

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

ON THE

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC JOINT PREPARATORY COMMISSION

Second Meeting - Huntercombe Manor - August 30th to September 4th 1967

The members of the Joint Preparatory Commission met for their second meeting at Huntercombe Manor near Taplow, Buckinghamshire, on Wednesday August 30th 1967. Their number had been strengthened by the addition of the Right Revd. Christopher Butler, O.S.B., Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, and the Revd. Father Camillus Hay, O.F.M. on the Roman Catholic side and, on the Anglican side, of the Right Revd. H. R. McAdoo, Bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin and the Revd. Professor Albert T. Mollegen. (See Appendix I)

As at Gazzada, it was pre-eminently in morning and evening worship together that Anglicans and Roman Catholics found and recognized one another as brethren in Christ, more united than separated; though sharing in the Eucharistic celebrations of the respective Churches still has, by mutual consent, to fall short of full intercommunion. This was experienced at once as a deprivation due to division and as the most urgent incentive to overcome it. All were conscious all the time of the help of the Holy Spirit given not least through the quantity and quality of prayer being offered on both sides throughout the world. At Huntercombe, fellowship at this level was deepened as well as mutual sympathy and friendship. This is one of the most important results, intangible though it may be, and difficult as it is to express in the churches represented.

Full sessions occupied some six hours of each of the four days. In addition, there was considerable committee work and much private discussion and consultation.

Two committees were appointed at the start:-

- a) The Bishop of Llandaff, Canon Purdy, Canon Satterthwaite, Father Keating to draft a press release. This was considered in full session and, with due changes and additions, agreed and issued. (See Appendix II)
- b) Bishop Butler, Canons Kemp and Root, Fathers Richards and Tavad, Professor Fairweather to prepare a private progress report and to make recommendations about the nature and purpose of the Commission and its future policy and programme.

All the papers had been circulated beforehand and were presented without being read. Four papers on the Word of God had been prepared:-

What is the Word? - by Father George Tavad

How is the Word received by Man? - by Canon James Atkinson

How the Word of God creates and sustains the Church - by Professor Eugene Fairweather

How Does the Church Proclaim the Word? - by Father Michael Richards.

Discussion proceeded on how Scripture, tradition, reason and experience interlink. Regarding the emphasis variously laid on each of these three elements, it was seen that differences here are at once inter-confessional and expressed in theological attitudes within the Confessions themselves. What is authority and what is the nature of this authority? Vatican II stresses organism rather than organization. The starting point essentially is that the Church is the life of Christ the Word communicated through baptism. The line of Anglican/Roman Catholic demarcation may be drawn not at interpretation of papacy, but of episcopacy. But what is meant by episcopacy and especially in its manifestations after the 3rd century A.D.? The mutual relation of papacy, episcopacy and presbyterate as well as the essential content of each office has not yet been (and may never be finally) established. The familiar question of schism within the Church and schism from the Church arose again.

Four papers had been prepared on the Church:-

What should be the Minimum Structure and Essential Life of the Local Church?

- by Canon Eric Kemp

The Papal Supremacy in Relation with the Unity and Unicity of the Church

- by Father Louis Bouyer

To what extent can or should there be Diversity in a United Church? -

Freedom and Authority - by Bishop J. Willebrands

Unity and Comprehensiveness - by the Bishop of Ripon and Professor Howard Root.

There appeared the question of structure and superstructure, the latter being the more difficult to elucidate. There was agreement that the sensus fidei of the whole body of the faithful is the ultimate authority. Is it the function of the 'apostolic college' and/or the 'episcopal college' to co-ordinate this? 'Primacy of jurisdiction' is legal terminology. Love and freedom are a fundamental category, but jurisdiction is not. Is territoriality necessary to the episcopal and also to the papal office? The presbyteral office is often practised without it in both Communion. It was pointed out by a Roman Catholic that the division of Christendom bears on the present practical functioning of papacy - often Popes have acted as Patriarch of the West and therefore not wholly. Are there any more historical foundations for episcopacy than for papacy, though the former is found more universally developed than the latter? With regard to a hierarchy of dogmas, some distinction may be made between what is necessary and what may be valuable. Living together was seen as vital for progress in Anglican/Roman Catholic relations. As there are degrees in the unity of faith, so there may be stages in the recovery of full communion between formally separated Christian communions. (The sisterly relations between the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople were instanced on various occasions. e.g. Bishop Butler mentioned the fact that the Oecumenical Patriarch, during his recent meeting with the Pope, had made it known that he would be prepared to accept the primacy of Peter and would be ready to discuss intercommunion on that basis without the members of the Orthodox Church committing themselves about infallibility.) Not dissimilarly there may possibly be a comprehensiveness of positive favour and a comprehensiveness of toleration within a united church. What, for instance, is the precise oecumenical implication of the paragraph annexed to the Nicene Creed in the new Roman Professio fidei replacing the former anti-modernist oath demanded of priests? What is the significance of the two Marian dogmas, which would appear to be rather devotional than strictly dogmatic?

There was also some discussion of the present position in negotiations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in England, which included reference to wider schemes for united churches in various other parts of the world.

It was noted that on many of the subjects discussed by the Commission, considerable detailed work had already been done by local groups of Anglicans and Roman Catholics working together.

At the final session it was agreed that Bishop Butler and the Bishop of Ossory should be asked to co-operate in preparing the ground both for the deliberations at the next meeting and for the drawing up of an interim report which it is hoped will be forthcoming at the end of that meeting. This report will be primarily made to the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury who together established the Commission and respectively appointed its members. (It should, however, be available for discussion in the Unity Committee of the Lambeth Conference next year.)

Canon Purdy and Canon Findlow were asked to co-operate in a special sub-commission to consider an up-to-date modus agendi on the question of Anglican Orders:- a) how it should be raised, and b) whether therefore it is politic to raise it.

The presence of Dr. Harding Meyer, observer from the World Council of Churches having been greatly appreciated by all, he was asked to give his impressions at the final session.

The next meeting of the Commission has been fixed for December 30th and will be held in a place to be found on the Continent of Europe near an international airport.

11th September, 1967.