

REPORT ON ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC RELATIONS AND NATIONAL
 ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUES, 1975-76

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 in conjunction with the Secretaries of National Dialogues

I ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE
 AND ITS APPLICATION TO MIXED MARRIAGES

The Commission, established jointly in 1967 by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Vatican, signed its unanimous final Report in 1975. The Report is now published with the approval of both authorities.

On the nature and theology of marriage the Report says:

"On marriage itself the Commission finds no fundamental difference of doctrine between the two Churches, as regards what marriage of its nature is or the ends which it is ordained to serve." (para. 21)

The Commission makes three main recommendations:

1. That "on condition that joint pastoral preparation has been given, and freedom to marry established to the satisfaction of the bishop of the Roman Catholic party and of the competent Anglican authority, the marriage may validly and lawfully take place before the duly authorised minister of the Church of either party" (paras. 7, 63)
2. As an alternative to the Promise required by the Roman Catholic Church the majority of the Commission recommend that "It would be for the (Roman Catholic) Church to require of the Roman Catholic parish priest responsible for the marriage a written assurance to his bishop that he had duly put the Roman Catholic partner in mind of his obligations concerning the baptism and upbringing of the children and, according to opportunity, satisfied himself that the other partner knew what these obligations were. He would not be empowered to exact a promise in the matter from either partner, though he might well ask formally if the obligations were understood. The bishop, if satisfied in other respects, might then issue a dispensation for the marriage on the strength of this assurance." (para. 71)
3. These two proposals "Presuppose a high degree of mutual understanding and trust between our respective Churches, and particularly between the clergy", and the Commission reaffirms the need for better joint pastoral preparation and joint pastoral care for mixed marriages (para. 73).

II ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL: TRINIDAD

During March - April 1976 ACC-3 spoke of Anglican/Roman Catholic relations in the following terms:

"This meeting of the Council has taken place exactly ten years after the historic meeting in Rome of Pope Paul VI with the then Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Michael Ramsey. This decade has seen incomparable developments in relations between our Churches. At the theological level there have been two agreed statements by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission

(on the Eucharist and the Ministry) and its further statement on Authority is awaited. Meanwhile the Report on the Theology of Marriage with special reference to Mixed Marriages is about to be published.

"The agreed statements represent growing understanding between theologians. They need not only to be studied but to become the basis of a new relationship. It is only as they find increasing acceptance at every level and in every region that their authority will become established. This assimilation is a slow and uneven process. Nevertheless, these developments have resulted in a mounting expectation that practical results will quickly follow, not least in the Roman Catholic attitude to inter-Church marriages in countries where full effect has not yet been given to the changes already authorised by Rome. It is our hope that through this ongoing work our two Communion may come to see that they already share a common faith in those essential matters where "doctrine admits no divergence" (Ministry and Ordination, Canterbury 1973, para. 17).

"Neither agreement among theologians nor encouragement by church leaders will be fully effective unless the people and the clergy of both Churches come to a deeper knowledge of one another through meeting and working together as much as possible. We welcome the reports we have received of such developments already taking place. We hope that they will be deepened where they are already happening and that they will extend into fresh areas. We are aware that questions like the Ordination of Women and Marriage Discipline, now under consideration within our Communion, are likely to raise fresh difficulties, yet we believe that in a situation of growing understanding of the truth, and of deepening trust for one another, they will not be insurmountable obstacles to reconciliation.

"There are therefore these lines of development which give us cause for thanksgiving in this involvement of the Roman Catholic Church within the ecumenical scene of our time. We welcome the many instances of growing co-operation in joint pastoral care in inter-church marriages, shared church buildings, measures of joint training for ministry, joint study and action on world development issues. However, this alone is not enough. We now wait for the time when the documents on Eucharist, Ministry and Authority are brought together in a doctrinal agreement approved by our Churches. All this is necessary within a true commitment to the search for unity."

III POPE PAUL VI AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Following the July 1975 session of the General Synod of the Church of England, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to His Holiness Pope Paul VI on the subject of the growing Anglican consensus that there were no fundamental objections to the ordination of women to the priesthood, a motion to that effect having been passed by the Synod.

