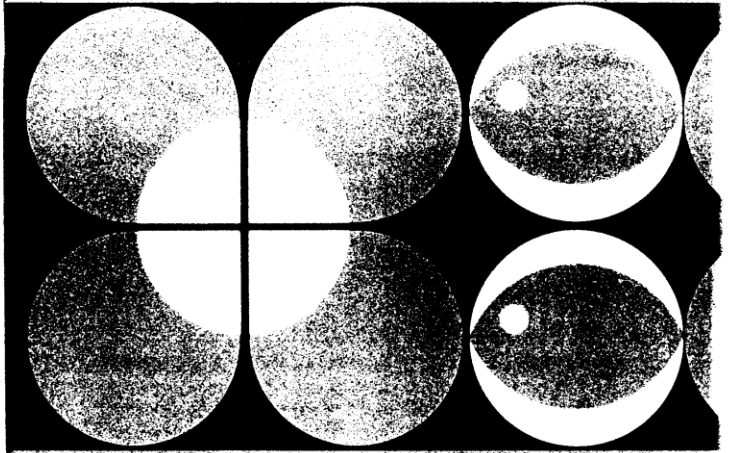


# MINISTRY & ORDINATION



The Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry agreed by the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, Canterbury 1973.

The official text, together with an introduction and commentary by the Rt Rev Alan C Clark, Bishop of Elmham Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of ARCIC.

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## MINISTRY AND ORDINATION

### AN AGREED STATEMENT OF THE ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

#### I. INTRODUCTION

by RT. REV. ALAN C. CLARK, Bishop of Elmham

The Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission started many when it announced from Windsor in September 1971 that it had reached 'substantial agreement' on the doctrine of the eucharist. Though there had been considerable publicity, it became quite clear that even the existence of this commission was unknown to a very large number of people. There was further confusion as to its authority and hence the precise status of the document that it published at the end of that year. It was necessary, for instance, for Cardinal Willebrands to clarify the position on the occasion of a broadcast on the Vatican Radio, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January, 1972), in which he affirmed categorically:

"Obviously this Statement does not constitute agreement between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. Agreement has been reached, for the moment, at the level of the International Commission."

Today a lot of this confusion has been eliminated and the appearance of a second AGREED STATEMENT, this time on the nature and purpose of ministry and in particular of the ordained ministry, is less likely to provoke the widespread misunderstandings of two years ago.

However, the commission has been well advised to give a factual account of its origin and its work, which will enable the reader to grasp the process by which it has reached agreement on one of the major divisive issues between the two communions. The history, therefore, of the elaboration of the Agreed Statement has been recorded in some detail and published, with the authority of the Co-Chairmen, as an appendix to the text.\* Copious references are also given to the sources which supported the work of the commission. In the present booklet this appendix finds a more logical place before the text.

\* "Ministry and Ordination: An Agreed Statement of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission"; S.P.C.K., London, 1973.

A general review, however, of where A.R.C.I.C. now stands may prove a useful introduction both to the history of its work and to the actual text of the present Agreed Statement. For the STATEMENT ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST,\* when that was published, opened up a vigorous debate within our two communions which is still going on. Not all are convinced that a real agreement was achieved and some flatly deny it. There are real hesitations. But, to a greater or lesser degree, theological and pastoral opinion is favourable, on the grounds that the two pivotal doctrines of eucharistic faith — that the eucharist is the *memorial* of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose atoning sacrifice reconciled the world to God, and that in the eucharist the bread and wine become his Body and Blood (the Real Presence) — were fully elaborated in the document, thereby illustrating that, at the level of faith, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, as represented in the commission and in many members outside of it, were in substantial agreement. Discussion has proceeded at every level and promoted a growing convergence and a growing acceptance, though the sceptics are still with us.

There is little doubt that some hoped for more from the commission. What, they ask, are the practical implications of this agreement? Is the practice of intercommunion thereby sanctioned? The plain answer is that the commission is not the competent authority to give such a sanction. It has an exact brief — to achieve doctrinal consensus and thereby to promote the reconciliation of our respective churches. The practical implications need to be worked out in a far larger context. But without agreement on what is the Christian faith and how it should be preached, the practical steps towards this reconciliation lack a firm and lasting foundation. The growing together in love and service — the way of reconciliation — is indeed full of practical implications, but agreement in faith is at the heart of this growth. Without it nothing practical will endure.

\* \* \*

The public is now confronted with a second Agreed Statement, this time concerning MINISTRY AND ORDINATION. There could still be serious misunderstanding of the point and purpose of these Statements if it were thought that they marked the final decision of our two communities. This would be to miss the point completely! Like its predecessor, it marks the beginning of a developing dialogue which is intended to embrace

\* "An Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine", S.P.C.K., 1972.

all the members of these communities, not just theologians but everyone engaged in the life and ministry of the Church. To them it is offered in the firm hope that they will recognize their own faith in the declaration of the common mind of the commission.

Agreed Statements are a new kind of ecclesiastical document. They are not agreed by the highest authorities, nor by the Church at large, but by a commission officially sponsored by these authorities. They are formulated in a language acceptable to all members of the commission but not wholly familiar to those more accustomed to the style and vocabulary of their church's "official" declarations of faith. They seek to provide a deeper examination of the issues that have historically divided our churches and to provide a wider context in which such problems may eventually be resolved.

They are the first word of doctrinal reconciliation, not the last. They cannot be adequately evaluated in isolation but only as part of an overall programme. Their purpose is to promote the convergence of the churches by establishing unity of faith.

It really becomes apparent how radical a development these Statements represent when Christians, who were separated on doctrines which they once regarded as essential to the proclamation of the gospel, now assert that these divisions of the past (which still remain) can be — and are being — healed. Not all at once, of course, but step by step through the rigorous re-examination of what is the faith we both profess and affirm to be of God.

We are in process of reconciliation precisely because on the fundamental issues of *eucharist, ministry and authority*, we are steadily achieving a common understanding. The reconciliation of our churches and their ministries is the goal of our endeavour. But this implies other important considerations not directly broached in the commission. To show, however, that we understand the eucharist in fundamentally the same way and to demonstrate we profess the same doctrine of ministry forces the two communions to explore the misunderstandings (and differences) that separate us not only in these areas but also in others equally sensitive. For it is surely time to have done with divisions among those who profess the name of Christ.

The same *method* has been followed as in the discussions that led to the eucharistic statement. We were intent on achieving "deeper understanding of ministry which is consonant with biblical teaching and with the traditions of our common inheritance" (cf. Text: Para. 1), without attempting an exhaustive treatment of the subject. We have therefore given primary attention to those areas of doctrinal disagreement which divided the

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — the consequences of which explain our present situation.

While itself tenaciously holding to the doctrine and practice of episcopacy throughout the difficult years between the Elizabethan settlement and the Act of Uniformity of 1662, the Anglican Church approached the *necessity* of episcopal ordination with less certainty. In a time of persecution and exile, there was a profound desire not to "unchurch" those on the Continent (and in Scotland) who did not admit this necessity. Anglican divines were convinced of the apostolic origin of episcopacy but were not convinced that where there were no bishops, no church would legitimately exist. Even though episcopacy were *de jure divino*, would the essential reality of the Church still be maintained without it? Did not unprecedented circumstances argue for the validity of temporary solutions? Hence the now famous question of whether episcopacy was necessary for the *plene esse* rather than for the *esse* of the Church. But, whatever the opinions of individual theologians or of even whole schools of theology, the Anglican Church maintained its episcopal structure and the necessity of episcopal ordination.\*

The Roman Catholic Church, however, held firmly to the established and traditional doctrine of the ordained ministry as of divine institution (cf. TRENT: Sess. XXIII, Can. 6, DS...). The pertinent canons of the Council of Trent, meagre in number and content in comparison with the canons on the eucharist, are a summary of the traditional doctrine directed against the new ideas of the Reformed Churches concerning the nature and status of the ordained minister of the gospel. Not least among these was that the ordained ministry was not more than a development of the common priesthood of the whole Church.

It was against this historical background that the commission felt it should begin its work. But the members were not to limit themselves to the specific questions of ordination and episcopal succession. The

\* For the most recent statement of the official Anglican position cf. "Partners in Mission": Anglican Consultative Council, Second Meeting, Dublin, 1973: p. 3:—

"Each part of Christ's divided Church has its own convictions about right order as well as its own expression of the faith. Anglicans believe that bishops have a role as sacramental agents of the unity of the Body, in time and in the Church they serve, locally and more widely. We therefore, in our own Church, insist that the minister of the Eucharist should demonstrate, by his episcopal ordination, the unity and continuity of the Body. Within our Church we hold this rule invariably, although not always for identical theological reasons. Other Christians do not have this conviction, and we respect their position while longing to share with them our own."

perspective, particularly in the light of the rich doctrine of the Second Vatican Council, had to be wider. This is not to dismiss as irrelevant the controversies of the past and the questions they still raise but to site them in a larger context. To define the ordained ministry solely in terms of the ministry of the word and in the proclamation of the gospel or solely in terms of a sacramental ministry centred on the celebration of the eucharist is equally false to the scriptures and to the traditional understanding of the Church. To speak of the ordained ministry without determining its roots in the apostolic community (apostolic succession) would show a completely misguided approach to the ministry of today's Church. Furthermore, if the doctrinal development of the last thirty years was not to be betrayed, the ordained ministry (instituted by Christ) must be seen in relation to the ministry and service which characterises the life and activity of the whole Church.

