

REPORT ON ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC RELATIONS AND NATIONAL ANGLICAN/
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUES 1979-80

by

Christopher Hill

in collaboration with Secretaries of National Dialogues

I POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Cardinal Jan Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, represented Pope John Paul II at the Enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury in Canterbury Cathedral on the Feast of the Annunciation, 25th March 1980. The Archbishop made particular mention of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador in his sermon. The following day Cardinal Willebrands spent some time with the Archbishop in discussion and presented a personal letter of greeting to the Archbishop from the Pope. It was agreed that the simultaneous visits of the Pope and the Archbishop to West Africa should not be seen as rivaling each other and a meeting in Accra was projected.

The Pope and the Archbishop met at the Nunciature in Accra on the morning of the 9th May for forty minutes. Their private discussion included the question of the future shape of dialogue between the two traditions and laid a firm foundation for a specifically 'ecumenical' meeting at which further steps could be taken towards unity. The text of the official press communiqué is as follows:

"The first meeting of Pope John Paul II and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, though a brief encounter in the midst of full programmes, has been a joyful and moving occasion.

"They were glad that it took place in Africa where the rapid expansion and the self-sacrificing zeal of the Church and the visible enthusiasm and love for Our Lord Jesus Christ has many lessons for Christians in Europe. They recognise the immense opportunities for the Christian Church in the countries of Africa, to proclaim Christ in worship and in service and to make a contribution to the search for peace and justice. They believe that the time is too short and the need too pressing to waste Christian energy pursuing old rivalries and that the talents and resources of all the Churches must be shared if Christ is to be seen and heard effectively.

"Their much loved predecessors, Paul VI and Archbishop Donald Coggan, saw the urgent need for this common action and solemnly committed themselves to work for it in the Common Declaration of 1977. Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie endorse that commitment to "collaborate more earnestly in a 'greater common witness to Christ'" and they share the recognition that common action depends on progress in the 'serious dialogue', now nearly fourteen years established, by which Roman Catholics and Anglicans have been seeking the way to that unity of faith and communion which Christ wills for His Church.

"Today in Accra, the Pope and the Archbishop of

Canterbury have established a personal friendship and trust upon which they intend to build in a fuller meeting in the future. They look forward to working together to achieve the unity for which Christ prayed to His heavenly Father."

II THE PRIMATES' MEETING AND THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The November 1979 meeting of the Anglican Primates at Ely, England, spent some time considering the future of Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue. The Anglican Co-Secretary was present for this discussion. It was agreed that no definitive assessment of the work of the present Commission could be made until it had completed its Final Report in 1981. A future Commission would need to have a wider pastoral mandate while also continuing the theological work of its predecessor. The Standing Committee of the ACC, meeting in June 1980 at Wantage, England, expressed this in the following resolution:

"In the light of Resolutions 4 and 5 of ACC-4 the Standing Committee requests the A.C.C. to encourage the Anglican Churches in regional and local areas to explore and identify opportunities for practical collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church.

The Standing Committee,

acknowledging with gratitude what has already been achieved by ARCIC, and

desiring to encourage continued and extended consultation and practical cooperation between our two communions,

requests the President and the Secretary General of the ACC to confer with appropriate people and groups in the Roman Catholic Church, with a view inter alia to

1. Possibilities of joint witness in mission
2. Opportunities for joint pastoral action
3. Cooperation in the promotion of justice and peace
4. The development of appropriate contemporary Christian spirituality

at international, regional and local levels."

III SECRETARIAT FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY

A meeting of Delegates of National Ecumenical Commissions took place in Rome in November 1979. Bishop Edward Knapp-Fisher, Archdeacon of Westminster and a member of ARCIC, attended it as Anglican Observer. An important paper was presented by another member of ARCIC, J.M.R. Tillard, OP Preparing for Unity - A Pastoral Approach (One in Christ, 1980, 1-2). In the course of discussion the pastoral implications of theological dialogue were frequently raised, not least those of the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue. The topics of Mixed Marriage and Communicatio in Sacris received particular attention.

