

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC JOINT PREPARATORY COMMISSION

Paper

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Commission, at its meeting in Huntercombe Manor gave us in general terms the task of drawing up, for discussion at the next meeting, an outline of what might be termed staged engagement or phased rapprochement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, with the ultimate objective of organic unity.

The fact that the Preparatory Commission has been set up is an historic event, and an unprecedented one in the history of our two Churches. It was clearly the thinking of the Commission that unprecedented situations require unprecedented treatment. With this in mind, it appeared that the idea of growing together by stages should be examined, each stage being one which would be theologically justifiable.

The point of departure for such a joint theological investigation and the basis of the concept of phased rapprochement may well be claimed to be a sentence from the Common Declaration of the Pope and the Archbishop in March 1966: "They intend to inaugurate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed."

From the Anglican point of view, such a basis is a welcome one, for Anglicans have always held themselves committed to 'the faith once for all delivered'. There is no such thing as the Anglican faith - only the faith, taught by Anglicans. Andrewes formulated this more than three centuries ago, and it remains the basis: "one canon....two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries, and the series of Fathers in that period....determine the boundary of our faith" (Opuscula, L.A.C.T. ed. p.91). Elsewhere, he wrote, referring to the definition of Vincent of Lérins: "Let that be reckoned Catholic which always obtained everywhere among all, and which always and everywhere and by all was believed." (Responsio, p.25)

Laud, in his Conference, develops this in detail and by way of conclusion he writes: "...and if the Scripture be the foundation to which we are to go for witness, if there be doubt about the faith, and in which we are to find the thing that is to be believed, as necessary in the faith; we never did, nor never will refuse any tradition that is universal and apostolic for the better exposition of the Scriptures; nor

any definition of the Church in which she goes to the Scripture for what she teaches; and thrusts nothing as fundamental in the faith upon the world, but what the Scripture fundamentally makes 'materiam credendorum', the substance of that which is so to be believed, whether immediately and expressly in words, or more remotely, where a clear and full deduction draws it out."

This sort of thing could be multiplied almost indefinitely from writings of the classical Anglican period, for Anglican theological method has consistently adhered to a three-fold appeal to Scripture, to antiquity and to reason. It is important to note it, however, because it emphasises how much Anglicans and Roman Catholics are agreed in accepting the historic faith. Divergences are not found here, but in the problems surrounding the question of the nature of authority and particularly as these impinge on the interpretation of the historic faith of the creeds, to which both our Churches are committed. This has constantly come to the surface hitherto in discussion, tending to crystallise around questions of papal infallibility and the magisterium of the teaching Church.

But it seems no more than a factual statement that Anglicans and Roman Catholics should be able to move forward from an accepted basis of the Gospels and the ancient common traditions.

The Lambeth Quadrilateral (Holy Scriptures, Creeds, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, the apostolic ministry) emphasises that the same position is held today, underlining as it does the given-ness of the faith and order of the Church. Again, both Churches recognise that the ministry has taken a three-fold form.

Both Churches are committed to preaching Christ, the Incarnate Word, and growth in fellowship with Him in the life of His Mystical Body: to proclaiming to the world the message of redemption and salvation as giving purpose and meaning to life in terms of man's supernatural end: to showing that the life which Christians live is "the life which Christ lives in (them)". (Gal. II, 20.) Both Churches see in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments the covenanted means of grace, the means by which men are "built, as living stones, into a spiritual temple" (I Peter 2, 5). Given this, and since charity is the norm of action and dialogue, what stages can be visualised in the process of growing together?

Such stages should each in themselves be theologically justifiable, so that what is being sought is a series of steps, theologically and practically feasible, which could be officially taken by the ecclesiastical authorities of both Churches.

STAGE I.

What kind of picture of the first stage could emerge from this approach to our present situation?

The first stage might well be one which would be inaugurated by taking two steps, one in the theological area and the other on the day-to-day level of Church life. It is well to remember that there is amongst members of both our Communions a diffused

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longing for unity which is complicated and partly vitiated by a certain amount of mutual distrust, the legacy of the past. It follows that all specific obstacles which block the growth of truly fraternal relations at the parochial level should be removed during this first stage. Otherwise, there would result merely a rapprochement of theologians.

The theological and practical steps must therefore be regarded as part of one operation, as necessarily complementary elements of Stage I in the coming together of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion.

A.

What are these?
The theological step would be the recognition by both Churches that "each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith". Such recognition would "not require from either communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other."

