

2nd September 9.10 p.m.

Truth Sub-Commission

Draft B

(to follow the section on Unity)

1. The central truth of which the Church is witness and guardian is the salvation of men in Christ. Recognising the need of all times for contemporary restatement the Church proclaims this saving truth and guards it against all attempts to present the Gospel in ways which prejudice man's salvation. For example, a doctrine of Christ which does not see in Him full manhood, or a doctrine which fails to recognise in Him the redeeming presence of God cannot be regarded as saving truth. Deliberately to persist in such doctrines (heresy) is not mere error but a positive rejection of the Church's action in safeguarding the truth of redemption in Christ.
2. Christ has sent his apostles with authority (Luke 10:16, Matthew 28: 19 & 20) to proclaim the Gospel which is to be received not as the word of man but as the Word of God (2 Cor. 4:5, 1 Thess. 2:13). The Church, being built on the apostles and prophets with Christ for foundation and cornerstone, is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The presence of Christ by the Spirit in and with the Church is a continuing gift to his people. The Church is an essential part of the eternal plan of God for the salvation of man in Christ and has His promise that it will withstand all the powers of evil.
3. The truth which the Church proclaims and guards is not primarily a series of propositions to which man is asked to give intellectual assent. The Church's purpose in its proclamation is to lead man to an acceptance of God's saving work in Christ, an acceptance which calls for the response of his whole person. Nevertheless, propositional formulae (creeds,

liturgical texts, dogmatic definitions, the text of Holy Scripture itself) are necessary means of communication for building up and safeguarding the Christian life of the individual and the community. But these in all cases are ^{instrumental} ~~subsidiary~~ to the truth which they effectively convey.

4. In these formulas of faith, the Church teaches to all its members what the apostolic tradition has perceived of the divine manifestation in Christ. This is received with trust in the guidance of the Spirit and in the continuing presence of Christ in the community of the faithful. Despite the frailty, ignorance, transitoriness and sinfulness of men, there is certainty that the Gospel remains the same through its successive preaching to different generations and through its expression in different cultures and languages. Despite the inadequacy of language to express the fulness of the mystery revealed in Christ, Christians believe that their faith truly gives them access to this mystery. But this certainty implies no guarantee that individual believers or even local Churches will always be free from error or constantly attuned to the Spirit.

5. In formulating its faith, the Church uses certain basic sources. The Scriptures record the primary witness of the Apostles and the traditions of the early communities. The creeds provide a basic doctrinal pattern closely related to baptism and to the early councils. In addition the Church appeals to the testimony of the Christian life of prayer and worship, to the preaching of ministers in continuity with the teaching of the Apostles, to the decisions of councils, to the instructions given at various times by bishops, and to the consensus of the faithful as expressed in the practice and behaviour of the Christian people. Among these many sources the Scriptures are universally recognised by our two traditions as normative for the testing of all restatements of doctrine.

6. Such restatements are made according to the needs of the times. In critical dialogue with developing human cultures a progressive exploration of the implications of the Christian faith is needed for the Church's guardianship of the message of salvation. Interpreting the Gospel in the present involves Christian reflection in a twofold movement. It looks back through the tradition to the Scriptures themselves for ^{renewal} rejuvenation through a deeper understanding of ^{the} primary witness to Christ and it strives to express these insights again in new forms that can speak more vividly to new generations of believers. Thus the reformulation of Christian truth through the ages is historically dated by the circumstances which prompt it. Yet it is of permanent value in that the doctrine newly expressed aims at ^{bringing out} highlighting some aspect of the saving work of God in Christ. To some of these formulas the Church has committed itself so unreservedly that they have become integral parts of the Church's witness to Christ.

7. Certain formulations are a gift to the Church of permanent value. Though they provide answers to the questions asked by a particular age, the answers ^e remain valid for future ages in so far as they are faced with similar questions. Consequently the theologian standing within the Church will not start thinking about, ^{e.g.} say, the Trinity de novo on the assumption that the Nicene Creed is so culturally conditioned as to be quite misleading; the Church, in making new formulations, will not contradict old ones.

To say that a formulation in this sense is permanent is not to say that it is the only possible, or even the most accurate or profound, way of expressing the truth, nor that it is or could be exhaustive. Rather it is to say that the formulation is true, and that, under providence, it is saving

truth which strengthens Christian life.

The statements of the Church do not originate from the hierarchy and descend to the laity. They are made in the light of the sensus fidelium; and the same Spirit which guides the Church's formulations will also guide the faithful to recognise in the statement the truth of the gospel.

5th September 3.15 p.m.