It is significant that the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission is not alone in selecting the theme of ministry for detailed examination. Other dialogues in progress throughout the world are engaged in the same venture, and the findings of these dialogues and of a considerable number of special monographs were valuable source-material for its own deliberations. However, it is important to note that the members represent two churches who regard the existence of an ordained ministry as essential to their constitution. We did not, therefore, start from cold — as though it were first necessary to establish that the Church of Christ required this ministry. In the light of the evidence that underpins this conviction of faith, our aim was to achieve agreement about its nature and purpose according to the will and purpose of the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Some people, it is already clear, will approach this document in the hope that the issues raised in the Bull APOSTOLICAE CURAE of 1896 will find a new solution. They look for a pronouncement on the validity or invalidity of the 'Orders' concerning which we have reached a doctrinal consensus.

This commission recognises, however, that such issues cannot be solved in isolation. To agree as to what is a bishop or priest does not give an answer to the question where he is to be found — there are other factors to be taken into consideration. A bishop or priest is what he is by the authority and commission of Christ as the living Head of the Church, for no merely human authorisation suffices. To assert the validity of our respective ministries presupposes that we are in agreement that they are *in fact* substantially identical and that

we are in agreement as to the criteria whereby *this can be made manifest* in the Church. Questions of authority are immediately involved.

We owe it to everyone to be very clear on our credentials. Though already initiated (cf. THE VENICE PAPERS), the deliberations of the commission on this matter are not yet sufficiently developed for it to offer even provisional judgments. In any case, when we achieve a similar consensus on the doctrine of authority and magisterium, and specifically on questions relating to the Petrine Office (primacy, infallibility, etc.), we must accept that, though these doctrines would no longer represent an obstacle to our complete reconciliation, our consensus, on its own, will not and cannot achieve that reconciliation. Yet to be reconciled in faith does present a new situation which, under the Holy Spirit, will demand a radical appraisal of why we remain divided.

The Agreed Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry is the result of some five years work, even though this subject was not given the full attention of the commission until after the publication of the Windsor document at the end of 1971. The following section gives a detailed account of the commission's work so that the text of the Agreement can be historically sited within the overall programme of the commission. The text itself is preceded by a summary guide to its contents and followed by a commentary. For these the present author must accept sole responsibility.

## II. THE DISCUSSION ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY\*

In 1966 Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury announced their intention of inaugurating "a serious dialogue founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions" in the hope that this might "lead to that unity in truth for which Christ prayed."<sup>1</sup>

\* This account of how the commission reached its Agreed Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry was written by the Rev. Colin Davey and is issued with the authority of the Co-Chairmen.

© H.R. McAdoo, Bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin; Alan C. Clark, Bishop of Elmham, 1973.

<sup>1</sup> Common Declaration of March 24th 1966 in "The Archbishop of Canterbury's Visit to Rome March 1966", Church Information Office 1966, p. 14.

the complete absence of any doubt about their orders on the part of Anglicans, as expressed for instance in a letter written in July 1925 by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht on the matter.<sup>9</sup> However, the policy of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission has been to approach this question not in isolation but in the context of the doctrine of the Church, the sacraments, and the ministry, as was recommended by the Preparatory Commission's "Malta Report":<sup>10</sup>

"The theology of the ministry forms part of the theology of the Church and must be considered as such. It is only when sufficient agreement has been reached as to the nature of the priesthood and the meaning to be attached in this context to the word "validity" that we could proceed, working always jointly, to the application of this doctrine to the Anglican ministry of today."

At the first meeting of the International Commission at Windsor in 1970 Dr. Arthur Vogel, in a paper on "The Church, Intercommunion, and the Ministry", commended the way in which the Anglican/Roman Catholic Consultation in the United States "tried to avoid hardened attitudes and the mind set on old controversies by looking at the ministry within the setting of the eucharistic community as a whole." In a parallel paper Dr. Jean Tillard asked the primary question: "Have we the same conception of the nature and purpose of the ministry?", and answered it by showing a remarkable doctrinal convergence in two recent documents; the Ordinal and its Preface drawn up for the proposed Anglican/Methodist Unity Scheme in England, and the Ordination Rites of the new Pontificale Romanum.<sup>11</sup> Following discussion of these and other papers, the commission was divided into three groups on *eucharist, ministry and authority* to outline the problems and questions to be worked on in preparation for its second full meeting. The group on *ministry* proposed that this should be studied under three main headings: The Essence of Ministry, Ministry in a Divided Church, and Renewal and Service. The preparatory work on this was assigned to a subcommission convened by Dr. Vogel and Fr. Tavard in the United States. They corresponded with Archbishop Arnott who was a member of the Joint Working Group of the Australian Council of Churches and the

<sup>9</sup> G.K.A. Bell, "Documents on Christian Unity, a Selection 1920-30", O.U.P. 1925, p. 202.

<sup>10</sup> Para. 19 in Clark and Davey op. cit. p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> J.M.R. Tillard, "Roman Catholics and Anglicans: the Eucharist", in *One in Christ* 1973, No. 2 pp. 181ff. This is the English translation of a revised and extended version of his original paper which was published in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, June 1971.

The conversations between the Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians who have engaged in this dialogue have been in two stages. In 1967 and 1968 the Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission met "to draw up a programme and establish priorities in the theological dialogue, as well as considering matters of practical ecclesiastical co-operation".<sup>2</sup> From January 1970 onwards the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission has been meeting to discuss the subjects selected by the Preparatory Commission. At its first meeting the International Commission decided, on the basis of the recommendations made in the Preparatory Commission's "Malta Report", that the three subjects on which their attention should first be concentrated were: *eucharist, ministry, and authority*.

In discussing these the commission's aim has been to see whether it is possible to "find a way of advancing together beyond the doctrinal disagreements of the past" to a point where these doctrines "will no longer constitute an obstacle to the unity we seek."<sup>3</sup> Its method has been to re-examine these questions in the light both of "biblical teaching and the tradition of our common inheritance"<sup>4</sup> and of "the development of the thinking in our two Communion"<sup>5</sup> about them. Within such a study, the members of the commission have also asked themselves and each other "what is our faith on this point? What is our understanding of this doctrine?" By asking and answering such questions it has proved possible for the commission to discover "a convergence of testimonies,"<sup>6</sup> and to express in its Agreed Statements a true consensus "on essential matters where it considers that doctrine admits no divergence."<sup>7</sup>

From the first, Anglican/Roman Catholic discussions of the doctrine of the ministry have had to take into account both "the judgment of the Roman Catholic Church on Anglican Orders"<sup>8</sup> and

<sup>2</sup> "Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue: The Work of the Preparatory Commission" edited by Alan C. Clark and Colin Davey, Oxford University Press 1974, p. 7. This will include an account of the work of this commission, its reports and recommendations, and a selection of the papers prepared for it.

<sup>3</sup> "Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission: An Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine", S.P.C.K. 1972, para. 12. This Windsor Statement was also published in the January 1972 issues of *Theology*, *The Clergy Review* and *One in Christ*.

<sup>4</sup> Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine, para. 1; "Ministry and Ordination: A Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry, Agreed by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, Canterbury, 1973", para. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry, para. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Wieser.

<sup>7</sup> Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry, para. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry, para. 17.

Roman Catholic Church who were studying this same subject that year. A position paper on "Ministry in a Divided Church" was also prepared by Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J.

The International Commission's second meeting took place in Venice in September 1970. The conversations there resulted in the production of three working papers on 'Church and Authority', 'Church and Eucharist', and 'Church and Ministry'. These were published in *THEOLOGY*, *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, and *ONE IN CHRIST* in February 1971<sup>12</sup> in order to show the stage the commission's work had reached and to invite comments and criticisms.

The Venice Paper on CHURCH AND MINISTRY spoke first of the Church and the gospel, and then of the many forms of ministry (*diakonia*), vocation, and the priesthood of Christ which is 'shared in a special way by those who have received holy orders.' The second section of the paper was on 'The Apostolic Ministry'. It affirmed that "in both our Churches the several orders of (the threefold) ministry are accepted, as sharing, in varying degrees, in the apostolic commission." Yet differences arise over "the relation between the episcopate as a whole and the Bishop of Rome." The third section was on 'The Problem of Orders', and the question was asked "whether the *new* situation with which we are faced — a pastoral situation — calls for a new policy in the Roman Church."

At the end of the Venice Meeting it was decided that the pattern of the International Commission's future work would be to take one of the three subjects at a time, beginning with the eucharist. After preparatory work by individuals and by subcommissions in England, South Africa and North America the third full meeting of the commission at Windsor in September 1971 completed "AN AGREED STATEMENT ON EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE" which was published on December 31st that year.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Theology*, February 1971, pp. 49-67; *The Clergy Review*, February 1971, pp. 126-145; *One in Christ*, Nos. 2-3, 1971, pp. 256-76.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 3 above. Commentaries on this have been published by A.M. Allchin, "Eucharist and Unity: Thoughts on the Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine", S.L.C. Press, Fairacres, Oxford; Julian Charley, "The Anglican/Roman Catholic Agreement on the Eucharist with an Historical Introduction and Theological Commentary", Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts.; Bishop Alan Clark, "Agreement on the Eucharist: the Windsor Statement with an Introduction and Commentary", R.C. Ecumenical Commission of England and Wales, 44, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.; Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J., in *Worship*, January 1972, pp. 6-14. For the background papers to the Windsor Agreed Statement and a brief bibliography see *One in Christ* 1973 No. 2, pp. 106-198, and *Lumen Vitae*, Brussels 1973 No. 1, pp. 113-175.

