

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIRST SECTION OF THE STATEMENT ON MINISTRY (ARCIC)

1. It is well to state that the document has limits. It might have been better to have been more explicit here concerning them. Part of the conclusion relating to these might have been included. As it is, one starts with an optimism which, to some extent, the rest of the text whittles away.
2. With the recovery by Roman Catholics of the notion of the Church as the People of God, a prophetic, kingly and priestly people, the ordained ministry does indeed need to be seen in a broader context of ministries.
3. In the question of reconciliation the Christian Church is something special. This paragraph, however, suggests that it is exclusive. There are other religious and even secular agencies for reconciliation of man with God and men with men. I think of the Vatican declaration on Non-Christian Religions and I think of the United Nations.
4. I have an uneasy feeling that the attempt to indicate a certain ambiguity about the portrait of an apostle is either saying too little or too much.
5. I read this paragraph without alarm.
6. I wonder about the analogy of the canon of scripture. This seems to me to be more irreversible (despite some discrepancies between the Roman Catholic and Reformation Churches) than the tri-partite office. The office of deacon fossilized as a practical ministerial function.