His Holiness responded in a warm but frank letter stating the position of the Roman Catholic church based upon the choice of Christ, the practice of the Church, and its consistent teaching. There was regret that Anglican admission of women to the ordained priesthood would introduce an element of grave difficulty into the dialogue between the two traditions but Pope Paul also added: "Obstacles do not destroy mutual

commitment to a search for reconciliation".

In February 1976 the Archbishop of Canterbury again wrote to Pope Paul to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Archbishop Michael Ramsey's visit to the Pope and their Common Declaration in St. Paul's-without-the-Walls. The Archbishop expressed the hope that the visible unity of the Church, jointly sought for by Anglicans and Roman Catholics, would be expressed within a diversity of traditions. His Grace recognised that what seemed to one tradition to be a genuine expression of diversity might to another appear to go beyond the bounds of legitimacy and instanced the question of the ordination of women. The Archbishop finally expressed a keen desire to visit Pope Paul. This letter was delivered personally to Pope Paul by Bishop John Howe, Secretary-General of the Anglican Consultative Council.

Pope Paul replied on the 23rd March the tenth anniversary (to the day) of his meeting with Archbishop Michael Ramsey in the Sistine Chapel. His Holiness recalled that historic occasion and was deeply thankful for the new spirit of consideration and trust which increasingly pervades Anglican/Roman Catholic relations. He noted the grave obstacle the ordination of women would place in the path of reconciliation but did not fail of hope and prayed that light would be shed on all.

IV LIAISON MEETING

A small informal group of Anglicans and Roman Catholics met at the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, Rome, during the November of 1975. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss common concerns and to exchange information and views over a rather broader field than the specific issues mandated to ARCIC and the Mixed Marriage Commission. The Group was co-ordinated by Bishop John Howe, Secretary-General of the Anglican Consultative Council and Mgr. William Purdy, Staff Member of the Secretariat. Also present at the gathering for the whole or part of the time were: Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli, President, Secretariat for Non-Christians; Mgr. Charles Moeller, Secretary, Vatican Unity Secretariat; the Rt. Revd. Gerald Mahon, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster; and Fr. John Long, SJ, Staff Member of the Unity Secretariat on the Roman Catholic side, and the Most Revd. Thomas Somerville, Archbishop of New Westminster; the Rt. Revd. John Taylor, Bishop of Winchester; the Rt. Revd. Edward Knapp-Fisher, Archdeacon of Westminster (a member of ARCIC); and Canon Michael Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury's Chaplain for Foreign Relations on the Anglican side.

The main subject under discussion was the question of the ordination of women and the following observation and two recommendations were made and communicated to the respective authorities:

"We see no ground for supposing that the ordination of women by Anglicans need prejudice the efforts of our two Communion to find organic union with one another.

"Given that member churches of the Anglican Communion are almost certain to ordain women priests in the next few years, we recommend a consultation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics - not to discuss whether or not it is right to ordain women, but to try to find to what extent and in what ways churches with women priests and churches without can be reconciled in sacramental fellowship.

"We are however aware of the difficulty that this issue may pose for the Orthodox Church, and we also recommend that the ordination of women be considered by the Anglican/Orthodox Commission."

There has also been discussion on the ordination of women during the autumn of 1975 between Cardinal Willebrands and Bishops D.K. Leighton of Maryland and J.S. Wetmore, suffragan of New York (Episcopalian), whilst the American bishops were in Rome for the Canonization of St. Elizabeth Seton.

V AUSTRALIA

A detailed theological report on the Agreed Statement on "Ministry and Ordination" has been submitted to the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission by representative bishops (and consultants) of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches in Australia under the Co-Chairmanship of Archbishop Frank Woods and James Cardinal Freeman (ARCIC 148). This is the product of two residential meetings which took place during 1974 and 1975 (see Report 1974/75 - ARCIC 138).

In February 1976 the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne sponsored a National Ecumenical Summer School at the University entitled "Ecumenism Ten Years after Vatican II". There was a large attendance of Anglicans and Roman Catholics, as well as representatives of other Churches. The Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of ARCIC, Bishop Alan Clark, gave three lectures on the work of the International Commission. Considerable time was spent in working groups and this resulted in the surfacing of a general impatience amongst many of the laity who urged that the two Churches should move more quickly into closer unity.

