

REPORT ON ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC RELATIONS AND NATIONAL ANGLICAN/
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUES 1978-79

by

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in collaboration with Secretaries of National Dialogues

The Report for 1977-78 (ARCIC 197) was delayed with the postponement of the ARCIC meeting for 1978 (to January 1979) due to the death of Pope Paul VI. This Report, coming only six months after our last meeting will necessarily be rather less substantial than usual and should be treated as a supplement to the Report members received last January.

I POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The customary exchange of letters over Christmas and the New Year contained specific and encouraging references to the work of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission and its future, as well as to the resolution of the Lambeth Conference (33) on the three Agreed Statements, the work of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Anglican Centre in Rome.

(For the text of both letters see the Appendix to my Background Paper No.S1/3 for the Anglican Consultative Council already circulated.)

II THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The fourth meeting of the Council took place during May at London, Ontario, Canada. The Anglican Secretary of ARCIC was Secretary to the Unity Section and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity was represented by the Very Revd. Canon Richard Stewart. The Report of ACC-4 includes a full treatment of Anglican/Roman Catholic relations (1:7) in which particular attention is paid to the work of ARCIC present and future (a and b). Two Resolutions are of particular significance concerning the 'reception' of the Agreed Statements by the Anglican Communion (Resolution 4) and the establishment of a new Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (Resolution 5).

(For the text of the Report and Resolutions see ACC-4 - Report of the Fourth Meeting 1979 already circulated.)

III NATIONAL DIALOGUES

1. Australia

The Report of the May 1978 meeting of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops to discuss Authority in the Church was agreed between Archbishop Sir Marcus Loane and Cardinal Sir James Freeman in May 1979. Under the chairmanship of the Cardinal a number of agreements and disagreements were recorded:

- 1) ARCIC's treatment of Scripture and Tradition was generally accepted;
- 2) within an agreement on 'institutional gifts' there was concern that 'charismatic gifts' be not overlooked and some Anglicans questioned the nature of episcopal authority assumed in the Agreed Statement;
- 3) there was divergence over the interpretation of ARCIC on Ecumenical Councils, though both sides agreed that within the koinonia the Gospel cannot fail and while the Anglican bishops saw no a priori criteria for

determining that statements of councils will be true, the Roman Catholic bishops admitted that the interpretation of conciliar decrees was in practice more difficult than theological theory; 4) there was agreement over ARCIC's presentation of the Petrine Texts and Primacy (on the Roman Catholic understanding that Venice 12 was also read with 24).

2. Belgium

Belgian ARC considered the implications of Anglican/Orthodox on Roman Catholic/Orthodox dialogue at a meeting at Chevetogne in May in which Dom Emmanuel Lanne participated. The Catholic Education Authority have requested Belgian ARC to examine school texts which mention Anglicans or the Anglican Churches with a view to any necessary revision.

3. Brazil

The Episcopal Church of Brazil, through its House of Bishops in March sent the following opinion on the work of ARCIC to the Anglican Consultative Council:

- "1. We have given time to careful study of the three reports of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission of theologians and we praise the Lord for so much that was accomplished by the Commission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his common work of searching for ways of restoration of the unity between our two sister churches.
2. We find the reports on the Eucharist, the Ministry and the Authority in the Church very well balanced, sound and congruent with the doctrine and teaching of the Anglican Communion.
3. Therefore, we recommend and urge further implementation of the conclusions and findings of ARCIC by the appropriate authorities of both Communions."

4. Canada

The Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue tackled the problem of 'Infallibility' at meetings in March and April and papers by Fr. J.M. La Porte, SJ, Professor O'Donovan, and Dr.H.McSorley were presented. At the March meeting the Dialogue requested:

- "a) that the work of ARCIC be extended to allow adequate time for intensive study of Paragraph 24 of the Venice Statement and related issues;
- b) that future work of ARCIC be directed towards actual unity by steps."

In March there was also a meeting between the bishops and clergy of the two dioceses of London, Ontario.

In May two bishops from each side met for preliminary discussions at national level on mixed marriages. The eventual full committee will include theologians and couples with experience of inter-church marriage.

In June in Toronto a gathering of over 400 clergy was addressed by Archbishop Edward Scott and Cardinal Jan Willebrands. The subject addressed was the three Agreed Statements and there was extensive group discussion afterwards with plans for continuing study.

5. England

The General Synod passed the following resolution on the work of ARCIC in February:

"That this Synod

- (a) endorses the opinion of the Faith and Order Advisory Group that the three Agreed Statements are 'sufficiently congruent with Anglican teaching to provide a theological basis for further dialogue';
- (b) draws the attention of the Anglican Consultative Council, and, through it, the attention of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission to the comments and the requests for clarification contained in this Report;
- (c) requests, through the Anglican Consultative Council, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission to initiate a joint study of the doctrine of the Church with a view to producing an agreed statement, in order to provide an over-all context for its three previous Agreed Statements on Eucharist, Ministry and Authority;
- (d) further draws the attention of the Anglican Consultative Council to the fact that 'doctrinal agreements reached by theological commissions cannot by themselves achieve the goal of Christian Unity'; and
- (e) therefore expresses its conviction that, in consultation with the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion should now proceed to the implementation of the stage-by-stage progression to full communion recommended by the 1968 Malta Report, particularly by the appointment of a joint commission for continuing oversight and development of official Anglican/Roman Catholic relations."

(A copy of the Faith and Order Advisory Group Report has already been circulated.)

