

ANGLICAN/ORTHODOX JOINT DOCTRINAL DISCUSSIONS

Communiqué of the Joint Anglican/Orthodox Doctrinal Commission
held at Hertford College, Oxford, from the 6th -
13th July 1973

1. The Joint Anglican/Orthodox Doctrinal Commission for dialogue between the two Churches held its first full meeting in Hertford College, Oxford, from the 6th-13th July 1973.

During the course of the meeting the members of the Commission together attended a Memorial service for the late Patriarch Athenagoras I, held on Sunday, July 8th, at the newly built Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity and the Annunciation. Later on the same day they were present at Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral, when the sermon was preached by the Dean, the Revd. Dr. Henry Chadwick. On Wednesday the 11th, they attended the consecration of the new Orthodox Church. In the afternoon of that day the Archbishop of Canterbury took part in the meeting of the Commission, and in the evening, as President of the Nikaeian Club, he offered a reception for the members of the Commission and others. On the final evening, Thursday, 12th, all the delegates were invited to a dinner by Archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira and Great Britain in the name of the Oecumenical Patriarch.

2. The participants represented the whole Anglican Communion and the whole Orthodox Church, although for technical reasons delegates from the Church of Czechoslovakia were unable to participate.
3. The meetings of the Commission took place in an atmosphere of Christian brotherhood, and great cordiality, in which those present felt able to speak the truth in love and mutual understanding, and with a sense of the urgency of the present problems facing both Churches.
4. The first subject discussed was that of Comprehensiveness. The Commission had before it a paper prepared on the Anglican side entitled Comprehensiveness and the Mission of the Church. Some Orthodox delegates, though not wholly satisfied, found in the paper a new and hopeful approach to the problem.
5. The second subject discussed was the work of the Holy Spirit. The Commission had before it a paper prepared on the Orthodox side entitled The Holy Spirit as Interpreter of the Gospel and Giver of Life in the Church To-day. The Anglicans were deeply appreciative of both the spirit and the content of the paper. In discussion they raised the question of the work of the Holy Spirit outside the Orthodox Church, and asked for further clarification of the Orthodox understanding of the limits of the Church, and of the Orthodox attitude towards the Churches of the West. We cannot deny the work of the Holy Spirit outside the canonical limits of the Church, since the Holy Spirit is "everywhere present and fills all things." The Anglicans in particular raised the question of how the Holy Spirit works in the movements and circumstances of the world to-day.
6. The third main group of subjects discussed related to the Anglican answers to the four questions raised by the Orthodox Commission in preparation for the dialogue, i.e.

- (a) The way in which the Anglican Church understands its union with the Orthodox Churches

On this question there was general agreement that the essential points which would be necessary as requirements for the establishment of full communion between the two Churches need to be further clarified. The Orthodox desired further explanations of the Anglican understanding of "the common tradition of faith, order, and worship inherited from the ancient Church, and based on the Scriptures and the decisions of the early Councils".

- (b) The possibility of the union of the Anglican with the Orthodox Church following upon intercommunion which the Anglican Church has decided to practise with various Lutheran Confessions and with those of the South Indian Scheme

The Orthodox insisted on the principle that communion presupposes complete unity in faith. The Anglicans explained the historic experience of their Church, which has the consciousness of being part of the One Church and which therefore recognises the reality of the Church beyond its own borders.

- (c) The way in which the decision of the Theological Dialogue will become compulsory for all the Anglican Communion of Churches

It was recognised that this question will be resolved gradually, and that progress towards unity in faith must involve both the faithful and the leaders of the Churches.

- (d) The position and authority of the Thirty-Nine Articles within Anglican tradition and in contemporary Anglicanism

The Orthodox found the paper on this subject to be informative and enlightening. The Anglicans in answer to the questions raised by the Orthodox, stated that the Articles have a significance in Anglican history. They referred to the resolution 43 of the Lambeth Conference 1968*, and reported the way in which forms of assent to the Articles, where such forms exist, are being modified in various provinces of the Anglican Communion. +

7. The Anglicans expressed their very deep satisfaction at the Orthodox paper on the subject of The Redemptive Work of Christ on the Cross and in the Resurrection. In this paper the Anglicans recognised the common tradition of the two Churches, although it was also recognised that, in the explication of the mystery of salvation, there are different interpretations and approaches in East and West. The discussion suggested that, after a serious common study of this subject, the two Churches could arrive at a common statement.

8. As regards the future work of the Commission, it was decided that the next full meeting of the Anglican/Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission will be held in 1976. Meanwhile Sub-Commissions will prepare material on the three following subjects. The Sub-Commissions will be formed as follows:

- (a) Inspiration and Revelation in the Holy Scriptures

1. Orthodox members: Metropolitan Stylianos of Miletoupolis; the Revd. L. Voronov; the Revd. Professor N. Shivarov; Professor N. Chitescu and Professor G. Galitis.

2. Anglican members: The Bishop of Winchester; the Right Revd. H. Carpenter; the Revd. R. Beckwith; the Revd. C. Davey; and the Revd. Dr. R. Terwilliger.

- (b) The Authority of the Councils

1. Orthodox members: Archbishop Basil of Brussels; Metropolitan John of Helsinki; the Revd. Professor John Romanides; the Revd. Lucian Gafton; Professor John Kalogirou.

2. Anglican members: The Bishop of St. Albans; the Bishop of Fulham and Gibraltar; the Revd. Dr. E. Hardy; Canon A. M. Allchin; Canon Edward Every.

- (c) The Church as the Eucharistic Community

1. Orthodox members: Archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira;

Metropolitan Methodios of Aksum; Archbishop Basil of Jordan; Bishop Gregory of Tropaeou; the Revd. Professor Ion Bria; Professor S. Gosević.

2. Anglican members: The Bishop of Long Island; the Bishop of Wollongong; the Revd. Professor E. Fairweather; Dr. Paul Anderson; Dr. Peter Day.

The papers prepared by the Sub-Commissions will be circulated to all the members of the Commission for comments and revision. The two Sub-Commissions may invite experts to advise them on specific subjects.

* The Conference accepts the main conclusion of the report of the Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine entitled Subscription and Assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles (1968) and in furtherance of its recommendation

- (a) suggests that each Church of our communion consider whether the Articles need be bound up with its Prayer Book;
- (b) suggests to the Churches of the Anglican Communion that assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles be no longer required of ordinands.
- (c) suggests that, when subscription is required to the Articles or other elements in the Anglican tradition, it should be required, and given, only in the context of a statement which gives the full range of our inheritance of faith and sets the Articles in their historical context.

Lambeth Conference, 1968
Resolution 43.

+ PREFACE (to be spoken by archbishop or bishop)

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. She professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, she has borne witness to Christian truth in her historic formularies, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. In the declaration you are about to make will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care?

DECLARATION OF ASSENT

I, A.B., do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, I will use only the forms of service which are authorised or allowed by Canon.

Church of England General Synod,
GS 116A.