At the conclusion of the meeting at Windsor, plans were made for continuing the International Commission's work on ministry. Dr. Halliburton and Fr. Yarnold were asked to convene a subcommission in Oxford to make a study of Ministry in the New Testament. Professor Fairweather and Fr. Tillard in Canada examined the concept of 'Sacerdotium'.<sup>14</sup> The Southern African Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission looked at the problem of Orders within the general context of Church and Ministry, and use was made of a paper written for that Commission on "Anglican Orders" by Fr. Jerome Smith, O.P. Fr. George Tavad, in the U.S.A. was invited to write a paper on "The Recognition of Ministry". In addition, full notes were taken of recent studies on the ministry by individual and by other dialogue groups. Papers were provided from the Anglican/Roman Catholic Consultation in the U.S.A.<sup>15</sup> and from the Joint Working Group of the Australian Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>16</sup> Special attention was given to the published Report and Papers of the World Council of Churches/Roman Catholic Joint Theological Commission on "Catholicity and Apostolicity",<sup>17</sup> and to the Fourth Volume of "Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue" in the U.S.A. on 'Eucharist and Ministry'.<sup>18</sup>

The relevant sections of the Anglican/Lutheran Report<sup>19</sup> were also considered and so was a valuable paper on 'Apostolicity and Ministry' written by Professor R.H. Fuller for the Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the U.S.A. in April 1971.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Fr. Tillard's prayer on "The 'Sacerdotal' Quality of the Christian Ministry" has now been published under the title "What Priesthood Has the Ministry?" as No. 13 of Grove Booklets on Ministry and Worship, Grove Books, Bramcote, Nottingham, and in the 1973 No. 3 issue of *One in Christ*, pp. 237-269.

<sup>15</sup> Including "The Function of the Minister in the Eucharistic Celebration: An Ecumenical Approach", by Fr. George Tavad, published in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 4, 1967.

<sup>16</sup> 'Ministry', the Report and Papers from its fourth meeting in Sydney, May 1970, was produced by the Australian Council of Churches, Third Floor, 511, Kent Street, Sydney, N.S.W.2000.

<sup>17</sup> Published in the 1970 No. 3 issue of *One in Christ*.

<sup>18</sup> Published 1970 by Representatives of the U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (315 Park Avenue South, New York 10010) and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (Publications Office, U.S. Catholic Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20005).

<sup>19</sup> "Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations", S.P.C.K. 1973 and pp. 139-175 of "Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue", A Progress Report, Forward Movement Maxi Book, U.S.A., 1973.

<sup>20</sup> Published in *Concordia Theological Monthly* February 1972, and in "Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue", A Progress Report, pp. 76-93, under the title, "The Development of the Ministry".

In preparation for the Poringland meeting,<sup>22</sup> Bishop Clark and Bishop McAdoo each produced a paper incorporating the material received from the subcommissions and portions of "The Ordained Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective" by the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission,<sup>23</sup> the French Roman Catholic/Reformed Groupe des Dombes' Statement on the Ministry entitled "Pour une réconciliation des ministères",<sup>24</sup> and Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV.<sup>25</sup> Members of the subcommittee had also been supplied with a paper by Fr. George Tavad 'A Theological Approach to Ministerial Authority',<sup>26</sup> Bishop Butler's recent articles on the ministry in *The Tablet*,<sup>27</sup> and Bishop Clark's summary in English of an article by Fr. Louis Bouyer "Ministère Ecclésiastique et Succession Apostolique",<sup>28</sup> and a passage on the office of bishops from the DIRECTORIUM DE PASTORALI MINISTERIO EPISCOPORUM.<sup>29</sup>

At Poringland it was agreed to start not from the pattern: Christ, the Church, and the Ministry, but from where we are: two churches in which there are ministries and, within these, ordained ministry; to speak next of our role as ministers; and then to give the theological and New Testament justification for this. Discussion focussed on the function of *episcopé* (oversight) and the role of the ordained minister "as a unifying figure, as co-ordinator, as judge, as director, as leader who serves." Ordination as a sacramental act was also debated, and emphasis laid on II Corinthians 3: 5-6, where St. Paul writes that "our sufficiency is from God"—a reminder of "the mystery of ministry", and that our faith is "in the power and authority of Christ in and through the minister." The Poringland draft document included sections on "Ministries in the Life of the Church", "The Co-ordinating Ministry", "Vocation to the Special Ministry" and "The Special Minister and the Reconciling Work of Christ". This last section spoke of the president of the eucharist, ordination in the apostolic succession, and the way priestly terms came to be used of the minister.

The Poringland document was sent to all members of the Inter-

<sup>22</sup> Those present were Bishop Clark, Bishop McAdoo, Bishop Butler, Bishop Moorman, Fr. Tillard, Fr. Duprey, Mr. Charley, and Mr. Davey.

<sup>23</sup> Published as item SE/34 in *Study Encounter*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, obtainable from the Publications Office, W.C.C., 150 Route de Ferney, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland.

<sup>24</sup> Published by *Les Presses de Taizé*, F-71460, Taizé, France, January 1973.

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 18 above.

<sup>26</sup> Printed in *The Jurist*, Vol. 32 No. 3, Summer 1972 pp. 311-329, published by the School of Canon Law, the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C.

<sup>27</sup> *The Tablet*, 17th and 24th February, and 3rd March 1973.

<sup>28</sup> Published in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, March 1973, pp. 241-252.

<sup>29</sup> Vatican, 1973, paras. 13-16.

A small subcommission<sup>21</sup> was convened at Woodstock College, New York, in May 1972 by Fr. Herbert Ryan to sift and assess all this material, and to suggest an outline way of working. It proposed that the next full meeting of the commission should examine three subjects: The Church as Eucharistic Community; Priesthood and Ministry in the New Testament; and a Historical Understanding of the Function of Ministers. Two further subjects were added for a subsequent meeting of the commission: (a) the threefold Order of Ministry, Ordination and Apostolicity; (b) the Church's freedom to alter this pattern, and to recognise ministry and order in itself and in "separated churches".

When the full commission held its fourth meeting at Gazzada near Milan in August-September 1972, the plan of working was changed. This was in response to the need felt to begin, not directly with priesthood but with mission and the totality of ministry in the New Testament. It was also agreed not to postpone discussion of apostolicity. The result of this change of direction was that by the end of the meeting two documents were produced which clarified the commission's thinking on ministry in the New Testament and on apostolicity. The first distinguished between the unique priesthood of Christ; the priestly ministry exercised by the whole people of God; and the office and function of ministers, which "originate in the specific purpose of Christ for his Church" and "are not simply a particular expression of the 'priesthood of all believers', but exist to promote the holiness of the whole Church." The second document spoke of "the basic apostolicity of the Church", and of apostolicity as "the quality of all the factors which contribute to the preservation of (the Church's) fidelity" to the apostolic witness to Christ. These two documents formed the basis of the subsequent work of the commission, but were seen as material to be used as needed, rather than as finished sections of a future Statement.

At the end of the Gazzada meeting a provisional structure for a document on ministry was agreed. The three main sections were: apostolic succession, priesthood, and ordination. Subcommissions in Oxford, North America, and Southern Africa were asked to write a draft for each of these, which would be circulated to all members of the commission for comment. It was arranged that a subcommittee would meet at Poringland, Norwich, 11th-15th June 1973 to take the draft sections and comments and from them to complete a draft document on the ministry from which the commission would begin its work at its next full meeting.

<sup>21</sup> Its members were: Bishop Clark, Bishop McAdoo, Bishop Vogel, Fr. Tillard, Fr. Tavad, Prof. Fairweather, Mr. Charley, and Fr. John Reid, S.J.

national Commission for comment and criticism. In preparation for the full meeting at Canterbury August 28th - September 6th 1973 they also received copies of the Report of the Joint Lutheran/Roman Catholic Study Commission on "The Gospel and the Church",<sup>30</sup> the third section of which is on "The Gospel and the Office of the Ministry in the Church"; the Report of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council 1967-1970,<sup>31</sup> section six of which is on Ministry; the Six Propositions with which the Roman Catholic International Theological Commission concluded their October 1970 report on "The Priestly Ministry",<sup>32</sup> and the document on "The Ministerial Priesthood" issued by the Second General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops in 1971.<sup>33</sup>

The Poringland document was the starting-point for the discussion at Canterbury, which began by considering what should be added to or subtracted from it. The commission then agreed a draft outline for what was planned to be a biblically and historically informed document on the ministry, which used and applied the material compiled at Gazzada and Poringland.

The outline contained an introduction, followed by sections on Ministries in the Life of the Church (including reference to the New Testament and early church situation), Ordained Ministry (*episcopé*, New Testament images descriptive of the ordained ministry, vocation to holiness, word and sacrament, priesthood and priestly language) Ordination (its unrepeatability, ordination in the apostolic succession) and a conclusion indicating the import of this agreement in doctrine on the question of the reconciliation of our respective ministries.

