

INTRODUCTION

1. Our intention has been to gain 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.\* This Statement is not designed to be an exhaustive treatment of Ministry, but seeks to investigate areas of agreement relating to points which have seemed to divide us in the past.

2. Within each of our two Churches there exists an ordained ministry amongst a diversity of forms of ministerial service. Of more specific ways of service, some are undertaken unofficially while others may receive a mandate from ecclesiastical authorities. The ordained ministry can only be rightly understood within this broader context.

3. The New Testament shows that ministry played an essential part in the life of the Church in the first century. The normative principles governing the task and function of the ministry are already found in the New Testament documents. However the early Churches may well have had considerable diversity in the structure of pastoral ministry, and development is already apparent in the New Testament itself. The emergence of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon required a longer period than the apostolic age, (though not as long as the emergence of the New Testament canon itself).

MINISTRY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

4. 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 Koinonia, flows and takes its shape from this service and model. The communion of men with

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\* cf. Agreed Statement on the Doctrine of the Eucharist para. 1

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 itself is still in process of sanctification, its mission is nevertheless to be the instrument by which this reconciliation in Christ is proclaimed, his love manifested, and the means of salvation offered to men.

5. The Christian Church began with the communities where the apostles exercised their ministry. 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 discernible: a special relationship with the historical Christ, and a commission from him to the Church and the world. (Mark 3:14). 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.

6. 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 these functions led to their being gradually 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 their legitimate exercise in the name of Christ. Here we can see elements which will remain at the heart of what today we call ordination.