The quotations are from the Bonn Agreement (1931) between the Church of England and the Old Catholic Churches, and are given simply as an indication of the sort of line that might now be considered. The common ground in that Agreement was fundamentals (see Introduction, above) in that the Declaration of Utrecht (1889), like Anglicanism, is committed to "the Rule of Faith laid down by St. Vincent of Lérins" (Decl. 1).

The recent meeting between Pope Paul and Patriarch Athenagoras produced a declaration to the effect that each Church regarded the other as holding the fundamentals of the Catholic Faith, but neither was committed to the whole theological position of the other. At Huntercombe, a Roman Catholic speaker asked "Why cannot we agree on fundamentals, and not insist on each other accepting all developments of doctrine?"

This would be the theological step in Stage I and something more can be said presently about its feasibility and about trends which might indicate it as a real possibility.

B.

The practical step is really a complex of movements, but it might be summed up as the clearing away of obstacles to ecumenism on the parochial level - the level of the Church's life. Here again, the joint declaration of March 23rd 1966 gave a clear pointer, indicating that dialogue should cover "not only theological matters such as Scripture, tradition and liturgy, but also matters of practical difficulty, felt on either side."

Experience shows that, if this aspect is not tackled simultaneously with the theological one, and the tangle of obstacles to charity and fraternity removed, the only growing together will be among delegates to theological conferences. Some of the particular difficulties can be indicated later.

As to the theological step envisaged, what indications are there that it might be acceptable to both Churches, and therefore a feasible step? On the Anglican side, the Articles with their insistence on the doctrinal centrality of Scripture and Creeds, the Lambeth Quadrilateral, and the form of the Bonn Agreement, would all appear to indicate that such a step would in fact be acceptable.

In consequence of this position, there is a built-in distinction in Anglican theology between fundamental and accessory truths. This is quite explicit, and it is a constantly recurring factor. So Henry Hammond distinguished "between theological verity and Catholic faith", the former including things which are believed to be true but are not a necessary part of fundamentals (Works, Vol. I, p.403). In fact, the whole drift of the classical Anglican appeal to antiquity - which had nothing to do with ecclesiastical antiquarianism - was, as Jeremy Taylor put it, in respect of "fundamentals and the rule of faith". Paul Elmer More's comment is to the point: "To the Anglican the value of tradition was measured by its tenacity of the original depositum fidei." (Anglicanism, ed. More and Cross, p.xxvi). Taylor put it that "when the Fathers appeal to Tradition....it is such a tradition as delivers the fundamental points of Christianity, which were also recorded in Scripture". (The Liberty of Propheying, S.V.). In this book, Taylor looks at the doctrinal differences of Christians and examines the questions which are still under discussion today, namely, the basis of authority in the interpretation and declaration of the Faith. It is surprisingly modern, dealing with the subjective approach, tradition, infallibility and the place of reason in this situation. He pleads for a coming together on fundamentals, and his book is far from being naïve: "If this consideration does not deceive me, we have no other help in the midst of these distractions, and disunion, but all of us to be united in that common term, which as it does constitute the Church in its being such, so it is the medium of the communion of saints, and that is the Creed of the Apostles, and in all other things an honest endeavour to find out what truths we can, and a charitable and mutual permission to others that disagree from us and our opinions." (ib. Epistle Dedicatory).

It is the traditional Anglican distinction between fundamentals and accessories and theological opinions. It runs through all Anglican writings of the 17th century, such as Sanderson's "Pax Ecclesiae", and it has nothing to do with minimalism or indifferentism. Its primary concern is with the unchangingness of fundamentals, the absolute necessity of these, and the difference between fundamentals and all else.

This is so much a part of Anglican teaching and thinking that it is hardly worth adducing further examples. Yet the views of Bramhall are very much to the point of the present subject, for he writes in terms of Christian unity. Bramhall sees the possibility of unity in returning to the position of the undivided Church when the creed was the foundation of the rule of faith, "if the creed or necessary points of faith were reduced to what they were in the time of the four first oecumenical councils, according to the decree of the third general council". Who, he asks, could say that "the faith of the primitive fathers was insufficient"?

His analysis of Catholicity bears on the whole question of the feasibility of the step in Stage I which is under discussion. "The communion of the Catholic Church" he writes "is partly internal, partly external". The former consists chiefly in acceptance of "the same entire substance of saving necessary truth revealed by the apostles", in judgments of mutual charity, in the desire to achieve external communion, and in refusal to exclude those "which profess the ancient faith of the apostles and primitive fathers, established in the first general councils, and comprehended in the Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian creeds". External communion consists in having the same creeds, sacraments, liturgy, and in accepting the same "authority, that is, episcopacy or a general council". Internal communion is a mutual obligation for all, even in the case of those with whom external communion, for some reason, is not possible.