This outline was filled out by three drafters, and their draft was then scrutinised, debated, and revised by the full commission. Out of this process the International Commission's *Agreed Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry* emerged. Its conclusion emphasises that "agreement on the nature of the ministry is prior to the consideration of the mutual recognition of ministries." It recognises "that we have not yet broached the wide-ranging problems of authority which may arise in any discussion of Ministry, nor the question of primacy." It considers however "that our consensus . . . offers a positive contribution to the reconciliation of our churches and of their ministries."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Published in *Lutheran World* Vol. 19, No. 3, 1972.

<sup>31</sup> Published in the *Information Service of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity*, No. 21, May 1973/III pp. 22-38.

<sup>32</sup> Published by Editions du Cerf, 29, Boulevard Latour-Maubourg, Paris VIII.

<sup>33</sup> Published by the Vatican Polyglot Press, 1971.

<sup>34</sup> Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry, para. 17.

### III. OUTLINE OF THE STATEMENT

#### NOTE: THE STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT

The document published here is the work of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission.

As the two Co-Chairmen point out in their preface, it is at present no more than a joint statement of the commission. The commission is reporting to the authorities who appointed it on one of the items in its programme of work. These authorities have allowed the Statement to be published so that it may be discussed by other theologians. It is not a declaration by the Roman Catholic Church or by the Anglican Communion. It does not authorise any change in existing ecclesiastical discipline.

The commission will be glad to receive observations and criticisms made in a constructive and fraternal spirit. \* Its work is done in the service of the Church. It will give responsible attention to every serious comment which is likely to help in improving or completing the results so far achieved. This wider collaboration will make its work to a greater degree work in common, and by God's grace will lead us to the goal set at the beginning of Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue; "That unity in truth for which Christ prayed" (*Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, 1966*).

To attempt an *outline* of a Statement which is itself stringently constructed and its logic and balance forged by an intense effort of collaboration inevitably risks distortion. On the other hand, a mere list of chapter headings or topics would be of little use. It is indeed debatable whether the outline should ever have been attempted. But it has been represented to me that it may serve as a useful introduction to the actual text which, however, alone has the authority and reveals the consensus of the commission.

+ Alan C. Clark

\* Comments on the Statement or requests for further information on the work of the commission may be sent to its Secretaries: Rev. Colin Davey, Archbishop of Canterbury's Counsellors on Foreign Relations, Palace Court, 222 Lambeth Road, London. SE1 7LB (01-928 4880), or Rt. Rev. Mgr. William Purdy, Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City 00193, Rome, Italy (Rome 698-4533).

However, as ministers of the gospel, their oversight is fundamentally linked to the preaching of the word of God and its authoritative proclamation. It belongs to them to declare and endorse the implications of the Christian message (*Para. 10*). At the same time, because the gospel announces not merely what God has said to his people but the advent of the Word Himself who communicates his life to the community he gathers round him, his minister is likewise a minister of the sacraments which convey this life (*Para. 11*). In so far as the eucharist, as the *memorial* of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the world and as the gift of himself for the life of the world, is the central act of Christian worship, so the minister finds his rightful place as the one who presides over its celebration (*Para. 12*).

At this point the Statement elaborates the priestly aspect of the ordained ministry — for the word 'priest' has been consistently used to describe the bishop or presbyter — and emphasises that this title in no way derogates from the unique Priesthood of the New Testament which is vested in the person of Christ. This priesthood is reflected in the minister as he fulfils his role as the instrument of Christ in the celebration of the eucharist and as the representative of the whole community "in the fulfilment of its priestly vocation of self-offering to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1)". At the same time his ministry is no mere extension of this common Christian priesthood but a distinct gift of the Spirit (*Para. 13*).

The final section of the Document concerns VOCATION AND ORDINATION. For it is by his ordination that a Christian assumes this particular ministry. He enters a ministry which establishes him in the unity of the Church which is in continuity with its beginnings. It is Christ who calls him and Christ, in the Spirit, who gives him the unique "qualification" to perform his ministry (*Para. 14*). It is the ministry of Christ himself which is the model of his own ministry, and he is empowered for this ministry by the sacramental act of ordination — an act which is unrepeatable in both Churches (*Para. 15*).

The particular office of the bishop is further illustrated by his function as the minister of ordination, though the ordained ministry is shared, in different ways, by both presbyter and deacon (*Para. 16*).

The meaning of ordination is tightly linked to the doctrine of *apostolic succession*. "Succession" means that a local church, by the ordination of its bishop at the hands of other bishops already in communion with the Universal Church, is itself also within that communion and therefore in historical continuity with the apostolic church and its new bishop with the original apostolic ministry. The authority of the ordaining bishops rests on their churches' fidelity to the teaching and mission of the apostles and their own membership of the episcopal college (*para. 16*).

The Statement is structured to give an overall picture of how the Church of Christ is in service to its living Head, and to identify the specific role of the ordained ministry. The modes of ministerial service in the Church are many and various, and it is in the context of these that the historical three-fold ordained ministry exists (*Para. 2*).

The first section, entitled MINISTRY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, therefore, concerns how the whole Church, in its life and service, is the instrument of Christ in his work of the reconciliation of man with God (*Para. 3*). This service of the Church finds its beginnings in the apostolic community and in the commission given it by Christ the Lord. It is a service of communicating the Gospel he himself preached and the life he himself brought to the world he redeemed. The Church is "the community of reconciliation" (*Para. 4*).

Every Christian is, therefore, called by the Holy Spirit to make this an effective community, and there are a diversity of ministerial services. The New Testament witness is explicit here. But the same witness shows that within New Testament times there is a gradual development, and certain ministries and functions came to be located in specific officers of the community. The ministry of *episcopé*, (oversight) in specific members of the local church, begins to emerge and to have its own authorisation (*Para. 5*). According to the design of God in Christ "the normative principles" governing this ministry can be discerned in the New Testament documents, even though the position of the second-century, where the clear pattern of a three-fold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon is fully attested, is not strictly deducible from what we know of the apostolic period (*Para. 6*).

The next section of the Statement, entitled THE ORDAINED MINISTRY, is a detailed expression of the faith of our respective communions as to the nature and purpose of this ministry within the life of the Church.

The ordained ministry is an enabling ministry: it exists to make it possible for the whole People of God to respond to their Christian vocation. It is a ministry of leadership and of unity and, in the rich sense of the word, of co-ordination (*Para. 7*).

The New Testament describes the minister in whom this service is located (*Para. 8*) and his particular responsibilities in the area of 'oversight' (*episcopé*). "This responsibility involves fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today, and its transmission to the Church of tomorrow" (*Para. 9*). Here the document speaks directly of the mutual collaboration of bishop, presbyter and deacon as the historic expression of this ministry.

The Statement now offers its CONCLUSION. The commission is concerned with doctrine, and where fidelity to the faith of the Church "admits of no divergence". However, because this particular consensus immediately raises issues that cannot be divorced from a full treatment of *order*, it announces the intention of entering this area as the next step in its programme, ending in the assertion that the present document "offers a positive contribution to the reconciliation of our churches and of their ministries".

### IV. THE OFFICIAL TEXT

© H.R. McAdoo, Bishop of Ossory, Ferns & Leighlin.  
Alan C. Clark, Bishop of Elmham, 1973.

#### PREFACE

At Windsor, in 1971, the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission was able to achieve an Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine. In accordance with the programme adopted at Venice in 1970, we have now, at our meeting in Canterbury in 1973, turned our attention to the doctrine of Ministry, specifically to our understanding of the Ordained Ministry and its place in the life of the Church. The present document is the result of the work of this officially appointed Commission and is offered to our authorities for their consideration. At this stage it remains an agreed statement of the Commission and no more.

We acknowledge with gratitude our debt to the many studies and discussions which have treated the same material. While respecting the different forms that Ministry has taken in other traditions, we hope that the clarification of our understanding expressed in the statement will be of service to them also.

We have submitted the statement, therefore, to our authorities, and with their authorisation, we publish it as a document of the Commission with a view to its discussion. Even though there may be differences of emphasis within our two traditions, yet we believe that in what we have said here both Anglican and Roman Catholic will recognise their own faith.

H.R. McADOO, Bishop of Ossory  
ALAN C. CLARK, Bishop of Elmham  
Co-Chairmen



# MINISTRY AND ORDINATION

## A STATEMENT

### ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

#### AGREED BY THE ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

Canterbury, 1973

#### INTRODUCTION

1 Our intention has been to seek a deeper understanding of Ministry which is consonant with biblical teaching and with the traditions of our common inheritance, and to express in this document the consensus we have reached.<sup>1</sup> This statement is not designed to be an exhaustive treatment of Ministry. It seeks to express our basic agreement in the doctrinal areas that have been the source of controversy between us, in the wider context of our common convictions about the ministry.

2 Within the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion there exists a diversity of forms of ministerial service. Of more specific ways of service, while some are undertaken without particular initiative from official authority, others may receive a mandate from ecclesiastical authorities. The ordained ministry can only be rightly understood within this broader context of various ministries, all of which are the work of one and the same Spirit.

#### MINISTRY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

3 The life and self-offering of Christ perfectly express what it is to serve God and man. All Christian ministry, whose purpose is always to build up the community (*koinonia*), flows and takes its shape from this source and model. The communion of men with God (and with each other) requires their reconciliation. This reconciliation, accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is being realised in the life of the Church through the response of faith. While the Church is still in process of sanctification, its mission is never-

<sup>1</sup> cf. "An Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine", para. 1, which similarly speaks of a consensus reached with regard to the Eucharist.