In both Melbourne and Brisbane Holy Week was begun jointly by the respective Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses.

In the Anglican and Roman Catholic Diocese of Brisbane the first shared parish is about to be inaugurated (in a new housing area). The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches are also partners in this venture.

In Tasmania the Roman Catholic Church is now a full member of the State Committee of the Australian Council of Churches. This is also imminent in Melbourne.

In Brisbane and Melbourne there continue to be joint faculties of theology.

BELGIUM

The Belgian Ecumenical Commission Anglican Sub-Commission has been examining authority by means of the presentation of individual papers by members of the Sub-Commission, followed by discussion. Anglicans and Roman Catholics have gained greater insight into the other tradition by this means, to their mutual benefit. In Brussels a small Anglican/Roman Catholic group has been engaged in a preliminary study of modern Anglican and Roman Catholic Eucharistic liturgies.

There has also been an examination of past efforts to achieve re-union between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The celebration of the 50th anniversaries of the deaths of Mercier and Portal, and the Malines Conversations, which concluded in 1926, has been a high point in this exercise.

At the end of July at the invitation of Cardinal Suenens, the Archbishop of York visited Malines (Mechelen) together with other Anglican bishops and a representative of the English Roman Catholic hierarchy. The celebration took the form of a Mass at Cardinal Mercier's tomb, followed later in the day by a Seance Academique during which the Dean of York presented a paper on Lord Halifax. The climax took the form of a Service of Ecumenical Celebration in the presence of the whole Belgian Episcopate, jointly presided over by the Cardinal and the Anglican Archbishop.

CANADA

A two-day meeting between sixteen bishops of both churches took place between 24th and 25th October 1975. Papers were presented by Professor Eugene Fairweather and Fr. Jean Tillard, OP (both members of the International Commission). The discussion was not, however, confined to the two Agreed Statements. There was also discussion of the question of the ordination of women, Christian initiation and current Canadian social problems facing both churches. Dialogue at local level was jointly requested and it was recommended that there be further meetings between the two hierarchies. This will take place in October or November 1976.

Canadian ARC itself met four times between October 1975 and June 1976. As well as preparing for the joint bishops' meeting, there has been discussion concerning the possibility of a national theological congress. It was felt, however, that at present a more regional approach would be more acceptable to both churches and more thought is being given to the matter. In June Canadian ARC discussed the question of the papacy from the perspective of Anglican ecclesiology, on the basis of a paper presented by Dr. Eric Jay, which has also been sent to the International Commission.

The following motions were carried unanimously at the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada meeting in Quebec during June 1975.

"That this General Synod receives with gratitude the Agreed Statement on the Eucharist; that the Synod accepts the Statement as agreeable to Anglican teaching about the Eucharist".

"That this General Synod receives with gratitude the Agreed Statement on Ministry and Ordination; that this Synod accepts the Statement as agreeable to Anglican teaching about the Ministry; and that the Synod awaits with expectation the Statement on Authority, Primacy and Related Matters".

CENTRAL AFRICA

The experimental presence of Anglican staff and students at Kachebere Seminary, Malawi, has now ceased. In retrospect it would appear that insufficient preparation has resulted in a certain misunderstanding and failure of communications exacerbated by the differing traditions of the churches (for example clerical celibacy).

EAST AFRICA

From September 19th - 25th 1975 a highly successful Ecumenical Congress took place under the chairmanship of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nachingwea. Other denominations participated, though the Congress was primarily concerned with Anglican/Roman Catholic relations. It took place at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. The subjects discussed were wide ranging and included: the Church and communal village life, Christian marriage, youth, religious instruction in schools and common worship. Concrete proposals emerged and it was agreed to hold a further Congress in the autumn of 1976.

The Congress was sponsored by East African ARC which meets quarterly and encourages dialogue at all levels.

United services are now the normal pattern in the remoter areas and are not confined to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

ENGLAND

On 2nd March His Holiness Pope Paul VI donated £500 towards the Canterbury Cathedral Appeal Fund.