Catholicity derives "by the uninterrupted line of apostolical succession" and depends on acceptance of the "Scripture ... that infallible rule", and on the acceptance of the unanimous and universal practice of the Church. It precludes "censuring others of different judgment.... in inferior questions" and "obtruding opinions on others as articles of faith". Bramhall's favourable view of the Eastern Churches was based on the fact that "they exact of no man..... any other creed", and the unity of Christians of the first centuries was founded on the fact that "no Church exacted more in point of faith than the primitive creed". (Works, 1676 ed.)

The relevance of this apparent digression to the question of the theological feasibility of the suggested step in Stage I is that, on their formularies and on their past or recent statements and actions (as in the Bonn Agreement), Anglicans ought to be prepared to welcome such a proposal.

Is this distinction between fundamentals and secondary matters so very dissimilar to the concept of a hierarchy of truths which finds expression in the Vatican Council's Decree of Ecumenism?

C.II,xi, reads: "Furthermore, Catholic theologians engaged in ecumenical dialogue, while standing fast by the teaching of the Church and searching together with separated brethren into the divine mysteries, should act with love for truth, with charity and with humility. When comparing doctrines, they should remember that in Catholic teaching there exists an order or 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith."

C.I,2, reads: "While preserving unity in essentials, let all members of the Church, according to the office entrusted to each, preserve a proper freedom in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in the variety of liturgical rites, and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth."

There is something here, particularly in respect of the phrases 'a hierarchy of truths', and 'freedom... even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth', which gives hope that such a line of approach as appeared to be emerging in the Commission's discussions may be an acceptable one to the

Roman Catholic Church.

It is further supported by words in the allocution of Pope John at the opening of the Vatican Council: "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith, is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another". The reference by Pope Paul at the opening of the Third Session to "pluralism in practice" points in a similar direction. (Both statements were discussed by the Bishop of Ripon and Professor Root in their paper on 'Unity and Comprehensiveness').

At a later stage, when a re-united Church is under discussion, the limits of comprehensiveness for both sides would naturally have to be examined, but as far as Stage I is concerned, this would not seem to be involved in the mutual recognition that each Church holds the essential faith.

The paper given to the Commission on the same subject ('To what extent can or should there be diversity in a united Church?') by Bishop J. G. Willebrands was regarded by all as a most important opening up of this question and is very relevant to this question of the first Stage. Having indicated how history shows the existence of theological differences within the local Church, he asks if history can guide divided Christians today confronted with what Pope Paul called "pluralism in essentials". "We have lived disunited for centuries. We have created doctrines and structures which have not remained within the communion of faith and charity but have broken it" (loc. cit. p.8). And again: "The dialogue of charity.....will bring us to recognise and accept legitimate and authentically Christian differences which have developed during the centuries of separation" (ib.).

Is not this the whole point, and ought not the first Stage to be the simple recognition on the basis already referred to?

One may conclude with a quotation from the Dutch theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx: "I personally believe that the Catholic Church must on the one hand allow ample space and liberty for theological pluralism (even for a certain pluralism in the interpretation of faith), but that on the other hand she must urge, more consistently than the Lutheran Church in Germany has done, the fundamental credo of faith as the canon fidei or norm of faith, in spite of the uncertainty in all Christian Churches about the precise definitions of this fundamental confession of faith." (Quoted in an article in Sept. 1967 by John Morgan.)

B.

Among the "matters of practical difficulty, felt on either side" (Common Declaration of March 1966), there can be no doubt that, from the point of view of Anglicans and of all non-Roman Catholics, the question of mixed marriages is in the forefront. It is not too much to say that the present position is a major obstacle in the way of ecumenism, making it impossible for members of the Churches to deal with each other on that equal footing referred to in the Decree on Ecumenism (II,9).

Since the Commission has recognised the urgency of thi

by requesting the setting up of a special body to deal with the question, there is no need to dwell further on details here.