On the question of the reception of the Final Report of ARCIC, amongst other possibilities the Secretariat has begun to consider whether the 1983 World Synod of Bishops might not have the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue on its agenda.

IV NATIONAL DIALOGUES

1. Australia

A Commission has been established to report to the General Synod of the Anglican Church on the three Agreed Statements under the chairmanship of Bishop E.D. Cameron, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Sydney. During a sabbatical Bishop Cameron spent some time at Lambeth consulting the ARCIC papers and minutes in preparation for the Commission's work. It is hoped the Commission will be able to report within a year.

A further joint episcopal conference is due to take place in October 1980.

At diocesan level there has been widespread and sometimes joint discussion of the ARCIC Statements and the possibilities of pastoral co-operation. In particular a common call to prayer and study has been issued by the two Archbishops of Adelaide. There are also the beginnings of a serious Evangelical/Roman Catholic dialogue.

2. Belgium.

In November 1979 the Belgian ARC completed a document on the pastoral care of those involved in Anglican/Roman Catholic mixed marriages in Belgium. The document will be the basis of a booklet issued to all Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy. In April the Anglican Co-Secretary of ARCIC opened discussion on the Elucidations of the International Commission.

3. Canada

A further joint meeting of representative bishops took place in November 1979. The Canadian ARC has presented a Resolution to the Anglican General Synod requesting the establishment of an Interim Ecumenical Standing Committee on Moral and Social Issues (including the United Church of Canada). The Commission has also been studying the question of the pastoral approach to mixed marriages based upon Anglican and Roman Catholic inquiries. At the May 1980 meeting of the Commission in Toronto an important statement on Infallibility was agreed, the text of which is as follows:

incapable

"1. God alone is essentially and inalienably infallible, / of deceiving or being deceived.

"2. The Church as a whole can be said to be infallible in the analogical sense that, by God's grace, it will never deceive or err so gravely concerning the truths of the Gospel that the message of salvation is lost to humankind. To speak of 'infallibility' in this sense is not to claim that either the institutions of the church or even the majority of its members are immune from error. It is simply to assert that the Church can be confident in the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, who will safeguard the faith and enable the Church to fulfil its mission. The Church puts its trust in God who will not allow it to fall totally away from the path of salvation.

"3. The truths of the Gospel thus 'infallibly' preserved enlighten the whole people of God. By virtue of their participation in the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ, all

persons and institutions of the Church are called to express and preserve these truths in appropriate ways. However, we must recognise also a special sign of God's grace in preserving the Church from error at times of crisis of when fundamental matters of faith are in question: this sign occurs when the institutions which serve the universal fellowship (i.e. council and/or primate) are enabled to articulate these truth faithfully to Scripture and in a way that commends itself to the whole Church, thus equipping the Church to meet the challenge. Such pronouncements, by virtue of their foundation in Scripture and their appropriateness to the need of the time, give the first embodiment to a renewed agreement in the truth to which they summon the whole of the Church. The 'formal authority' of such pronouncements helps the Church to meet the threat of error and gives it confidence in proclaiming the Gospel: but it must always defer to the 'material authority' of Scripture, in fidelity to which the pronouncements were formulated."

4. Central Africa

The Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of Central Africa, meeting in May 1980, accepted unanimously the following resolution forwarded from the bishops:

"The CPCA Episcopal Synod has followed with interest and warm approval the discussions of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission on the Eucharist, the Ministry and on Authority in the Church. Its members hope and pray that the agreement they have reached will provide a basis for sacramental sharing between our two Communions."

5. England

During 1979-80 English ARC considered the significance of Elucidations and discussed at some length the question of Anglican Orders. Consideration was also given to a joint British Council of Churches/Roman Catholic Public Statements on Moral Issues: Report from the Liaison Committee of the BCC and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. (One of the chief areas of debate over which the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales declined to join the BCC in 1970). English ARC also made a preliminary examination of some issues related to the establishment of the Church of England. The Anglican half of English ARC, the Commission on Roman Catholic Relations, continued to examine the problems associated with inter-church families, including questions related to the joint celebration of baptism.