*episcopoi* and *presbyteroi*. While the first missionary churches were not a loose aggregation of autonomous communities, we have no evidence that 'bishops' and 'presbyters' were appointed everywhere in the primitive period. The terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' could be applied to the same man or to men with identical or very similar functions. Just as the formation of the canon of the New Testament was a process incomplete until the second half of the second century, so also the full emergence of the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon required a longer period than the apostolic age. Thereafter this three-fold structure became universal in the Church.

#### THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

7 The Christian community exists to give glory to God through the fulfilment of the Father's purpose. All Christians are called to serve this purpose by their life of prayer and surrender to divine grace, and by their careful attention to the needs of all human beings. They should witness to God's compassion for all mankind and his concern for justice in the affairs of men. They should offer themselves to God in praise and worship, and devote their energies to bringing men into the fellowship of Christ's people, and so under his rule of love. The goal of the ordained ministry is to serve this priesthood of all the faithful. Like any human community the Church requires a focus of leadership and unity, which the Holy Spirit provides in the ordained ministry. This ministry assumes various patterns to meet the varying needs of those whom the Church is seeking to serve, and it is the role of the minister to co-ordinate the activities of the Church's fellowship and to promote what is necessary and useful for the Church's life and mission. He is to discern what is of the Spirit in the diversity of the Church's life and promote its unity.

8 In the New Testament a variety of images is used to describe the functions of this minister. He is servant, both of Christ and of the Church. As herald and ambassador he is an authoritative representative of Christ and proclaims his message of reconciliation. As teacher he explains and applies the word of God to the community. As shepherd he exercises pastoral care and guides the flock. He is a steward who may only provide for the household of God what belongs to Christ. He is to be an example both in holiness and in compassion.

9 An essential element in the ordained ministry is its responsibility for 'oversight' (*episcopé*). This responsibility involves fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today, and its

theless to be the instrument by which this reconciliation in Christ is proclaimed, his love manifested, and the means of salvation offered to men.

4 In the early Church the apostles exercised a ministry which remains of fundamental significance for the Church of all ages. It is difficult to deduce, from the New Testament use of "apostle" for the Twelve, Paul and others, a precise portrait of an apostle, but two primary features of the original apostolate are clearly discernable: a special relationship with the historical Christ, and a commission from him to the Church and the world (Matt. 28:19; Mark 3:14). All Christian apostolate originates in the sending of the Son by the Father. The Church is apostolic not only because its faith and life must reflect the witness to Jesus Christ given in the early Church by the apostles, but also because it is charged to continue in the apostles' commission to communicate to the world what it has received. Within the whole history of mankind the Church is to be the community of reconciliation.

5 All ministries are used by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Church to be this reconciling community for the glory of God and the salvation of men (Eph. 4:11-13). Within the New Testament ministerial actions are varied and functions not precisely defined. Explicit emphasis is given to the proclamation of the Word and the preservation of apostolic doctrine, the care of the flock, and the example of Christian living. At least by the time of the Pastoral Epistles and I Peter, some ministerial functions are discernible in a more exact form. The evidence suggests that with the growth of the Church the importance of certain functions led to their being located in specific officers of the community. Since the Church is built up by the Holy Spirit primarily but not exclusively through these ministerial functions, some form of recognition and authorisation is already required in the New Testament period for those who exercise them in the name of Christ. Here we can see elements which will remain at the heart of what today we call ordination.

6 The New Testament shows that ministerial office played an essential part in the life of the Church in the first century, and we believe that the provision of a ministry of this kind is part of God's design for his people. Normative principles governing the purpose and function of the ministry are already present in the New Testament documents (e.g. Mark 10:43-45; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 4:12-16; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The early churches may well have had considerable diversity in the structure of pastoral ministry, though it is clear that some churches were headed by ministers who were called

transmission to the Church of tomorrow. Presbyters are joined with the bishop in his oversight of the Church and in the ministry of the word and the sacraments; they are given authority to preside at the eucharist and to pronounce absolution. Deacons, although not so empowered, are associated with bishops and presbyters in the ministry of word and sacrament, and assist in oversight.

10 Since the ordained ministers are ministers of the gospel, every facet of their oversight is linked with the word of God. In the original mission and witness recorded in Holy Scripture lies the source and ground of their preaching and authority. By the preaching of the word they seek to bring those who are not Christians into the fellowship of Christ. The Christian message needs also to be unfolded to the faithful, in order to deepen their knowledge of God and their response of grateful faith. But a true faith calls for beliefs that are correct and lives that endorse the gospel. So the ministers have to guide the community and to advise individuals with regard to the implications of commitment to Christ. Because God's concern is not only for the welfare of the Church but also for the whole of creation, they must also lead their communities in the service of humanity. Church and people have continually to be brought under the guidance of the apostolic faith. In all these ways a ministerial vocation implies a responsibility for the word of God supported by constant prayer (cf. Acts 6:4).

11 The part of the ministers in the celebration of the sacraments is one with their responsibility for ministry of the word. In both word and sacrament Christians meet the living Word of God. The responsibility of the ministers in the Christian community involves them in being not only the persons who normally administer baptism, but also those who admit converts to the communion of the faithful and restore those who have fallen away. Authority to pronounce God's forgiveness of sin, given to bishops and presbyters at their ordination, is exercised by them to bring Christians to a closer communion with God and with their fellow men through Christ and to assure them of God's continuing love and mercy.

12 To proclaim reconciliation in Christ and to manifest his reconciling love belong to the continuing mission of the Church. The central act of worship, the Eucharist, is the memorial of that reconciliation and nourishes the Church's life for the fulfilment of its mission. Hence it is right that he who has oversight in the Church and is the focus of its unity should preside at the celebration of the eucharist. Evidence as early as Ignatius shows that at least in some churches, the man exercising this oversight presided at the eucharist

and no other could do so without his consent (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8:1).

13 The priestly sacrifice of Jesus was unique, as is also his continuing High Priesthood. Despite the fact that in the New Testament ministers are never called 'priests' (*hieries*),<sup>2</sup> Christians came to see the priestly role of Christ reflected in these ministers and used priestly terms in describing them. Because the eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, the action of the presiding minister in reciting again the words of Christ at the Last Supper and distributing to the assembly the holy gifts is seen to stand in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in offering his own sacrifice. So our two traditions commonly use priestly terms in speaking about the ordained ministry. Such language does not imply any negation of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ by any addition or repetition. There is in the eucharist a memorial (*anamnesis*)<sup>3</sup> of the totality of God's reconciling action in Christ, who through his minister presides at the Lord's Supper and gives himself sacramentally. So it is because the eucharist is central in the Church's life that the essential nature of the Christian ministry, however this may be expressed, is most clearly seen in its celebration; for, in the eucharist, thanksgiving is offered to God, the gospel of salvation is proclaimed in word and sacrament, and the community is knit together as one body in Christ. Christian ministers are members of this redeemed community. Not only do they share through baptism in the priesthood of the people of God, but they are — particularly in presiding at the eucharist — representative of the whole Church in the fulfilment of its priestly vocation of self-offering to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). Nevertheless their ministry is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit. It exists to help the Church to be "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

#### VOCATION AND ORDINATION

14 Ordination denotes entry into this apostolic and God-given ministry, which serves and signifies the unity of the local churches in themselves and with one another. Every individual act

<sup>2</sup> In the English language the word 'priest' is used to translate two distinct Greek words, *hieries* which belongs to the cultic order and *presbyteros* which designates an elder in the community.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "An Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" para. 5.

ness, through time and space, is thus symbolised and maintained in the bishop. Here are comprised the essential features of what is meant in our two traditions by ordination in the apostolic succession.

#### CONCLUSION

17 We are fully aware of the issues raised by the judgment of the Roman Catholic Church on Anglican Orders. The development of the thinking in our two Communions regarding the nature of the Church and of the Ordained Ministry, as represented in our Statement, has, we consider, put these issues in a new context. Agreement on the nature of Ministry is prior to the consideration of the mutual recognition of ministries. What we have to say represents the consensus of the Commission on essential matters where it considers that doctrine admits no divergence. It will be clear that we have not yet broached the wide-ranging problems of authority which may arise in any discussion of Ministry, nor the question of primacy. We are aware that present understanding of such matters remains an obstacle to the reconciliation of our churches in the one Communion we desire, and the Commission is now turning to the examination of the issues involved. Nevertheless we consider that our consensus, on questions where agreement is indispensable for unity, offers a positive contribution to the reconciliation of our churches and of their ministries.

5. 9. '73

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The Rt. Rev. Christopher Butler,  
O.S.B.  
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Professor J.J. Scarisbrick,  
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#### Anglican Delegates

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Bishop of Ripon.  
The Rt. Rev. E.G. Knapp-Fisher,  
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The Very Rev. Henry Chadwick,  
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The Rev. J.W. Charley,  
Vice-Principal, St. John's College,  
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of ordination is therefore an expression of the continuing apostolicity and catholicity of the whole Church. Just as the original apostles did not choose themselves but were chosen and commissioned by Jesus, so those who are ordained are called by Christ in the Church and through the Church. Not only is their vocation from Christ but their qualification for exercising such a ministry is the gift of the Spirit: "our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:5-6). This is expressed in ordination, when the bishop prays God to grant the gift of the Holy Spirit and lays hands on the candidate as the outward sign of the gifts bestowed. Because ministry is in and for the community and because ordination is an act in which the whole Church of God is involved, this prayer and laying on of hands takes place within the context of the eucharist.