Truth Sub-Commission

Draft.

8. In the common tradition of both ~~our~~ churches, the dogmatic decisions of the early councils concerning the person of Christ and the Holy Trinity ^{are} ~~have been~~ acknowledged as being of permanent value. ^{to truth} Because these decisions have themselves met the test of the scriptural norm of faith, they have served to guide the testing of other doctrines by that same norm. The creeds, the three sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, confirmation, eucharist), the basic pattern of redemption and justification, the canon of Scripture, the continuing relevance of the Old Testament for the understanding of Christ's ^{ordained} person and mission, ^{to truth} the fundamental structure of the ministry, having been tested over several centuries of reflection and experience, ^{are} ~~have been~~ recognized as permanent elements of Christian doctrine, to which the Church has committed itself irrevocably.

^{language} Anglicans and Roman Catholics have often used different terms to designate ~~these~~ irrevocable doctrines. In the Anglican tradition the appeal to Scripture, to the creeds, to the

^{equally?} Fathers and to the definitions of the councils of the undivided Church has been regarded as ^{basic} ~~fundamental~~ and normative.

^{appealing to the same criteria} The Roman Catholic tradition, ^{in speaking of these doctrines} ~~has spoken~~ of dogmas, definitions of faith, doctrines de fide, ~~it has regarded them as~~

^{in both our traditions in both cases the} "irreformable". This means that what was intended by the formulas adopted in the past to express permanent doctrine must inform ^{expressed in the past & control} the ~~the~~ statements which the Church is called to make from time to time, even when the historical context has changed ^{or} and the language of the past is no longer ^{sufficiently} ~~clearly~~ clear.

^{this is extensive} We ~~recognize that~~ there is a deep agreement between our two traditions, even though the 'fundamentals' of Anglican ^{teaching} ~~belief~~ are not identical in all respects with all the "irreformable" dogmas of Roman Catholic teaching.

colleagues?

~~These~~ Dogmas are believed by Roman Catholics ^{to fall} within a "hierarchy of truths". This means that some bring the faithful nearer than others to the christological centre of the faith. The connection of all doctrines with this centre needs repeated theological investigation. It is of the nature of such investigation that differing judgments on the proper status of ^{or definitively} some doctrines may be arrived at. Anglicans and Roman Catholics have often differed in these judgments, notably regarding ~~modern~~ Marian doctrines and the authority of the bishop of Rome.

That The ACC differs in certain areas of doctrine less familiar to Anglicans is in part due to the historical divergence of the two Communes. Notably the ACC has defined the modern Roman dogmas

5th September 1975 4.30.p.m.

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Draft

9 ~~10~~. The need for permanent and ~~unquestioned~~ decisions is seen at an early date in the Church's judgment that certain books are inspired and form the canon of the New Testament. Similarly it is recognised in both our traditions that the Church can speak for all time in the judgments of councils. The truth of these judgments is attested by their reception by the Church as a whole. But if certain judgments have not received such general acceptance, there is reason for doubting whether they were truly those of a general council.

The two Eastern Patriarchal ~~authorities~~ ^{dogmas} depend not on Councils authority but on definition by the Pope of Rome

11. Roman Catholics ascribe to the ~~bishop~~ ^{bishop} of Rome a unique function in the process by which the Church arrives at irrevocable decisions. In regard to the formulation of doctrine the papal primacy has been called an infallibility. By ~~this is meant~~ ^{involved} that what ecumenical councils have done in formulating Christian doctrine can also be done by the bishop of Rome under conditions which were carefully delineated in Vatican I and II. The bishop of Rome, as ~~the~~ pastor of all the faithful and the head of the episcopal college, formulates the faith of the Church in the light of the sensus fidelium. Such decisions are always ^{collegial}, for they presuppose ~~extensive~~ ^{his brother bishops} consultation with ~~the episcopal college~~ even when a council has not been called. Since ~~they are meant~~ ^{it must be clear that they are not} to be part of the Church's doctrine, ~~their agreement with the~~ ^{requirement to} norm of Scripture, ~~must be recognisable~~ ^{not}. In making these decisions the bishop of Rome is ^{not} believed to be protected from error by the Holy Spirit, rather than ^{personally} inspired. ~~rather, he is believed~~ ^{to be protected from error}

not

10 (continued)

2. This exercise of the authority of the bishop of Rome is not without difficulties for the relationship between our communions. It can lead to the apparent diminution of formulations arrived at through more ordinary procedures; it can appear to ascribe powers to the bishop of Rome and his advisers which are not in fact claimed. It may seem to have been exercised in matters peripheral to the centre of faith. It may also give the impression of an authoritarian rigidity and exclusiveness.

