

1.9.77 : 9.20 a.m.

A) Numbers 3 - 5

Question: Does the Commission use the term "authority" equivocally?

Assumption: The question identifies authority with "the power to compel obedience".

Comment: Perhaps this leads to a deeper question, viz., how does the questioner conceive the authority of Christ as Incarnate Word of God?

Initial Response: All Christian authority originates with the Father, is mediated by Christ and bestowed by the Spirit. Christian authority is an authority of service and love and therefore incompatible with compulsion (1). The Commission has spoken of three forms of this authority in the Church.

(1) This is not to say that there is no place for discipline in the Church. Discipline, however, must never be used to compel a subject to act contrary to conscience.

B) Number 9

Question: Does the authority of the laity in the Church receive sufficient emphasis in the Venice Statement?

Assumption: The questioner presumes that the role of the laity in the Church is a matter of difference

between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Communion.

Comment: Perhaps what concerns the questioner is the teaching office of the bishop and whether the authority of the laity is infringing on this office. How does magisterium and doctrinal authority cohere with the authority of the laity?

Initial Response: What has been said in the Venice Statement acknowledges a very wide variety of structures currently to be found in both our Communion (Synods, General Convention, Pastoral Councils) in many of which the laity play a major part, along with presbyters.