

CONCLUSION

Nothing essential to the doctrine of the Ordained Ministry and its place in the life of the Church has, we consider, been omitted in the foregoing Statement. Our intention was never to offer an exhaustive treatment of Ministry but to record our agreement on what we both believe to be the fundamental design of Christ for his Church and to justify this theologically. What is not essential is open to varied expression and is therefore compatible with the doctrine of the Ordained Ministry as we have described it.

Our divisions have lasted four centuries, and it is urgent that anything that is consistent with our doctrinal consensus should not be made an obstacle to our reconciliation.

We acknowledge our debt to the many historical and theological studies and to other dialogues which have treated of the same material which we considered basic to our consensus. We would want to see our own contribution in this larger context, and ask that yet more be done in this field.

We are fully aware of the issues raised in Apostolicae Curae and that our doctrinal consensus does not provide a direct answer to them. But the development of the thinking in our two Communion's regarding the nature of the Church and of the Ordained Ministry has, we consider, put these issues in a larger context. At the same time we are convinced that our paramount concern must be with our common involvement in the mission of the Church. Our doctrinal agreement on the purpose and structure of the Ordained Ministry, even within the limitations we accepted, gives a sure footing to those who share this concern.