The episcopal ordination and installation of Abbot George Basil Hume to the see of Westminster on 25th March 1976 was the occasion of a moving stimulus to Anglican/Roman Catholic relations in England. Immediately after the ceremony in Westminster Cathedral the new (now Cardinal) Archbishop made a pilgrimage down Victoria Street to Westminster Abbey. There, with his late community of Ampleforth and with many other Benedictines, including the Anglican community of Nashdom, he sang Latin monastic vespers. After a heartfelt greeting by the Dean he spoke movingly of unity, alluding to a tomb in the Abbey containing the remains of two sisters. Its inscription read: 'Consorts both in throne and grave, here we rest, two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary in the hope of one resurrection'. (Put there at James I's instructions, the original reads: 'Regno consortes et urna hic obdormimus Elizabetha et Maria sorores in spe resurrectionis').

English ARC is at present engaged in the production of a pamphlet on Anglican/Roman Catholic relations of a broader nature and at a more popular level than the Agreed Statements. It is hoped that this will be published at the beginning of 1977.

Two further Anglican students will be spending six months at the Venerable English College, Rome, from the beginning of the academic year 1976. They will be Mr. Michael Perrott of St. Stephen's House, Oxford, and Mr. Peter Wadsworth of Ripon College Cuddesdon.

During June 1976 an Anglican/Roman Catholic/Methodist shared church was dedicated at Stirchly, Telford, and further shared buildings are being built at Grove Hill, Hemel Hempstead (Anglican/Roman Catholic/Baptist) and Basingstoke (Anglican/Roman Catholic).

FRANCE

French ARC are at present engaged in discussion on the present 'status' of the Windsor and Canterbury Agreed Statements; it is hoped that the French Episcopate will shortly be examining the Statements in accordance with the request of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

The Groupe-Mixte have also been engaged in examining whether couples entering mixed marriages in France are properly prepared and receive pastoral help afterwards. This follows the publishing of a document by French ARC in 1974.

There was a large gathering of Christians of all traditions in Paris on the 19th June for the Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the death of the Abbé Portal. Cardinal Marty was the principal concelebrant at a Mass and this was followed

by a lecture by Cardinal Jan Willebrands. Cardinal Willebrands spoke of the Abbé Portal's ecumenical vision, his trials (with Lord Halifax) during the campaign 'Anglo Roman' and the Malines Conversations, and the partial fulfilment of his hopes in the current Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue. The Archbishop of Wales led the Anglican party and the Bishop of East Anglia (the Rt. Revd. Alan Clark) represented the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission and the English Roman Catholic hierarchy. Some of the Paris pilgrims travelled south to Chambéry and Corbières where they took part in a further celebration at the Abbé Portal's tomb.

IRELAND

The General Synod of the Church of Ireland amended and adopted its Standing Committee report on the Windsor Statement at its May session 1976. As requested it forwarded its comments to the Anglican Consultative Council.

The report welcomed the emphasis on the unique character of the death of Christ, the sacramental nature of Christ's presence, the necessity of a response of faith on the part of the communicant, the activity of the Holy Spirit in the eucharistic liturgy, and the interconnection between the gift of Christ in the sacrament and the reception of the consecrated elements.

NEW ZEALAND

Anglican/Roman Catholic discussion in New Zealand is set in the more diffuse context of the National Council of Churches/Roman Catholic dialogue. The ARCIC Canterbury Statement has been one of several consensus documents which have acted as valuable stimuli in this dialogue.

The Anglican General Synod is due to discuss the Canterbury Statement during 1976.

SOUTH AFRICA

The fourteenth and fifteenth series of conversations took place between Anglicans and Roman Catholics at La Verna, Loch Vaal and Irene during December 1975 and May 1976, under the joint chairmanship of bishops M. Gottschalk and T. Bavin. Studies were made of the papacy and collegiality, the reaction to the joint Pastoral Letter of June 1975 (see Report 1974-5), the lack of progress on mixed marriages, the question of "re-baptism" and the charismatic movement, the ordination of women, infallibility, and marriage discipline. Arising from the discussion on the papacy and collegiality, the South African ARC published a statement on "The Pope and other Bishops" and resolved that:

"We look forward to the reunion of Christendom having its centre and focus on the primacy of the See of Rome with which all Christians would be in Communion.

"In order that this become a reality, we hope and pray that the exercise of the Petrine ministry be freed from the elements that have obscured its true nature and significance, and be reformed in such a way that it appears more clearly as a ministry exercised in communion with, in support of, and with respect for the responsibility and authority of the entire episcopate."