15 In this sacramental act, the gift of God is bestowed upon the ministers, with the promise of divine grace for their work and for their sanctification; the ministry of Christ is presented to them as a model for their own; and the Spirit seals those whom he has chosen and consecrated. Just as Christ has united the Church inseparably with himself, and as God calls all the faithful to life-long discipleship so the gifts and calling of God to the ministers are irrevocable. For this reason, ordination is unrepeatable in both our churches.

16 Both presbyters and deacons are ordained by the bishop. In the ordination of a presbyter the presbyters present join the bishop in the laying on of hands, thus signifying the shared nature of the commission entrusted to them. In the ordination of a new bishop, other bishops lay hands on him, as they request the gift of the Spirit for his ministry and receive him into their ministerial fellowship. Because they are entrusted with the oversight of other churches, this participation in his ordination signifies that this new bishop and his church are within the communion of churches. Moreover, because they are representative of their churches in fidelity to the teaching and mission of the apostles and are members of the episcopal college, their participation also ensures the historical continuity of this church with the apostolic church and of its bishop with the original apostolic ministry. The communion of the churches in mission, faith and holi-

<sup>4</sup> Anglican use of the word 'sacrament' with reference to ordination is limited by the distinction drawn in the Thirty-nine Articles (Article XXV) between the two 'sacraments of the Gospel' and the 'five commonly called sacraments'. Article XXV does not deny these latter the name 'sacrament', but differentiates between them and the 'two sacraments ordained by Christ' described in the catechism as 'necessary to salvation' for all men.

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#### V. COMMENTARY

by RT. REV. ALAN C. CLARK, Bishop of Elmham.

Style and language, as the public reaction to the AGREED STATEMENT ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST showed, is of paramount importance in the production of documents of this kind. For these betray the attitudes of the authors and indicate their common mind. One inevitable result of the dissensions and schisms of the Reformation was that, in the stress of polemic and controversy, each of the denominational churches and communities gradually evolved almost a language of its own. This concealed both agreement and disagreement and effectively hindered the various moves towards reconciliation that were made over the last four centuries.

An obvious example from history was the attempt to heal the division between the episcopal and presbyterian churches in England

and Scotland. Words like priest and presbyter, bishop and superintendent, focussed the attention of many of the controversialists while they indefatigably sought to establish an identity of *meaning* behind the difference of vocabulary. In this they failed, but it is precisely because present day apologists are convinced that failure is not inevitable, when the right distinctions are made between faith and its theological expression, that Agreed Statements are possible.

The success or failure of such Statements is to be judged not by the kind of language used — for a common tongue is indispensable to a bilateral conversation — but by the agreement reached on the meaning of the faith and doctrine under discussion. In the case of the present AGREEMENT ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY, the question asked by the commission (and answered affirmatively by its members) is: do Anglicans and Roman Catholics recognise their own faith therein? We were intent on achieving a common and unambiguous testimony of our faith.

The Roman Catholic Church is not exempt from the constricting limits of controversy. In order to preserve certain truths of Catholic faith, it needs to hammer out declarations of this faith in the concepts available to it, and at times to embody it in definitive statements. For, unlike changing formulation, the meaning of doctrine admits of no divergence. When speaking of the difficulties the Church encounters in the transmission of divine revelation, the most recent document of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *MYSTERIUM ECCLESIAE*, notes that "difficulties arise also from the historical condition that affects the expression of revelation":—

"With regard to this historical condition, it must first be observed that the meaning of the pronouncements of faith depend partly upon the expressive power of the language used at a certain point in time and in particular circumstances. Moreover, it sometimes happens that some dogmatic truth is first expressed incompletely (but not falsely), and at a later date, when considered in a broader context of faith or human knowledge, it receives a fuller and more perfect expression. In addition, when the Church makes new pronouncements she intends to confirm or clarify what is in some way contained in Sacred Scripture or in previous expressions of Tradition; but at the same time she usually has the intention of solving certain questions or removing certain errors. All these things have to be taken into account in order that these pronouncements may be properly interpreted. Finally, even though the truths which the Church intends to teach through her dogmatic formulas are distinct from the changeable conceptions of a given epoch and can be expressed without them, nevertheless it can sometimes happen that these truths may be

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enunciated by the Sacred Magisterium in terms that bear traces of such conceptions." (DECLARATION IN DEFENCE OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AGAINST CERTAIN ERRORS OF THE PRESENT DAY, 5: Vatican, 1973).

This document is cautious in its treatment of what has come to be called 'the historical conditioning' of declarations of faith, but it demonstrates that it is meaning rather than terms which must command our attention. What, for example, do I mean when I use the word 'bishop', 'priest', 'deacon'? Who and what is this person whom both Anglicans and Roman Catholics consider to belong to the ordained ministry as instituted by Christ?

The polarisations consequent upon the Reformation are too well known to be repeated here. The Reformed Churches emphasised the ministry of the word, the Catholic Church stressed the ministry rooted in the celebration of the eucharist. A priest was primarily regarded as the person qualified to offer the Mass and to dispense the sacraments. It is quite illegitimate to make exclusive distinctions here, but it is nonetheless true that there existed, in practice, a marked difference of emphasis which had its effect on popular belief.

This imbalance was largely restored, from the Catholic point of view, in the teaching of Vatican II and in subsequent documents issued with the authority of the Holy See. A much richer understanding of the ministry of the whole Church and of the ordained ministry has emerged. At the same time, there has been a remarkable growth in awareness of the centrality of the eucharist in Anglican worship and doctrine, with the obvious result that the sacramental role of the ordained minister has attained a new prominence. This shift has made it possible to attempt to reconcile the differing and sometimes contradictory emphases that played such a notorious and destructive part in the continuing polemic of the Reformation.

This is not a naive proposal that the break up of the Church at that time arose from mere difference of approach or from contrasting theologies. It is, however, to assert that today's position is markedly different from the past and offers the ecumenical movement an opportunity rich in promise that it must not pass by.

\* \* \*

It is significant that when the commission planned its programme some three years ago, the title of the present Statement was: CHURCH AND MINISTRY. Though this title has

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE STATEMENT

been replaced (to indicate more specifically the subject of our agreement), the idea represented by it is central to a right interpretation of the doctrine contained in it.

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For ministry — whether the general ministry of the whole Church or the specific ministry of the ordained — can only be understood within the reality, itself a mystery in the traditional sense of that word, which is the Church.

The Second Vatican Council (cf. *LUMEN GENTIUM*, ch. I) made it clear that no one description, though drawn from sacred scripture, is adequate, and that our understanding in faith of what is rightly called "the sacrament of Christ", the effective sign of his presence and operation within the community of believers, demands deeper and deeper reflection. What we do is proclaim with certainty that this Church "subsists in" the Catholic Church and that other Christian Churches and communities share in this reality according to the elements of holiness and truth that exist in them (cf. *LUMEN GENTIUM*, I, 8; *UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO*, I, 3). We recognise, therefore, a partial communion with all our Christian brethren, and the purpose of all ecumenical endeavour is to deepen the reality of this communion.

The word *communion* has assumed a central place in theological reflection on the Church and among all those who profess faith in Christ, Lord of the Church. It expresses a living community (*koinonia*) founded on faith and nourished by the life of grace, and it is in this real context that the doctrine of the ministry is unfolded. For this community is constituted precisely to minister to its members and to the whole of redeemed humanity. It is commissioned to this service (*diakonia*) by its entry in baptism into the assembly of those who respond to the grace of faith offered in Christ. Hence all Christians are ministers of Christ, but some are called to a ministry which Christ himself gives, as his own special gift and by his own choice, to enable the Church as a whole to exercise its common priesthood.

The Church is busy about many things in her efforts to respond to her vocation to be the servant of all. This ministry is possible, as well as demanded, because

#### (1) MINISTRY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH (Paras. 3-7)

of the reconciliation of the world with God accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is Jesus, as Prophet, Apostle and High Priest of the New Covenant, who continues to exercise a unique and eternal ministry of reconciliation, sanctification and redemption (I COR. 1:30; HEBREWS *passim*), but he exercises it through those who, in the power of the Spirit, serve the gospel. As the gospel is at once the revelation of God in His Word and the communication of the Life of the Word to the world, so those who undertake ministerial service

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must communicate not a mere message but words that are "spirit and life" (JOHN 6:63) and open the hearts of all to the grace of God's reconciling love. For though the world is reconciled, it is also in process of reconciliation, and this is the tension that explains both the inadequacy of the ministers and the power of the gospel they serve.

These introductory reflections, necessarily theological, provide a right framework for the ensuing and more detailed development of the doctrine of ministry.

Of fundamental significance to the Church of all ages are the beginnings of this ministry in the first Christian community (*Para.* 4). The word "apostle" is centred on the right understanding of our own commission — our own apostolate — precisely because we believe that gospel is inherited from the apostles and transmitted in history to us. The Father "sends" the Son: the Son "sends" the apostles who in turn commission others.

There is, then, no authority nor service in the Church which is not *apostolic* in origin. However, though our faith is clear and unambiguous, neither Church claims to be able to show from the history of the New Testament period the exact way this apostolic commission was transmitted.

