions about ministry centre about the episcopate. The consensus statements as yet fail to register any real meeting of minds on the crucial question whether the episcopal structure is necessary as a matter of 'divine law'" (p.39)

"Protestants will have to ask themselves whether they can accept bishops as at least a desirable sign and guarantee of the authority of the pastoral office, of the Church's continuity with its own past, and of the mutual unity among particular churches. Catholics, on the other hand, must take more seriously the fact that the episcopal office, as it concretely exists, reflects the influence of cultural and social forces since New Testament times. The whole question of 'necessity' and 'divine law' will have to be re-thought in the light of these various findings" (pp.39-40)

(2) My own immediate questions are:-

1. If our basic intention is to determine the will of Christ regarding the ministry of his Church, what are our specific criteria for determining this?
2. What is "the priesthood of the baptised"? We seem to be confused. Cfr. Note 8, p.5.
3. Is the distinction between "the apostolic succession of the whole Church" and "the apostolic succession of the ministry" acceptable as formulated (not necessarily by us)?

What does it mean other than that the contemporary Church is always the historical embodiment of the Church founded by Christ on the foundation of the Apostles even though, as a living community of men, it will reflect greater or less fidelity to Christ's commission (Ecclesia semper reformanda)?

4. Is it acceptable to say that "the apostolic succession of the ministry" is the fullness of the sign of the apostolicity of the whole Church?
5. Is "the apostolic succession of the ministry" to be equated in practice with the continuity of the episcopate as a living body doing certain things - again, more or less well? Has there been an acceptable development of our understanding of this Catholic position?
6. In the light of recent interpretations, how far is the three-fold ministry normative? Cfr. TAVARD'S article in THE JURIST.