An amended version of this was passed by the Anglican Synod of Bishops.

SOUTH AMERICA

Though relations between Anglicans (Episcopalians) and Roman Catholics are generally good, there continues to be delay in the setting up of a South American joint Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission with consequent widespread ignorance of the work of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission and dialogues at other levels elsewhere.

SOUTH PACIFIC

Owing to the nature of the South Pacific, contacts have tended to be at a local level and of an informal kind. Nevertheless both the Melanesian and Papua New Guinea Joint Commissions are awaiting the hoped-for Agreed Statement on Authority as a stimulus to more theological discussions.

SPAIN

The Pontifical University of Salamanca has announced its intention of awarding the degree of doctor of theology honoris causa to Bishop Michael Ramsey. This will take place during the academic year 1976-77.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

At the end of October 1975, under the chairmanship of Bishop Arthur Vogel of West Missouri (Episcopalian) and Bishop Charles Helmsing of Kansas City (Roman Catholic) United States ARC published an important Agreed Statement on the Purpose of the Church. Emphasizing the "relationship between prayer and belief," the text of the statement is illustrated with prayers from the contemporary eucharistic liturgies of the two churches. The statement says that "The Church is that community of persons called by the Holy Spirit to continue Christ's saving work of reconciliation." It is not, they point out, "a man-made society of like-minded people who are trying to live Christian lives and to exert some kind of Christian influence upon the world." As "a community created and called by God," the Church is "to be an instrument of God's work in the world focused in the saving and liberating mission of Jesus Christ." The statement says, "Our churches have understood that this mission of witness to Jesus Christ is to be carried out by the proclamation of the Good News, the praise of God's Name, and service to all people." The Church "expresses its own life most fully when it gathers as a community for worship, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the summit and source of its mission," the statement says. The document points out that it is "imperative" for the Church "to serve others," though neither the Roman Catholic nor the Episcopal Church apparently "has yet found the means to carry out this aspect of mission as successfully as we might." A special responsibility and opportunity are thus placed on "those Church members who find themselves among the affluent, for they possess, under God, particular means whereby the Church may become more fully a servant people, a sign of hope on mankind's way." The agreed statement says, "To many contemporary Christians the witness of worship is only fully complete when it results in a commitment to service." The statement concludes "that insofar as the Church appears visibly divided, its purpose is obscured, its mission impeded, and its witness weakened. We yearn, therefore, for a restoration of the unity that will serve our common purpose."

In November United States ARC released the text of a statement drawn up at a special ad hoc Anglican/Roman Catholic consultation on the question of the Ordination of Women held at Erlanger, Kentucky, during the previous month. The Consultation included Cardinal William Baum of Washington. The Statement noted that a new element would be introduced into Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue, but that as unity was not synonymous with uniformity a plurality of disciplines might be acceptable. Whilst male ordination had the universal tradition behind it, on the basis of Jesus' model as recorded in the New Testament, it was necessary "to determine whether it holds for all time or is capable of change when cultural evolution presents new possibilities for witness to the Gospel". It was agreed that no individual had an inherent right to be ordained priest.

During the period July 1975 - July 1976 United States ARC has also been engaged in discussion on the question of authority in the Church.

In June 1976 New York/ARC published its first Report which included ecumenical study guides on the ARCIC Eucharist and Ministry Statements. In Rhode Island five Episcopalian and five Roman Catholic parishes have established a covenant relationship and a shared parish is planned in Greenbriar, Chesapeake, Southern Virginia.

At its General Convention in September 1976, it will be proposed that the Episcopal Church of the USA sees its faith and the faith of the Church in the Ministry and Ordination Statement of the International Commission.

WESTERN EUROPE

The Anglican/Roman Catholic Working Group met at Assisi during November 1975. The main topic on the agenda was the question of the ordination of women. The likelihood of several Anglican provinces admitting women to the priesthood canonically in the near future was discussed in relation to the question becoming a live issue in parts of the Roman Catholic Church. There was Old Catholic participation and papers presented at the meeting have been published under The Assisi Report by the Interuniversity Institute for Missiology and Ecumenical Research, Utrecht.