

RESTORING KOINONIA BETWEEN OUR TWO CHURCHES

II

THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR TASK

Given the position of our two Churches in the search for unity after the Final Report of ARCIC I, it seems that if we are to be serious and not to drift, ARCIC II should concentrate on three crucial points. They are all tied to what I have been presenting in the first part of this paper as the theological background of genuine life in koinonia.

I. Discover what are the links of koinonia remaining between us

The way in which the Final Report is "received" is going to compel us to an attentive and realistic examination of the status of the koinonia still existing between our two communions. In other words, we must determine ties of ecclesial koinonia. To what degree and in what measure have we, in spite of the rupture, remained in koinonia in the great areas which we have in the preceding study discovered as the components of fidelity to baptismal requirements? Hence we must put to ourselves the following questions:

- a) How far are we in communion in affirming the essential truths of the faith, i.e. id quod requiritur et sufficit to be able to say that we are unanimous in confessing the God and Father of Jesus Christ and in understanding his Salvation, allowing for necessary and legitimate theological differences and doctrinal emphases?
- b) How far are we in communion in church life (particularly sacramental life and ordo ecclesiae involving the ministry of episkopè and its relation with the laity)?

allowing for diversity of liturgical traditions (Prayer Book, Rituale Romanum, Ordo Missae, Ordinal Pontificale Romanum and canonical traditions?

- c) How far are we in communion in gospel teaching on moral conduct in harmony with the biblical view of the human person created by God and **restored** by Jesus Christ?
- d) How far are we in communion in one same 'apostolic succession' of our ministries but also in what I have described earlier as their 'apostolic continuity', implying much more than "validity" of ordination? To what extent can our communion in the elements of this apostolic continuity bespeak a real ministerial communion even supposing there remained a grave doubt about the "validity" of Anglican orders?
- e) How far are we in communion (if ARCIC I is "received") in common reference to the bishop of Rome as centrum unitatis?

2. I think this enquiry is essential if we want our koinonia to be based not simply on the answers to theological difficulties but on lived faith in all its realism. In other words, we must explain, in a clear and simple document accessible to the faithful of both communions, what ARCIC I rightly recognised as the ample measure of koinonia which has not ceased to exist between us on the level not of canonical unity (broken by the schism) but of the life of grace.

3. This enquiry ought to provide a basis from which to start and on which to build the second stage of our common journey towards unity. It is important to note that

the answer to the question "what kind of unity are we moving towards"? will depend on the way we answer the questions I have been framing. Is the phrase "united not absorbed" to be interpreted only as an adaptation of the "uniat" style?

4. The question of the Lambeth quadrilateral (of 1888)

might be discussed from this standpoint. It is important for the attitude of the Anglican communion towards questions of koinonia in faith. After nearly a century of ecumenism do the four requirements of the quadrilateral still seem enough?

II. Looking for consensus, on the basis of koinonia and in terms of it, on questions still outstanding.

The experience of our discussion on justification - with its imbrolios and perpetual turning back, its getting stuck on minor points - shows simply that we should be on the wrong track discussing remaining questions for their own sake ; the more so since - apart from Apostolicae Curae - they are immense and go beyond the limits of relations between our two communions. For instance, it is not our business to discuss for its own sake the ordination of women to the presbyteral (or even the episcopal) ministry. But it is our business to see in what degree and for what reasons these ordinations are an obstacle to our common purpose of koinonia.

It seems to me necessary to study the following points, in order of urgency:

1) In terms of the full koinonia to be restored between us and on the basis of a study of the Anglican ordinals and the Pontificale Romanum, we must decide the steps to be taken on either side so as to close the dossier opened by Apostolicae Curae. Cardinal Willebrands' letter sent during our last meeting (in U.S.A.) already traces a valuable line of procedure. Does the obstacle to koinonia raised by Apostolicae Curae still exist?

2) It is now clear to me that this study cannot mature until we have answered the following question: in terms of the full koinonia of our two Churches, what attitude must we take to the problem raised by the ordination of women to the presbyterate? Does the will for koinonia call for a decision both on the Roman and on the Anglican side? The answer does not depend only on knowing whether the validity of the rite is in question. It depends also on the demands of koinonia and on the determination to give the latter priority over other desires, because of the ut sint unum.

3. These two first questions are certainly more central than those raised by the marginal disagreements which ARCIC I acknowledged about the function of the bishop of Rome within the koinonia. It is obvious that we have not to go over the whole of this subject again, and the agreement reached by ARCIC I (broader and deeper than is sometimes thought and said) should not be attacked but reaffirmed by ARCIC II. I have been surprised at the ignorance among many (perhaps even members of this commission) of what was stated together, admitted together as necessary for koinonia, accepted together as an ecclesial agreement, in the parts of the Final Report

dealing with the place and role of the Roman primacy.

Our task is to answer the following question: what remains to be cleared up so that our two communions may have their bishops in koinonia, in a single episcopal college united by the koinonia of all with the bishop of Rome?

4. This settled, we shall have to tackle another question which is the corollary of the foregoing. Bearing in mind the tradition of each of our communions, and also the situation of the Church of England before the rupture, what sort of relationship requiritur et sufficit between the Churches of the Anglican communion and the bishop of Rome not only in a juridical and external way but in the practice of church life? Must the type of relationship be the same for every Church of the Anglican Communion? Could for example something different be envisaged for the Church of England, for the Episcopal Church of U.S.A., in view of the history of the Church of England before the schism: The question might be put in this way: for full koinonia what links should be established between the see of Rome and those episcopal sees wishing to preserve (within that koinonia) what is valuable in their Anglican heritage?

5) Moral questions are of a different order. But there more than anywhere the problems should not be treated in themselves, apart. I think they should be approached in this way :

In order that the faithful of our two communions may not be simply in a ritual koinonia but truly in that koinonia of evangelical life which is the purpose (the res tantum) of the Eucharist: in order too that they

may be capable of witnessing together in active commitment to the coming of "the man God wants", that is, a humanity in "the image and likeness" of the living God, what are the great e-thical principles to which they should hold together, which they should unite to defend and promote?

The question might be re-phrased thus : what are the great principles of human conduct which, in the light of the gospel, our two communions should together hold, teach, promote and defend so that their koinonia may be one life in Christ, a unanimous commitment to the triumph of evangelical values in our world? How can we arrive at a common teaching on those principles?

I think it is obvious that the answer to this question must send us back, not theoretically but very practically, to the problem of teaching authority (the magisterium episcoporum) and its connection with the function of the bishop of Rome. And the question of the sensus fidelium will come up afresh, but this time in the context of christian praxis which APOC I had no mandate from the Malta Report to broach.

The Stages toward full koinonia

Inquiring into the practical steps to be taken, the definitive stages on the way to full koinonia would clearly have to take account of the reflections I have been suggesting. But it is not for me, in this paper, to deal with that part of the work of APOC II. Others have to do that. It will however be necessary after discussion to compare ~~their~~ views with mine - if mine are judged worth considering.

I think this framework based wholly on the theology of koinonia may allow APOC II to carry out its mandate with a seriousness worthy of our two communions.