Stage I would have little reality if, as well as mutual acknowledgment that both Churches hold the essential Christian faith, it were not possible for ordinary members of the Churches to have a candid relationship of charity and equality. At present, this relationship is greatly inhibited by the question of the mixed marriage provisions, and nothing would do more to remove suspicion and to create the beginnings of brotherhood than the removal of the obstacle at the inception of Stage I. It would be an undeniable assurance that Christians mean business as they approach the problem of disunity. From one aspect, it is a question of dealing with ecclesiastical legislation, but for many it is basically a matter of freedom (cp. Declaration on Religious Freedom, I,5), while for all involved it is a human concern.

Discussions of the Commission also revealed that a second group of matters required attention, namely, the missionary situation, the sharing of church buildings where possible, as in new areas, the question of theological education, and the possibility of joint pronouncements. While each of these matters would require examination in depth, they would seem to fit in to the pattern of what might be the first Stage.

A third group of questions of a liturgical nature appeared in the course of discussion, and clearly the unifying effect of liturgy ought to be taken full account of during Stage I.

Steps could be taken to give effect to the Huntercombe proposals in respect of an agreed text for all common forms, e.g. Creeds, Gloria in excelsis. Since liturgical revision is now going on in most Churches of the Anglican Communion and in the Roman Catholic Church, this is the time to take practical steps to ensure linguistic uniformity.

Yet another side of this, not touched on at the meeting, is the question of an agreed lectionary for use at the Eucharist. With the appearance of an Old Testament lection in the liturgical revisions of both Churches now in progress, a three-part common Eucharistic lectionary would be a possibility. Could Stage I involve a coming together of the various lectionary commissions and the pooling of their work with a view to a common usage? If such an arrangement could be made, it would greatly strengthen the effectiveness of Stage I at the level where it would most need strengthening.

Stage I would then involve dealing with the present canonical discipline in mixed marriages, the bringing in of common texts and forms, the making of joint pronouncements on matters of world concern, missionary competition and theological education. This would 'bring the people on both sides along with us', to use a phrase used at our meeting and one which emphasised a vital aspect of Stage I.

This would be further helped by worship together and by the exchange of preachers. The Directory of May 1967 might provide a basis for an agreed arrangement by both Churches

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suiting to the nature of Stage I. The theological background would be similar to that of the Pope and Patriarch in that neither side should require from the other a positive acceptance of every article of the other's creed, e.g. the Patriarch specified the Vatican I definition of the Petrine primacy and infallibility. There are, of course, similarly differences as between Roman Catholics and Anglicans, and Anglicans would add Mariological definitions.

The proposals for Stage I might then be summarised as follows:

- I. Mutual recognition that each Church holds the essential Christian faith, neither being tied to a positive acceptance of all the beliefs held by the other.
- II. The removal of the obstacle to ecumenism caused by mixed marriage legislation.
- III. Joint examination of a. the missionary situation, b. sharing of buildings, c. theological education, d. the possibility of joint pronouncements.
- IV. Joint action to ensure a. an agreed text for common forms, b. an agreed three-part lectionary for Eucharistic lessons from the Old Testament, the Epistles and the Gospels, and c. arrangements for common worship and for the interchange of preachers.

On this view, Stage I depends on mutual recognition of credal orthodoxy and on the removal of practical obstacles so that the members of both Churches may be able to regard each other "not as rivals but as brothers and allies" (The Archbishop of Canterbury's 'Rome and Canterbury', p.2). This stage consists of the essential first movements if the hope expressed in the Common Declaration is to find fulfilment, that Anglicans and Roman Catholics shall treat one another with "respect, esteem and fraternal love."

During the Commission's discussions, mention of the statement of the Pope and the Patriarch, and of the limited intercommunion between Roman Catholics and Orthodoxy as set out in the Vatican Council's Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, gave rise to a suggestion as to the possibility of a similar relationship as between Roman Catholics and the Churches of the Anglican Communion.

The question, as framed by a Roman Catholic member of the Commission, was to the effect that, if the Petrine primacy, infallibility and Mariology, are the points dividing us from Anglicans, they also divide us from the Orthodox*, with whom there is limited intercommunion, and so why not look for a similar relationship with Anglicans?

The section of the Decree which deals with 'Relations with the Brethren of Separated (Eastern) Churches' notes that "a valid priesthood is preserved among Eastern clerics" and it lays down a new "milder" and "more lenient" policy in respect of communicatio in sacris.