The Roman Catholic National Pastoral Congress of England and Wales took place in Liverpool at the beginning of May 1980. Two thousand people attended, principally lay people from the Dioceses of England and Wales, but with all the Bishops. There were seven major sectors: A. The people of God - Co-responsibility and relationship; B. The people of God - Ministry, Vocation, Apostolate; C. Family and Society; D. Evangelisation; E. Christian Education and Formation; F. Christian Witness; G. Justice. Within sector A there was a section on Christian Unity. There are ecumenical references throughout the final Report and there were a significant number of observers. The Christian Unity section recommended Roman Catholic membership of the British Council of Churches and dealt with the issue of eucharistic hospitality in the following way:

"25. We find it a terrible anomaly that our baptismal communion with our fellow-Christians does not lead to eucharistic communion as it should, and we long for the day when Catholics and other Christians will be able to meet in total eucharistic fellowship. At the same time we reject any movement towards indiscriminate inter-communion. We recognise, however, that the possibility now exists of inviting our fellow Christians to receive Communion at a Catholic Mass in certain circumstances and we ask our bishops to reconsider the situation in England and Wales, and to consider the possibility of making provision for eucharistic hospitality in certain cases.

"26. The cases we have in mind are those of the non-Catholic partners in inter-Church marriages who are already united through the sacraments of baptism and matrimony. We urge that provision be made for the partner to be welcomed to communion in the Catholic Church, at least on special occasions, always providing that his or her eucharistic faith agrees with that of the Catholic Church.

"27. The occasions which we have in mind include the non-Catholic spouse at a nuptial Mass, and close relatives of inter-Church couples at weddings and funerals; the non-Catholic spouse at a family baptism or confirmation, or other special family occasions. We also urge the highest authorities in the Catholic Church to reconsider the implications of the statements of the phrase of the Second Vatican Council concerning eucharistic sharing, that 'the grace to be won sometimes recommends it'. (There voted for this resolution on Communion and inter-Church marriages 209 in favour and 24 against, with 42 abstentions)."

In August 1980 the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales made their considered reply to the whole Congress. On the whole the Bishops endorsed its findings, but they were unable to authorize a change of discipline in regard to Eucharistic hospitality, though promising to keep the matter under review.

6. France

At the May 1980 meeting of the Groupe Mixte a Common Declaration on the Mutual Recognition of Baptism was agreed. There was also discussion of a draft document on Eucharistic Hospitality which was then sent to the French Doctrinal Commission. A further pastoral document on Mixed Marriages was accepted and has since been approved by the French Ecumenical Commission. Members of the Groupe have also been involved in the preparation of an illustrated pamphlet entitled Qu'est ce que La Communion Anglicane" The text was finalized in August 1980 after extensive consultation which included Franco-phone Anglicans in other parts of the world. The pamphlet will be published by the SPCK.

7. Scotland

In March 1980 a common statement was published by the Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Study Group entitled: Priesthood and the Eucharist. It was published with the authority of the two Churches. The Roman Catholic Bishops meeting in September 1979 commended the document in the following terms:

"The Conference wishes to thank the Joint Study Group for their excellent work and warmly commends the statement as a most useful basis for study".

At a meeting in October 1979 the Provincial Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church passed a similar resolution:

"That this Synod:

- i. thanks the members of the Episcopalian/Roman Catholic Joint Study Group for their work over the past eleven years and for the three common statements they have produced in that time;
- ii. welcomes the common statement 'Priesthood and the Eucharist', hopes that it will be published as soon as possible and commends it for serious study at all levels in the Church, wherever possible jointly with members of both Churches, and asks that reports be returned to the Inter-Church Relations Committee."

