

The report of the International Theological Commission, dated October 10, 1970, on "The Priestly Ministry" (Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1971) ends with the following SIX PROPOSITIONS, which I have been asked by the steering committee to translate and circulate to members of ARCIC:

- 1) All hierarchical ministry in the Church derives from the institution of the Apostles. Such a ministry, willed by Christ is essential to the Church: it is by means of it that the Lord's saving action becomes sacramentally and historically present to all generations.
- 2) In the New Testament there is no other priesthood but that of Christ. This priesthood is the fulfilment of all the ancient priesthoods and supersedes them. All the faithful in the Church are called to share in it. The hierarchical ministry is necessary to the building-up of the body of Christ, where this calling is realised.
- 3) Christ alone has achieved the perfect sacrifice in the offering of himself to the will of the Father. The episcopal and presbyteral ministry is therefore sacerdotal in the sense that it makes present Christ's service in effective proclamation of the gospel message, in the gathering and direction of the christian community, the remission of sins and the eucharistic celebration, where Christ's unique sacrifice is in a special way made effective in the present.
- 4) The Christian who is called to the sacerdotal ministry therefore receives by ordination not merely an external function but a special share in the priesthood of Christ, by virtue of which he represents Christ before the community and at its head. Hence ministry is a specific form of the life of Christian service in the Church. This specific quality is most emphasised when the minister presides at the eucharist - a presidency which is necessary for the full reality of christian worship. The proclamation of the word and the pastoral charge are both focussed on the eucharist which consecrates all Christian being in the world.
- 5) Even though we acknowledge a certain period of ripening of church structures, there can be no opposing of a purely charismatic constitution of Pauline churches to the ministerial constitution of other churches. For the primitive church there is not opposition but a complementary relationship between the freedom of the Spirit in the bestowal of His gifts and the existence of a ministerial structure.
- 6) The New Testament ministry has a collegial dimension and there is an analogy between the collegial relationship of the bishops to the pope in the universal church and of the priests to their bishop in the local church.

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June 28, 1973