An Orthodox Response to this, by Alexander Schmemmann, while welcoming the Decree as a step forward, enters several reservations, particularly that the differences between East and West cannot be reduced to questions of rite and ethos in such a way as to isolate them from the doctrinal principles implied, for this constitutes "the real issue between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy". He also points out that the institution of Patriarchates ought not to be given "an importance it does not have, in fact, in the Eastern Church" by regarding it in terms of "a personal jurisdiction of the Patriarch over other bishops, which is alien to the Eastern canonical tradition, where the Patriarch or any other Primate is always a primus inter pares". With regard to communicatio in sacris, he stresses that bilateral action is required which must express "the consensus of all Orthodox Churches".

If a parallel with the Roman/Anglican situation is to be drawn, there are several valuable pointers here, namely, the general theological context of such an agreement, the primacy, and the importance of bilateralism.

In this latter connection, the Bonn Agreement, which is one of full intercommunion, itemises the details of a somewhat similar situation in three simple provisions: (1) each communion recognises the catholicity and independence of the

* For the absence of Mariological definitions in Orthodoxy, see The Orthodox Ethos (1964), ed. A. J. Philippou, p.147.

other, and maintains its own. (2) Each communion agrees to admit members of the other communion to participate in the sacraments. (3) Intercommunion does not require from either communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith.

Basically - apart from the fact that only limited intercommunion is visualised - this appears to be the situation as it actually is between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

The Bonn Agreement, it will be recalled, followed the Old Catholic declaration in 1925 on Anglican Ordinations which was to the effect that the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht recognised "the sufficiency of the rite of Edward VI as an adequate expression of the Catholic belief" and the intention of the Church of England "to maintain the episcopal rule of the Church of antiquity" and had no reservations "that the apostolic succession has not been broken in the Church of England". (See Documents on Christian Unity [1955] ed. G.K.A. Bell.)

Such an approach would involve, for Roman Catholics, the question of Anglican Orders. Anglicans have no corresponding difficulty as to the matter of fact, although they have had very real difficulty about notions of priesthood conceived in terms of 're-sacrificing'. Recent shifts of emphasis on this and allied questions since the Vatican Council make a difference here. For both sides there will surely be involved a radical looking again at concepts of the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments, in the light of the New Testament's evidence and teaching, so that the question of Orders may be taken in relationship to what the Church is and to what its structures are.

To refer back to Branhall's phrasing - if Stage I removes the obstacles to "internal communion" then, logically, Stage II should confront the obstacles to "external communion".

If Stage II be taken as one of intercommunion, limited or not, what would be the steps by means of which practical proposals might come into view?

If, as appears to be indicated by the relationship of limited intercommunion between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, acceptance of the Petrine claims and Mariological dogmas is not essential for this limited intercommunion, from the Roman Catholic point of view, where should the approach to the Roman Catholic/Anglican situation commence?

As already suggested, the Ministry cannot be considered apart from the Church, so the approach to the problem would naturally be by way of questions such as: Who are the Church? What is the essential Ministry? What is the meaning of priesthood? This would include an examination of sacraments in relation to each of these questions.

This is, of course, somewhat simplified, but the first step in Stage II would be a joint examination of these questions in terms of the New Testament situation and the subsequent experience of the Church.

If a substantial measure of agreement were discovered in this area - and the work done by the writers of previous papers on the nature and extent of a legitimate diversity in the Church would fit in here - it would then be a natural second step to proceed to consider the specific question of Anglican Orders within this larger context, and to consider what practical moves would bring about inter-communion.

Two courses suggest themselves, and they ought not necessarily to be regarded as alternatives but rather as supplementing each other:

1. A joint re-examination of Apostolicae Curae in the light of a revised sacramental theology.
2. A joint examination of the position in the light of the Lambeth Appeal of 1920 and on the analogy of other Reunion schemes.

One could not, of course, at this stage forecast what attitude the Churches of the Anglican Communion would take to these two proposals, taken singly or together. It is a complex situation, with Apostolicae Curae on the one hand and, on the other, the complete absence of any doubt about their Orders on the part of Anglicans - as expressed, for instance, in the letter of July, 1925 in which the Archbishop of Canterbury accepts and receives the decision of the Old Catholic Church on Anglican Orders: "For our own part we are sure, and have always been sure, that the apostolical succession has never been broken in the Church of England, and that a valid formula of consecration has been continually maintained." (Bell, Documents on Christian Unity, p.202).

Respecting one another's consciences, Anglicans and Roman Catholics united in the dialogue of charity will also have to look at reasons and candidly examine together the theological and historical aspects. It may well be that some will favour thinking solely in terms of 2. (supra) but others may think that 2. implies 1.