This being said, it is nevertheless clear that among the many apostolic ministries recorded in the New Testament documents there developed one type involving administration, authority and oversight, to ensure the community's fidelity to the gospel and to co-ordinate the various aspects of its life in Christ. James in Jerusalem and Paul in the gentile churches offer classic examples of this ministry. The Pauline letters show that others also exercised this kind of ministry in the local churches: e.g. I THESS. 5:12-13; PHIL. 1:1; I COR. 12:28; 16:16; ROM. 12:7. The vocabulary which describes this type of ministry is extensive: *episkopoi-presbyteroi, proistamenoi, kyberneseis, poimenai*. But the permanent features of this particular ministry are most abundantly described in Paul's letters to TIMOTHY and TITUS in which the ministry assigned to them obviously did not appear to them as something novel.

The foregoing comment does anticipate to some degree what the Statement has to say in its second section: THE ORDAINED MINISTRY. But it is very important, from the start, to avoid the impression that there was first a plurality of ministries — as indeed there was — but only afterwards, for reasons of right order and discipline, a *new* ministry of 'oversight' came into being. On the contrary this ministry — the ordained ministry — springs out of the commission the first followers of Christ received from his own lips. The central point is that there is an historic development *within* the New Testament but that it is based on the commission of Christ to preach the gospel to

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every nation given to the apostles. We are not dealing with something novel but with an apostolic commission that took time to "institutionalise".

The commission, however, as exercised in the New Testament period, shows that it was understood as being directly concerned with "the proclamation of the Word and the preservation of apostolic doctrine, the care of the flock, and the example of Christian living" (Para. 5). By the power of the Holy Spirit the Church was being built up and, equally by that power, a certain concentration of "authoritative service" develops and becomes located in specific officers of the community. A judicious assessment of the historic process by which this came about is contained in Para. 6 which shows the warranty or guarantee of divine endorsement of this process by a comparison with the formation of the Canon of the New Testament which was not fully completed until the second half of the second century, many years after the last book of the New Testament had been written.

Two approaches to the scriptures are ruled out by the evidence — the purely fundamentalist approach which requires explicit and detailed witness in the New Testament writings if a particular pattern of ministry is to be recognised as according to the design of Christ; and the position, on the other hand, which postulates as belonging to the beginning of the Church the second century pattern of the episcopate as it had by then developed. This is not an academic matter, for a right attitude to the sacred scriptures and to the Church's growing understanding of the revelation of God in Christ is cardinal to the reconciliation of our churches.

The first sentences of this section describe briefly the common priesthood of all believers and the ministry to which they are called.

(2) *THE ORDAINED MINISTER* The assertion is then made that the purpose of the ordained ministry is to enable this general ministry to function.

For we are not dealing here with a merely human society but with the society of those who have been reborn by water and the Holy Spirit. (JOHN 3:5).

The characteristic features of this "enabling" ministry are leadership, co-ordination and discernment, but these almost sociological terms must be understood in the light of the powerful images contained in the New Testament when it describes who the ordained minister is and what he should be. This is no misplaced triumphalism but a sober record of the vocation to which he is called, and in which he so often fails. But his responsibilities stand and, whatever his personal limitations and sinfulness, his authority — itself a service to the community — is to be recognised.

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Our intent was, in a sense, more modest — to confess the faith that is in us. The opening sentence of Para. 10, therefore, is the key to our mutual understanding, and in an attempt to forestall any premature judgment on the correctness of our presentation, it is of immense help, particularly to the Roman Catholic reader, to quote the opening sentences of Chapter II of the DECREE ON THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY AND LIFE, (Chapter II, No. 4) of the Second Vatican Council: —

"It is the word of the living God which first brings together the People of God and all therefore have the right to demand it from the mouth of the priest. Since nobody can be saved without faith, the first duty of priests as fellow-workers with the bishops is to preach the Gospel to all men."\*

This is not his exclusive function nor his most sacred. But it is his primary duty and to this he is ordained. This function can indeed be rightly described as "sacramental", for it is directed towards the effective proclamation of the gospel and to the recognition of the living presence of the Word of God within the Church.

'Preaching' is, therefore, a poor word to describe this pastoral office. In a true sense all are called to proclaim the Good News of Christ not only within the Church but throughout all ranks and conditions of men. But the bishop, with all his co-operators in the ordained ministry, has the responsibility of ensuring not only that this is done but that it is rightly done. Without prayer — as the last sentence of the paragraph notes — this is humanly impossible.

But the balance of responsibilities must be maintained. "The part of the ministers in the celebration of the sacraments is one with their ministry of the word. In both word and sacrament Christians meet the living Word of God" (Para. 11). There follows, logically, a succinct account of his sacramental functions in the life of the Church.

There is, however, one function that is pre-eminent in its sacredness and in its importance for this life. The eucharist re-presents here and now — sacramentally — the sacrifice of our Redemption, and the presiding minister of the eucharist is the bishop or the priest.

The Statement registers the "rightness" of this office which stems from the earliest ages of the Church (Para. 12). A stronger assertion would be more consonant with Roman Catholic doctrine, but the commission wanted to use a term that said much more than "fitting"

\* Outstanding among the foremost functions of Bishops is the preaching of the Gospel (*Lumen Gentium*, No. 25. Cross reference to TRENT, Sess. V, C. 2, No. 9, and Sess. XXIV, Can. 4).

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The Statement now declares (Para. 9) that an essential element in this ordained ministry is its responsibility for 'oversight' (*episcopé*). The wording is deliberate because there are, as it will transpire, other essential elements, but we testify to our agreement with the correctness of the over-arching idea of 'oversight' to identify the function of the ordained minister. But it must be spelt out clearly. His responsibility is to ensure "fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today, and its transmission to the Church of tomorrow". Even though he is ultimately responsible, his charge is actively to lead those entrusted to him — the local church — to do all this and more. In particular he shares this responsibility with his presbyters (priests) who are "joined with the bishop in his oversight of the church and in the ministry of the word and sacrament", as well as assuming the presidency at the eucharist and pronouncing forgiveness of sin.

Nothing is said here of the way our respective churches 'administer' God's forgiveness. We are in agreement that this is part of the ordained minister's charge, and we did not think that, at this point of our dialogue, more detailed discussion, e.g. on the practice of auricular confession, was required.

It will be clear now that we are declaring that the ordained ministry is *one* ministry but that it has become historically diversified, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the three-fold pattern which is common to both our churches. Another way of saying this is to assert that the Church has understood her apostolic commission to require that the ministry of 'oversight' be exercised through a conjunction of three orders. But though it is so exercised, it is represented principally and in the fullest way in the office and person of the bishop. Whether this ordained ministry, which is of God, could be exercised in a different pattern was alien to our discussion. In the light of our faith we believe this ministry, deriving from our origins, to be essential to our existence as the Church of Christ.

With Para. 10 the Statement gives a more detailed description of what a bishop is and, mutatis mutandis, what a presbyter or priest is, though it deliberately keeps to its accepted vocabulary by continuing to use the term 'the ordained minister'.

As was indicated earlier in the rapid analysis of the structure of the document, we accepted the historical fact that one result of the Reformation was a reductionist view of the ordained ministry on the part of the Protestant Churches, and a heavily accented sacramental or even 'cultic' approach on the part of the Roman Catholic Church, a view shared by many Anglicans. This is, of course, to oversimplify but these views were central to the Reformation debate. The historical reasons for this could not be our immediate concern.

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but less than "exclusively the function of". It did not thereby commit itself to the proposition that the non-ordained may celebrate the eucharist, but it wished to show that it was aware of the historical controversy concerning who presided at the eucharist in the early Christian community. In fact, the word "right" was chosen as a synonym of "proper", in the Latin sense of "being characteristic of". Our doctrinal consensus is untouched — that it is part of the function of the ordained minister to preside at the eucharist.

A further historical controversy influenced our discussions. This particular controversy stems from the Reformation debate as to whether it is justifiable to call this minister a *priest*. It seemed to the Reformers that this would derogate from the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood (Para. 12). Though Roman Catholics and many Anglicans freely use the term *priest* today, some Anglicans feel considerable uneasiness with this kind of vocabulary, and even suspect a deviation from a true doctrine of ministry.

The commission was convinced that a correct presentation of the priesthood of the ordained would dissipate this disquiet. Just as the sacrifice of Christ was unique and the eucharist in no way derogates from its uniqueness, even so the priesthood attributed to bishop or presbyter (and, consequently, the use of the word *priest*) in no way detracts from or militates against the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood (Para. 13). We find indeed — for reasons which the commission did not feel competent to determine — that in the New Testament ministers are never called priests.

Yet we testify to the growing understanding in the Church that the presiding minister of the eucharist stands in a sacramental relation to Christ's own offering wherein the one High Priest exercises his own unique priesthood. The ordained minister, in this context, is the *effective sign* of this offering here and now, and, in the familiar language of much Catholic theology, "shares" in the offering of the eucharistic sacrifice.