At the meeting of the General Synod in July the House of Clergy firmly refused (and therefore the Synod as a whole) to open the way for canonical provision for women ordained in other Anglican Churches to minister in England. From the speeches it is reasonable to conclude that the official view of the Roman Catholic Church was a significant factor in the House of Clergy's decision (as in November 1978 on the question of the ordination of women in the Church of England). The Roman Catholic daily eucharistic lectionary was authorized for use in the Church of England at the same session.

English ARC and the General Synod Committee for Roman Catholic relations addressed itself in March to the problems of 'intercommunion', 'establishment' and interchurch marriage ceremonies and baptisms. English ARC plans to continue to explore the ecumenical implications of the legal establishment of the Church of England as this is a specifically (and only) English problem.

In January the Ecumenical Commission for England and Wales/Church of England Evangelical Council joint group met at Nottingham. Justification and other issues were discussed and it is planned to continue the talks at a regional level.

6. France

French ARC met in Poitiers during May. Anglican-Roman Catholic marriage was discussed at length and preparation was begun on Common Statements on the ecumenical celebration of Baptism and Marriage. Other matters discussed included the ecumenical dimensions of the Episcopal Conference at Lourdes, the varieties of Roman Catholic response on the question of eucharistic hospitality, the pastoral work of Anglican chaplains, English/French jumelages and ecumenical pastoral work among young French people in London and South East England.

7. South Africa

In December 1978 the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference agreed on a number of comments on the Venice Statement which were duly sent to Rome. After setting the dialogue in its context the Southern African bishops commended the Statement because of: a) its insistence that the source of all authority is Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit in the koinonia; b) the recognition of the necessity of Scripture and tradition as reference points for all exercise of authority; c) the care to bring out the pastoral nature of authority; d) the awareness that authority exists in the Church as a whole; e) the recognition of the historical development of episcopacy and primacy. The bishops considered one of the Statement's most important assertions was that there was a proper authority to the ordained ministry by virtue of Christ's mandate, even though the technical sacramentality of order is not accepted by all Anglicans. The agreement on conciliar authority was regarded as the most significant convergence of all, though some doubt remained as to the role of "reception" - did "reception" make a Council "binding"? the Bishops recognised continuing divergence over whether communion with Rome was necessary for full ecclesiality, but welcomed the real advance on the agreement of a universal primacy. They echoed the comment of J. Dumont, OP that at this point the inductive method followed by ARCIC was inadequate. In spite of this the Bishops saw the three Agreed Statements as offering a grounded hope that the grave difficulties which still divided the two Churches could indeed be overcome. They urged that the theological dialogue be pursued with the utmost vigour.

8. South Pacific

The South Pacific ARC (appointed by the South Pacific Anglican Council and the Pacific Conference of Bishops) are due to meet in October to discuss Authority in the Church. The Co-Chairmen - Bishops Derek Rawcliffe (Anglican) and Frank Lambert (Roman Catholic) of the New Hebrides - have examined a bibliography on the Venice Statement and a number of articles, Anglican and Roman Catholic, pro and contra, have been sent to them for reproduction.

9. U.S.A.

The Standing Committee on Ecumenical Relations of the Episcopal Church of the USA has proposed three draft Resolutions on Anglican/Roman Catholic relations for the General Convention in 1979 (Denver, Colorado). The first concerns the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission and is intended to go further than previous Convention resolutions of welcome: as proposed it "affirms that the documents on Eucharistic Doctrine and Ministry and Ordination provide a statement of the faith of this Church and form a basis upon which to proceed in

furthering the growth towards the unity of the Episcopal Church with the Roman Catholic Church". The second proposes the adoption of US-ARC's Statement The Purpose of the Church (see Report on Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogues 1975-76 p.8). The third proposes that there should be a conference of Episcopal and Roman Catholic leaders in the United States to consider the practical implications of the first two Agreed Statements of ARCIC and the U.S. Statement The Purpose of the Church.

In the context of the annual National Ecumenical Workshop (in which most US Churches take part) in Birmingham, Alabama, in April, a first joint meeting of Episcopal and Roman Catholic ecumenical officers took place. The executive committees of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers and the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers jointly examined the report of a joint Task Force on Anglican/Roman Catholic covenants. The report The Lived Experience surveyed a hundred and seventeen relationships throughout the United States. It also included a theological assessment by Fr. Herbert Ryan, SJ and Professor R. Wright. The report realistically recognised that the high initial expectation from covenants has only been realised in a minority of cases. Chief among the reasons for this comparative failure were thought to be: inadequate preparation; changes in leadership; small involvement from congregations; artificiality when organised from 'above'; apathy after enthusiasm. Where successful covenants were found there had been very careful preparation, the full involvement of all concerned, prayer, and a realistic expectation.

Among the many activities of covenanted parishes and dioceses has been the covenanting of the two Cathedrals in Louisville, Kentucky, and the joint production of Anglican/Roman Catholic study kit material by New York ARC and the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement.

IV RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The second ad hoc meeting of representative Anglican/Roman Catholic Religious Superiors met in Rome (with a Lutheran representative) in May. It was agreed that a regular Anglican/Roman Catholic Council for the Religious Life should be established with three members from each Church. The proposal was referred to the three regional Anglican Advisory Councils for the Religious Life and to the Conferences of Mother Superiors and Men Superiors. The provisional Anglican membership of the Council will be: Fr. Connor Lynne, OHC (representing the Americas), Fr. Dunstan McKee, SSM (representing Australasia and Southern Africa), Bishop Michael Fisher, SSF (representing Europe and Convening Anglican Secretary).