In so far as
~~On the other hand~~ this exercise of authority can be seen as a way of affirming the objective character of divine truth which is corporate and universal rather than private and individual, It can help to preserve Christian faith from the temptation of relativism and may enable the 'successor of St. Peter' to declare what the Christian faith is now in a time of confusion and division.

It points to a reality which is not a matter of controversy between our two communions

5th September 1975 9.a.m.

ARCIC 144/1/2

Truth Sub-Commission

(to follow the section on Unity)

Revised form

1. Christ sent his apostles with authority (Luke 10:16, Matthew 28: 19 & 20) to proclaim the Gospel which is to be received not as the word of men but as the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13, 2 Cor. 4:5). The Church has Christ for foundation and cornerstone, is built on the apostles and prophets, and is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Cor. 3:11, Eph. 2:20, 1 Tim. 3:15). The presence of Christ by the Spirit in and with the Church is a continuing gift to his people. The Church is an essential part of the eternal plan of God for the salvation of man in Christ and has His promise that it will withstand all the powers of evil.

2. The Church proclaims that Christ is the Saviour of the world. In affirming this saving truth the Church has at all times to state it in contemporary terms. It must also guard the truth against all attempts to present the Gospel in ways which endanger man's salvation. For example a doctrine of Christ which does not see in him full manhood, or a doctrine which fails to recognise him as the incarnate Word of God cannot be regarded as saving truth. Deliberately to persist in such doctrines is not mere error but a positive rejection of the Church's action in safeguarding the truth of redemption in Christ.

3. The Church's purpose in its proclamation is to lead man to an acceptance of God's saving work in Christ, an acceptance which engages more than his logical faculty and calls for the response of his whole person. In consequence the Gospel which the Church proclaims and guards is not primarily a series of propositions to which man is asked to give intellectual assent. Nevertheless, propositional formulas (creeds, liturgical texts, dogmatic definitions, even the

text of Holy Scripture itself) are necessary means of communication for building up and safeguarding the Christian life of the individual and the community. But these in all cases are in varying degrees instrumental to the truth which they effectively convey.

4. In formulating its faith, the Church uses certain basic sources. The Scriptures record the primary witness of the Apostles and the traditions of the early communities. The creeds, which arose out of the baptismal confession of faith and were expanded by councils for the articulation of orthodoxy, summarise the essential truths of the Gospel. In addition the Church appeals to the testimony of the Christian life of prayer and worship, to the preaching of ministers in continuity with the teaching of the Apostles, to the decisions of councils, to the instructions given at various times by bishops, and to the consensus of the faithful as expressed in the practice and behaviour of the Christian people. Among these many sources the Scriptures are universally recognised by our two traditions as normative for the testing of all restatements of doctrine.

5. In critical dialogue with developing human cultures a progressive exploration of the implications of the Christian faith is needed for the Church's guardianship of the message of salvation. Interpreting the Gospel in the present involves Christian reflection in a twofold movement. The Church looks back through the tradition to the Scriptures themselves for renewal by means of a deeper understanding of the primary witness to Christ; it also strives to express its insights in new forms which can speak more vividly to new generations of believers. Thus the reformulation of Christian truth through the ages is historically dated by the circumstances which prompt it. Yet it is of lasting value in that the doctrine newly expressed seeks to bring out some aspect of the saving word of God in Christ.

To some of these formulas the Church has committed itself so unreservedly that they have become integral parts of the Church's witness to Christ.

6. In its formulas of faith, the Church teaches what the apostolic tradition has perceived of the divine manifestation in Christ. Despite the frailty, ignorance, transitoriness and sinfulness of men, the Gospel remains the same from generation to generation and in its expression in different cultures and languages. Despite the inadequacy of language to express the fulness of the mystery revealed in Christ, Christians believe that the faith they hold truly gives them access to this mystery. But their certainty implies no guarantee that individual believers or even local Churches will always be free from error or constantly attuned to the Spirit.

7. Certain formulations are a gift to the Church of permanent value. They provide answers to the questions asked in a particular age, and these answers remain valid for subsequent generations faced with similar questions. Consequently those who stand within the Church will not start thinking about, e.g. the Trinity de novo on the assumption that the Nicene Creed is so culturally conditioned as to be quite misleading.

To say that a formulation in this sense is permanent is not to say that it is the only possible, or even the most accurate or profound way of expressing the truth, nor that it is or could be exhaustive. Rather it is to say that the formulation is expressing saving truth which strengthens Christian life.

