

1.9.73: 1.45 p.m. Seventh Full Draft

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.* This Statement is not designed to be an exhaustive treatment of Ministry, but attempts to investigate areas of agreement relating to points which have seemed to divide us in the past.
2. Within the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion 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.

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 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 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.
4. 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

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

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.

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 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.

THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

6. The Christian community exists for the glory of 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 bring 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. Even if this ministry assumes various patterns to meet the varying needs of those whom the Church is seeking to serve, 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.

7. 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 who proclaims his message of reconciliation. As a teacher he explains and applies the Word of God to the community. As a 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. The ordained minister discerns the Spirit-given diversity of the Church's life and promotes its unity.

8. 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 found in the New Testament documents. Certain ministers exercised a role of administration, teaching and oversight. 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 terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' could be applied to men with identical or very similar functions. Despite the obscurities which surround their office and function these ministers certainly possessed a degree of authority to fulfil their task. 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). Since the beginning of the second century the ministry has retained this threefold structure.

9. An essential element in the ordained ministry is its responsibility for 'oversight' (episcopate). 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.

10. The continuing mission of the Church is to proclaim reconciliation in Christ and to manifest his reconciling love. The central act of worship, the Eucharist, is the memorial of that reconciliation and the nourishing of the Church's life for the fulfilment of its mission. Hence it is appropriate that he who has oversight in the Church and is the focus of its unity should preside at the celebration of the Eucharist. As early as Ignatius, at least in some Churches, the man exercising this oversight presided at the Eucharist and no other could do so without his consent. (Smyrn. 8:1).

11. Because the Eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, its minister bears a special relation to the sacrificial act of Jesus our High Priest. Thus the Church saw the priestly role of Christ reflected in him and used priestly terms in describing him. Nevertheless in the faith of our Churches the priestly sacrifice of Jesus was unique, as is also his continuing High Priesthood. Moreover in the New Testament ministers are never called 'priests'. The Christian ministers are necessarily members of the redeemed community. Not only do they share through baptism in the royal priesthood of the People of God, (1 Peter 2:9), but they are - particularly in the leading of worship - representative of the whole Church in the fulfilment of its priestly role. Nevertheless their ministry does not derive from the common Christian priesthood. It exists to promote it, by helping the Church to be what it is called to be for the good of mankind and the glory of God.

12. Ordination in both our Churches takes place within the context of the Eucharist, thus stressing both the involvement of the whole people of God, and the fact that ministry is the end for the community. Ordination involves both

prayer to God to present the gifts of the Holy Spirit for this ministry, and the laying on of hands as the outward sign of these gifts bestowed.*

13. There is a necessity not only for the integration of the life of the local church, but also for the assurance that it is one with its historical origin and with the universal church. Ordination is a sign of continuity with the past and of universality in the present. In our two Churches oversight is primarily associated with the bishop. When a person is to be ordained bishop, bishops of other churches lay hands upon him as they request the gift of the Spirit for his ministry and receive him into their ministerial fellowship. Because they are overseers of other Churches they signify, by their participation in his ordination, that this new bishop and his church are within the communion of local churches, that is to say the universal church. Moreover, because they are bishops of churches rooted in the teaching of the apostles and faithful to it, their participation also indicates the historical continuity of this church and its bishops with the original apostolic community. The communion of the churches in faith and holiness, transcending the limitations of time and space, is thus maintained and symbolised in the bishop. In all this are comprised the essential features of what our churches mean by ordination in the apostolic succession. In the local church presbyters and deacons are associated by their ordination with the bishop's responsibility for oversight. Ordination in our two churches is not repeated.

* Anglican use of the word 'sacrament' with reference to ordination is limited by the distinction drawn 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.

CONCLUSION

We believe that this section can be formulated only after the Commission has considered matters which we put in the form of questions:

1. Does this document represent a frank and honest appraisal of the problems?

E.g. Validity

Anglican Orders

Sacrificial nature of priesthood

Apostolic Succession of bishops

2. How far do our practice and intentions accord with our theory? Are we prepared to face the costing practical implications of the document? In it we have set out high ideals of responsibility for oversight and proclamation by which our mutual understanding of ministry has been enriched. Do we recognize the wider ecumenical implications?
3. How far are we - and our ecclesiastical authorities - fully aware of the urgency of Christians finding unity in a secular world?