The language of *participation* is, however, deliberately avoided here, though it is fully current in the Catholic theological vocabulary, in order not to obscure the uniqueness of Christ's priestly role in which both our communions firmly believe. Once any doubt about this is dispelled, priestly language applied to the ordained minister should no longer be a source of controversy. For the Roman Catholic the attachment to the word is perhaps deeper than this particular controversy, for it reflects a profoundly spiritual appreciation of the personal relationship of the ordained minister to Christ himself and the uniqueness of his vocation. But it is doubtful whether this attitude bears on the particular issue under discussion. It should

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not therefore be a source of disagreement. Furthermore, this attitude is not exclusive to Roman Catholics.\*

But of more importance is the development we find in this part of the Statement of the relationship of the ordained ministry to the eucharist. "The essential nature of the Christian ministry", the commission asserts, "is most clearly seen in its (the eucharist's) celebration". One could cite here an enormous number of 'texts' from Roman Catholic declarations of faith, ancient and modern, in support of this doctrine. It is the whole Church which celebrates the eucharist, but within that celebration the priest has a special role which is his alone. This, however, should not be interpreted as detaching him from the community he is ordained to serve and to which he belongs by baptism. Nevertheless, his priestly ministry is no mere extension or development of the general Christian priesthood, but derives from a particular and distinct gift of the Spirit.

Without, then, entering into any particular theological explanation of the precise distinction between the 'two priesthoods', which though closely inter-related refer to two different ministries, the commission affirms their real differences. The ordained ministry is not to be interpreted as the ministry of the people of God developed to its highest possibilities in a particular layman. It belongs, on the contrary, "to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit". Roman Catholic teaching expresses this difference as one of "essentia, non gradu", but it does not thereby affirm more than is contained in the Statement.

The conclusion of the preceding section — concerning the specific feature of the ordained ministry — is now fully developed (Para. 14)

(3) *VOCATION AND ORDINATION* by an analysis of what our Churches consider to be the meaning and purpose of ordination.

What happens when a person is ordained? He enters into "the apostolic and God-given ministry". To become a bishop or priest obviously has personal implications. But these — if given pride of place in any systematic treatment of the subject — could lead to misunderstanding. For ordination means first and foremost entry into an *order*, a particular community of ministers who have the same office. These ministers have the particular function of ensuring the unity of the 'local church' (the diocese), so that this may fully express in its faith

\* It is also relevant to recall the long established fact that the word in English translates both "sacerdos" and "presbyter" and in our modern English version of the Latin Ordination Rite most English-speaking hierarchies have preferred to use the word "presbyter" rather than "priest".

and life the unity which characterises Christ's Church. The diocese is, quite simply, the Church in miniature.

But this is no mere local matter. By the *sacramental* act (of ordination), the bishop and his church are established in unity with every other 'local' church and so in apostolic continuity with the universal Church. The bishop himself, chosen by Christ "in the Church and through the Church", receives a special qualification for the exercise of his ministry, a particular gift of the Spirit. (It is noteworthy that the ritual adopted in ordination is substantially identical in both our churches).

The personal implications of ordination, mentioned above, can now be discussed in the right context, the context of the local and the Universal Church (Para. 15). The gift given in ordination is never repeated. Why this should be so belongs to the sphere of theological explanation. The theology of the 'priestly character' is very familiar to Catholic readers, and has a classical place in the understanding of the doctrine of the non-repeatability of certain sacraments. But it falls short of being the only way of *understanding* this doctrine and is unacceptable to more than one school of theology within the Catholic Church. The Statement, therefore, prefers to indicate the *datum* of Tradition that in ordination the candidate receives the 'seal of the Spirit' (*sphragis*) which consecrates him to his ministry. The ordained thereby enters into a covenant with Christ. This is sealed by the Spirit and becomes irrevocable.

He is also promised divine grace for his work and for his sanctification, and Christ's own ministry is presented to him as the model for his own. He must respond to his vocation by a close following of the One High Priest who came to serve (cf. LUKE 22:27). Ordination consecrates to a sacred office: it does not thereby ensure the holiness of those who receive it.

The essential features of ordination — its purpose and meaning — have now been embodied in the text. Yet the omission of any discussion of the nature of *apostolic succession* would be rightly condemned as deliberately avoiding a serious area of disagreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The disagreement concerns both the nature (what it is) and the fact (whether it has been maintained) of apostolic succession. The commission, in accordance with its brief, limits itself to answering the first question and, in doing so, reveals a rich and shared understanding of this feature of the ordained ministry. Both churches believe that unless the act of ordination places a bishop within that succession, then the church he represents cannot be called 'apostolic'.

There is a difficulty here which arises from a popular concept of apostolic succession which is not confined to any one church: But

simply, it is the idea that it means no more than the derivation of episcopal powers from the Apostles by a continuous process, in history, of successive ordinations. This is, at the least, a very limited view of the doctrine and gives rise to some very difficult problems, especially in the field of history. The commission, therefore, had no intention of dismantling this particular approach but rather of presenting what it considered to be the true meaning of the doctrine. It similarly left aside an interpretation, common to the Reformed Churches, that apostolic succession means no more than the maintenance of apostolic doctrine.

Where to start? The only feasible way, in our circumstances, was to begin with the facts of ordination. First, therefore, it is noted (Para. 16) that presbyters and deacons receive their ordination from a bishop, and a presbyteral ordination has the particular characteristic that all priests present join with the ordainer in laying hands on the new member of the *presbyterium* — an effective sign of a shared commission. (With the deacon it is different, but both our Churches recognise how meagre is their theology of the diaconate and had no substantial comment to make to offset this defect.)

The case of episcopal ordination, however, exhibits quite a new and extremely important element. Here we see the ordaining bishops, from other 'local' churches, receiving a new member into their communion or fellowship (or, to use a technical term, college). The importance of this not to be interpreted in purely personal terms, as though, like Elijah, they were doing no more than covering the new Elisha with their own mantle. Their presence and their intervention has a far greater significance.

Who are these ordaining bishops? They are the 'overseers' of other local churches already established in the communion of local churches which is the Universal Church. By ordaining the new bishop of this particular church, they recognise that he and his church stand within that communion. The chain of succession is to be seen not in a series of persons who have sacramentally received the office of bishop, or in the 'handing on' of the sacramental gift already possessed by the ordaining prelates, but in an unbroken "communion" of local churches, focussed in the person of their bishops, with each and every other local church and their bishops.

Ordination is indeed a sacramental act in which the specific powers of the episcopal office are conferred, but the doctrine of apostolic succession concerns the communion of a local church with the total communion which is the Church. A schismatic ordination, for example, may confer sacramental powers but it will fail to establish the apostolic communion of the church of the schismatic bishop with the Universal Church. One modern theologian has suggested

that "the affiliation of the schismatic bishop to the (episcopal) college would be analogous to the affiliation of the schismatic Christian to the Church" (Wilhelm Brenning: Art. "Apostolic Succession", No. 8: in SACRAMENTUM MUNDI, vol. 1).

The commission had no intention of entering into the deep water of theological controversy, but to disentangle the doctrine of apostolic succession from the closely connected, but distinct, doctrine of the sacramentality of ordination. Because these doctrines have been confused, relations between our churches have been needlessly exacerbated.

The presentation of apostolic succession in terms of the succession of local churches to the communion of all the churches has further implications. It indicates criteria whereby a factual judgment may be made as to whether a particular church stands within the succession and is therefore apostolic. Among these criteria the fidelity of the local church to the apostolic tradition ("the teaching and mission of the apostles") is of the utmost importance. The ordaining bishops testify by their presence to the fidelity of their own churches which they represent. Furthermore, it is as members of the episcopal college that they participate in the act of ordination. These two factors ensure that the local church is "in historic continuity with the apostolic church and its (new) bishop with the original apostolic ministry". The whole Church, acting through the ordaining bishops, acknowledges the maintenance of fidelity in doctrine and continuity in ministry.

This is the traditional doctrine. In the second century confrontation with the Gnostics, who alone claimed to have preserved authentic apostolic doctrine, the apologists articulated what had already been historically practised in the subapostolic period. "The secret traditions which the Gnostics alleged could be confronted by the authentic apostolic tradition of the churches, whose list of bishops could be traced back with certainty to an apostolic founder. As early as Papias, the ascertainable line of the bearers of tradition acts as a criterion for the authenticity of the preaching" (Wilhelm Brenning: art. cit. N. 5). As the author emphasises in the same article, "underlying this (i.e. the reference to a continuing tradition common to the apostolic churches) was the conviction which we also find in the New Testament itself: the Church is not the sum total of individual churches, but, transcending them all, it is the fellowship by which all churches are formed into one Church" (ibid). Once again we return to the basic and powerful concept of *koinonia* as most expressive of the reality (and the mystery) of the Church.

From the preceding comments it must be clear that it is outside the scope of so simple a commentary to work through the full impli-

cations of the agreed doctrine of the commission on apostolic succession. The Statement itself does not do this. What is of predominant significance, however, is that we have both sited this succession in a succession of churches and their bishops in historical continuity with the apostolic church commissioned by Christ in his inauguration of the New Covenant.

It would be superfluous to add anything of substance to the Conclusion. It represents our common evaluation of the content and achievement of the doctrinal consensus we have reached. Of purpose we have not tried to answer questions — such as the assessment of the Orders we exercise — which require the examination of yet larger issues than have been broached in the present Statement. It is this fact that leads us now, as we have announced, to our present discussion of problems of authority. At the same time we are convinced that the present consensus and the theological developments of recent years offer a wider framework within which these problems can be honestly discussed.

It is by no means unfair to ask the question: where then do we, Catholics and Anglicans, now stand? The answer is: in close communion. We offer to our respective Churches a doctrinal consensus, in a major area of Christian faith, *whose purpose* is to confront all their members with an understanding which they are all being asked to make their own. We are requesting people to enter into the process of reconciliation in faith in order to promote the reconciliation of our churches.

“Having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. We have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways, we refuse to practise cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (II Cor. 4:1-2).

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