In any event, the starting-point is the Church, and here Vatican II provides encouraging help in the shape of what may fairly be termed an ecclesiology with a changed emphasis. The shifting of the stress from a monarchical to a collegial concept of the Church, from a 'juridical' view to a view of the Church as an organism, comes closer to Anglican and Orthodox thinking. Lumen Gentium thinks in terms of the mystery of the Church, of the Church as the mystical Body, as a People, and (apart from what Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants would regard as the assumption of the basis of the Petrine claims) the document re-emphasises the New Testament 'organic' idea of the Church. Professor Fairweather wrote in his paper at the Commission's first meeting: "The Constitution on the Church, as its teaching is assimilated by Roman Catholic theology, will inevitably bring the latter into close rapport with living Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox thought. Common study of the broad theme of Lumen Gentium should therefore be an advantageous starting-point for dialogue on the outstanding points of difference in the area of ecclesiology."

The first question then would be something like this: Within the framework of a consensus on ecclesiology - supposing that this could be achieved - could there be useful dialogue on the basis of an examination of the theological presuppositions of the Papal Constitution Apostolicae Curae in the light of what has been happening within the Roman Catholic Church since the second Vatican Council?

A recent article by Robert Adolfs OSA (in NEW CHRISTIAN, 4 May, 1967) suggests that there could be, with practical results, as his conclusion indicates: "As a final suggestion, I would say that we should start working on a formula which would express the minimum requirements for a new form of corporate unity, which I would call 'collegial communion' between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church."

The article merits attention, not simply for the points it raises but also for the angle from which it raises them, namely that of post-Vatican II theology of the Church, the priesthood and the sacraments. This it contrasts with the theology of the Constitution which reflects, the author maintains, a type of theological thinking superseded by the Vatican Council. It is on this changed emphasis that Adolfs bases his evaluation of the arguments of Apostolicae Curae, and his assessment of the "special place" accorded by the Council's declaration to the Anglican Communion within the context of the restoration of unity.

Even more relevant because of its historical examination of the circumstances and its theological evaluation is an article, "The Papal Condemnation of Anglican Orders: 1896", by John Jay Hughes in The Journal of Ecumenical Studies (Spring 1967, Vol.4, No.2, Temple University, Philadelphia). Quoting contemporary Roman Catholics who consider that the matter should be re-opened, the author writes: "The growing conviction that Apostolicae Curae did not say the last word on Anglican Orders, and that the verdict of seventy years ago will have to be critically re-examined, has its roots in the one-sided procedure adopted in 1896." He refers to the desire expressed at the time by some for a joint commission and clearly regards this as the procedure to be sought for now.

The second question - either taken in conjunction with the first or taken separately - would be in connection with the reconciliation of Ministries, what its content should be, and what its form and nature would be. The advisability and acceptability to both sides of this proposal would require careful examination, but we recall the agreement on the nature of the Apostolic Ministry as between Lumen Gentium and the Anglican statement read in connection with Anglican/Methodist conversations.

Stage II would then emerge either as one of limited intercommunion - and would thus be a penultimate phase - or it might become part of a final Stage which had as its objective full communion. These are the issues, and this might well be an approximation to the pattern of unity by stages, but at this point we cannot and should not attempt to impose a pattern.

Finally by way of general comment, some of the issues may be found merging into all the Stages, as discussion proceeds, rather than being confined to a particular Stage,

with the result that the pattern of Stages reshapes itself. Accordingly, the outline of Stages suggested in this paper is only a tentative one, and, in fact, could not presume to be anything else. But, since the request was to examine the possibilities of unity by stages, clearly some outlines were expected.

Yet no matter how the Stages involved are viewed in respect of form, content and timing (either in themselves, or in relation to each other, or to the ultimate objective), it also becomes clear that common investigation will be an important factor.

Such theological re-examination and enquiry, undertaken jointly, would have many topics to consider, all of which would bear in varying degrees on the question as to how the various Stages are to be viewed. For example, the whole subject of doctrinal development and the problems of meaning and interpretation seems to require review, and, as suggested already, there are the questions of the structures and channels of authority within the Church.

Doubtless there are many side-tracks on the approach to unity, such as premature proposals or too prolonged and diffuse theological debate, and others too. What the theologian may not forget is the desire of people for unity and their conviction, for whatever reasons, of the rightness of it. What the people should be helped to see by the theologian are the true dimensions of unity, no easy assignment. What both need to be helped to keep in the forefront is not only the how, but the why, for in this lies the true imperative and the primary motivation of the search for unity.