

Approaching the problem of
Church and Authority

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Some comments

Methodology

What is this to be ?

Is our approach to the subject to be existential?

cf. our approach to Ministry

This seems to be the direction of the ARCIC document
(Purdy para. 15)

If so - the matter must be considered against the background of the contemporary situation in which the total concept of Authority is presently questioned or totally rejected, or its content eroded.

The effect of this on our own two Churches

We have to be concerned first with the rehabilitation of the whole concept of authority.

Much of our material previously prepared - although it contains much that relates to our consideration - is very differently orientated.

Particular comments on Purdy.

1. In South Africa there are regular meetings between Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops. Discussion of problems on authority are frequent and frank, but inconclusive. But in some ways this may prepare the way for proper receptivity to an agreed statement on the subject - simply because the matter has been aired (4)
2. Local Church - Agreed that definition must be attempted - Suggests that the province rather than the diocese or parish should be regarded as the microcosm of the universal church (7).
3. This raises the problem of the limits of permissible doctrinal divergence which can still be compatible with genuine unity. This nettle has never been grasped - but must be now (9)
4. Another widespread Anglican view: Anglicanism has minimized authority and discipline in the past, while Roman Catholicism has maximized it. It would be a tragedy for all Christendom if R.C. authority were so relaxed as to disintegrate. (10)
5. A statement unanimously agreed by the Southern African Joint Commission in 1971 is of interest...

/ see over

5. (continued)

"We look forward to a reunion of Christendom having its necessary centre and focus in the primacy of the see of Rome, with which all Christians would be in Communion; which, free from elements that have obscured its true nature and significance, would express the kingship of Christ and the unity of the people of God." (11)

Questions for preliminary consideration

'Hierarchy of truths' - meaning and implication

Scripture and tradition - relationship to authority

The authority of the episcopal college in relation to the papacy.

Development in a divided church

The limits of permissible doctrinal diversity.

Materials to be generally available.

Chadwick: Some observations on Authority

Venice papers: Church and Authority

Lambeth 1968: Episcopacy, Collegiality and papacy.

Tavard: A theological approach to ministerial authority

Duprey: Brèves réflexions sur l'adage 'Primus inter pares'.

Pastor Eternus

Mysterium Ecclesiae