3. South Africa

The Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa passed the following resolution in November 1979:

"That this Synod:

1. gives thanks to God for remarkable progress both in doctrinal agreement and in mutual acceptance in love and welcomes the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission which was set up jointly by the Lambeth Conference of 1968 and by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity;
2. recognises in the three Agreed Statements of the Commission a solid achievement, one in which we can recognise the faith of our Church, and hopes that they will provide a basis for sacramental sharing between our two Communion if and when the finished statements are approved by the respective authorities of our Communion;
3. affirms that there are no points at which the clear meaning of the Agreed Statement is directly at variance with Anglican teaching, with the possible exception of Sections 16 and 19 of the Statement on Authority which would seem to accord an authority to councils which is incongruent with Anglican teaching;
4. draws the attention of the Anglican Consultative Council, and through it the attention of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, to the comments contained in the Report on the three Agreed Statements from the Southern African Anglican Theological Commission;
5. requests, through the A.C.C., the A.R.C.I.C. to consider the question of that which constitutes a Christian, including such related matters as the place of justification, baptism, and the Holy Spirit in initiation;
6. believes that further official dialogue should undoubtedly be pursued with a view to examining important theological areas and clarifying questions raised by those who have responded to A.R.C.I.C. in respect of the three Agreed Statements;

7. welcomes and supports the recommendations of ACC-4 that the proposed new Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission be not exclusively Western but more widely representative;
8. acknowledges that doctrinal agreements reached by theological commissions cannot by themselves achieve the goal of Christian Unity; and
9. therefore expresses its conviction that in consultation with the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion should now proceed to the implementation of a stage-by-stage progression to full communion, with a view to bringing about a closer sharing between our two Communion in life, worship and mission.

9. South Pacific

An exploratory joint episcopal meeting was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands in October 1979 under the chairmanship of the local Bishops, Archbishop N. Palmer (Anglican) and Archbishop D. Stuyvenburg (Roman Catholic). A theological meeting proper was planned for November 1980 with full representation from the South Pacific Anglican Council, the Pacific Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference, and the Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Extensive documentation has been requested and sent from Lambeth in preparation for discussion of the ARCIC Statement on Authority. It is also planned to examine the question of authority in the Pacific area.

10. Sri Lanka

Archbishop N.M. Fernando and Bishop S. Fernando of Colombo have appointed a joint Anglican/Roman Catholic group to study the Agreed Statements. A planning meeting took place in June 1980 for which documentation was requested and sent from Lambeth.

11. Tanzania

The Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Inter-Diocesan Ecumenical Commission for Mtwara, Masasi and Nachingwea (S.E. Tanzania) welcomed the work of ARCIC in June 1980. It went on to say:

"We should be grateful, however, if the ARCIC could explain as well the nature of authority and not merely who they are who exercise it.

"We agree with the ARCIC that we need a universal primacy in the Church but without monarchical tendencies. We agree, too, that he who exercises such a primacy speaks with the authority of the universal Church. Finally, we are satisfied with the Commission's choice of the Bishop of Rome as the logical candidate for such primacy 'in any future union'.

"The International Commission's hope 'unity by stages of the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion is a hope shared by this local ecumenical commission."

When the joint ecumenical commission was established five years ago one of its first acts was to bring Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations to pray together. A common Sunday liturgy when no priest is available has been accepted. A joint syllabus

and set of religious text books has also been agreed for all schools. During 1979/80 a liturgical sub-committee has completed a common form for the celebration of Christian Matrimony incorporating and emphasizing local rites and customs. It is presently engaged upon a common form of Christian Burial, again with an emphasis upon indigenous culture.

In Tanzania as a whole the Anglican Church of the Province has taken steps towards the formation of a national Ecumenical Commission and the Tanzania Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference has appointed a National Ecumenical Director.

12. Uganda

Though it proved impossible to continue the meetings of the mainly Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Christian Council during the final months of the Amin regime, steps are now being taken to reorganise ecumenical co-operation. To this end a joint visit to Uganda by a senior Anglican and a senior Roman Catholic is being planned by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Anglican Primate of Uganda, Archbishop Silvanus Wani and the President of the Uganda Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference, Cardinal E.Nsubuga. It is hoped this will take place in June or July 1981.

