

28.8.80: 9.15 p.m.

Jurisdiction

1. Jurisdiction may be defined as the ^{authority} public power of a legitimate ecclesiastical superior to govern the faithful in matters pertaining to their spiritual welfare. The immediate universal jurisdiction attributed to the Bishop of Rome is a service which comes to him because of his office and which he may exercise directly over the whole koinonia or any part of it. The Roman Catholic attribution of such jurisdiction to the Bishop of Rome is a source of anxiety to Anglicans. (Authority in the Church, paragraph 24(d)) Anglican anxieties include such fears as the following: that the Pope may usurp the rights of a metropolitan in his province or a bishop in his diocese: that authority centralized in Rome ^{will have little} ~~with their better~~ understanding of ^{of local concern} local affairs such as the appointment of bishops: that matters referred to the Pope ^{may} ~~will~~ be prevented by the power of the curia from being brought to his attention: that freedom of action and conscience may be imperilled.

2. Power of jurisdiction is given for the effective fulfilment of an office, and its exercise and limits are determined by what that office involves. It has been questioned whether we imply that the jurisdiction associated with different levels of episcopate is always similar in kind (e.g. Primates, Metropolitans and local bishops), with the possible conflict that this might entail. We believe that the problem is not basically that of jurisdiction but of the complementarity and harmonious working of these differing forms of episcopate in the one body of Christ.