Statements of the Church, made in the light of scripture, tradition and the sensus fidelium, are not simply imposed by the hierarchy, or by any particular bishop, on a passive and acquiescent laity which is excluded from any part in the process of formulation. And the same Spirit which guides the Church's formulations will also guide the faithful to recognise in the statement the truth of the gospel.

5th September 1975. 6.5.p.m.

Truth Sub-Commission

JR
ARCIC 144/1/2 (cont)

Draft

8. In the common tradition of both our churches, the dogmatic decisions of the early councils concerning the person of Christ and the Holy Trinity are acknowledged as being of permanent value and truth. Because these decisions have themselves met the test of the scriptural norm of faith, they have served to guide the testing of other doctrines by that same norm. The creeds, the three sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, confirmation, eucharist), the basic pattern of redemption and justification, the canon of Scripture, the continuing relevance of the Old Testament for the understanding of Christ's person and mission, the fundamental structure of the ordained ministry*, having been tested over several centuries of reflection and experience, are recognized as permanent elements of Christian doctrine, to which the Church has committed itself irrevocably.

9. The need for permanent and unquestioned decisions is seen at an early date in the Church's judgment that certain books are inspired and form the canon of the New Testament. Similarly it is recognised in both our traditions that the Church can speak for all time in the judgments of councils. The truth of these judgments is attested by their reception by the Church as a whole. But if certain judgments have not received such general acceptance, there is reason for doubting whether they were truly those of a general council.

10. Anglicans and Roman Catholics have often used different language to designate irrevocable doctrines. In the Anglican tradition the appeal to Scripture, to the creeds, to the Fathers and to the definitions of the councils of the undivided Church has been regarded as basic and normative.

* Canterbury Statement on Ministry and Ordination, 6

5th September 6.5p.m.
10 (continued)

Appealing to the same criteria, the Roman Catholic tradition describes dogmas, definitions of faith, doctrines de fide as irreformable. In both cases the permanent doctrine expressed in the past must inform and control subsequent statements which the Church is called to make from time to time when the historical context of its mission has changed or the language of the past is no longer sufficiently clear.

Even though the 'irreformable' dogmas of Roman Catholic teaching cover a wider field than the 'fundamentals' of Anglican teaching, there is deep agreement between our two traditions. This wider field is in part accounted for by the fact that since the sixteenth century the Roman Catholic Church has defined several doctrines, and the Churches of the Anglican communion have not taken part in this process.

Dogmas are understood by Roman Catholics to fall within a "hierarchy of truths". This means that some bring the faithful nearer than others to the christological centre of the faith. The connection of all doctrines with this centre needs repeated theological investigation. It is of the nature of such investigation that differing judgments on the proper status and definibility of some doctrines may be arrived at. Anglicans and Roman Catholics have often differed in these judgments, notably regarding modern Marian doctrines and the authority of the bishop of Rome.

11. The two modern Marian dogmas depend not on conciliar authority but on definition by the bishop of Rome. Roman Catholics ascribe to him a unique function in the process by which the Church arrives at irrevocable decisions. Councils are the normal way in which the Church has reached dogmatic decisions binding upon the universal Church. Before the separation of East and West general councils which achieved recognition in both Greek and Latin Christendom were ratified

by the bishop of Rome not only as patriarch of the West but also as the first bishop bearing some special place of service and responsibility in the universal Church.

This role of the bishop of Rome in the universal Church has not been clearly seen in a disunited Christendom, but it implies that the power of judgment which is supremely exercised by ecumenical councils can also be exercised by the bishop of Rome in abnormal circumstances without the summoning of a council, but under conditions which were carefully delineated in Vatican I and II.* In Roman Catholic teaching, the bishop of Rome, speaking as the pastor of all the faithful and the head of the episcopal college, formulates the faith of the Church in the light of the sensus fidelium. Such decisions are always collegial, for they presuppose consultation with his brother bishops even when a council has not been called. Since these decisions are to be part of the Church's doctrine, it must be clear that they are not repugnant to Scripture. In making these decisions the bishop of Rome is not believed to receive and inward and personal inspiration; rather he is believed to be protected by the Holy Spirit from error.

12. A steadily growing respect for the see of Rome has not removed the grave difficulties and misunderstandings which many Anglicans feel about this exercise of the authority of the bishop of Rome. Nevertheless, in so far as this exercise of authority can be seen as a way of affirming the objective character of divine truth, which is corporate and universal rather than private and individual, it points to a reality which is not a matter of controversy between our two communions.

* We are considering a footnote stating more fully what these conditions are.