13. U.S.A.

The 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church took place in Denver in September 1979. The following resolution on the first two Agreed Statements was passed, making them statements of the faith of the Episcopal Church of the USA:

Whereas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey, and Pope Paul VI met in 1966, and an International Commission from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches was established as a result of the meeting for 'serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed'; and

Whereas, the General Conventions of 1967 and 1970 stated that the purpose of our official dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church is full communion and organic unity with that Church; and

Whereas, the International Commission has now issued completed statements on Eucharistic Doctrine (1971) and Ministry and Ordination (1973) from the agenda assigned to it, to which reactions have been gathered from around the world, and in view of such reactions, to which further elucidations have been issued by the Commission; and

Whereas, the Common Declaration signed in Rome on April 29, 1977, by Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Donald Coggan, stated that 'the moment will shortly come when the respective authorities (of both churches) must evaluate the conclusions (of the Agreed Statements)...through procedures appropriate to our respective Communion, so that both of them may be led along the path towards unity'; be it

Resolved, that this 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirms that the documents on Eucharistic Doctrine and Ministry and Ordination provide a statement of the faith of this Church in furthering the growth towards unity of the Episcopal Church with the Roman Catholic Church.

The Convention also passed an Agreed Statement on the Purpose of the Church prepared by US/ARC. (See Report on Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations 75-76) and went on to request a joint meeting of Episcopal and Roman Catholic leaders to consider the implications of the first two Agreed Statements in the life of the Church. This has been accepted by the US Catholic Bishops' Conference.

The ARC-USA Consultation has met twice this year continuing its probing of Christian Anthropology as a way of approaching Mariology and the ordination of women. Following upon a recommendation made by ARC/USA, bishops of the two churches formed a 'task force' with the purpose of studying together the actual exercise of episcopal ministry in the church today. Fifteen bishops are engaged in this project. Four meetings were held from 1979-1980. The focus of these sessions were: the bishop as leader, as pastor, as a person, and the discussion of future directions. Tale of Three Cities: A Study of US ARC Covenants was published by the joint standing committee of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers and the National Association of (RC) Diocesan Ecumenical Officers. This report on Ogden, Utah, Louisville, Kentucky and Tidewater, Virginia provides a detailed description of particular covenants. The study grows out of the earlier publication The Lived Experience: A Survey of U.S. ARC Covenants. Each covenant was strongly affirmed by its participants. Setting and evaluating of goals were important factors in successful covenants. Tension areas were intercommunion, mixed marriages and the threat to the integrity of both religious communities. A weakness within all the covenants was the inability to integrate the covenant experience into the total life of the parish, leaving it compartmentalized.

14. West Europe

The Anglican/Roman Catholic Working Group met at Poitiers in November 1979. The meeting exchanged information on the local and national ecumenical situation in England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Belgium, France and Italy. A study of the religious geography of Europe was discussed and the pastoral implications of the three Agreed Statements of ARCIC were explored.

15. West Indies

In May 1979 the Provincial Synod of the Church in the Province of the West Indies agreed to the proposal of its Ecumenical Commission that a joint Anglican/Roman Catholic study of the three Agreed Statements should be undertaken.

V RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

An Ecumenical Consultation of religious, consisting of representatives of Roman Catholic and Anglican religious communities, has been formally constituted by the Union of

Superiors General, the International Union of Superiors General, and the Advisory Councils for the Religious Life of the Anglican Communion. Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Society of Jesus and Michael Fisher, SSP, Anglican Bishop of St. Germans, are honorary presidents of this international Consultation. It normally meets once a year. The co-chairpersons (the Bishop of St. Germans and St. Katherine McDonald, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion) are authorized to welcome the participation of other Churches. The beginnings of the international Ecumenical Consultation among religious occurred in 1977. Fr. Arrupe, as president of the men's Union of Superiors General, and Michael Fisher, Provincial of the Anglican Society of St. Francis, saw the project as a means of important ecumenical exchange and mutual assistance among male religious orders. After the first meeting in 1977, it was decided that the meeting be sponsored by both conferences of Superiors General, and that both men and women religious of other Christian communions would also participate. This new decision marked the meetings of 1979 and 1980. In the Consultation of 1980, the informally structured group was constituted an official commission with a precise mandate from the Catholic Unions of Superiors General and the Anglican Advisory Councils.

In the USA a national ecumenical religious consultation has been established. An informal meeting took place in May 1980 and an official Ecumenical Consultation of Religious will meet later in the year.