

(30/8/73: 10.0 p.m. - first full draft)

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. (cf. Agreed Statement on the Doctrine of the Eucharist). This Statement is not designed to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject, since we recognise that a common faith allows variety in both the theology and the practice of ministry. Our present discussions, while not neglecting the great controversies of the past have convinced us that we do share such a common faith.

2. The Church exists to serve, that is to minister. The service of God and of mankind is the hallmark of every Christian who seeks to follow the example of Jesus. All service is undertaken in response to God's call. The call to some forms of service is simply direct and personal, while the call to others may be mediated through Church authority. In both our churches this diversity includes an ordained ministry.

3. The New Testament gives no comprehensive pattern for this ordained ministry. This allows for considerable flexibility in its subsequent development, as is already apparent in the New Testament itself. Although both our churches have intended to adhere to basic principles attested by the New Testament, the particular forms which our ministries have assumed have been shaped by our traditions. Such development requires constant reassessment in the light of the biblical evidence and of contemporary needs.