

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

Third Meeting - Windsor, 1st - 8th September 1971

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The title 'chairman's address' was not chosen by me nor did the idea of giving such an address originate with me. The idea was born at a meeting of Chairmen and Secretaries in London on June 10th, 1971 and it is only fair to add that my Co-Chairman acted in the capacity of mid-wife on that occasion.

In saying this, I am not attempting to unload part of the responsibility for what I say in this address on him. Apart from bringing the idea to the birth, and stressing that 'Partial communion is a rich notion' (to use his own phrase), he does not know what I am going to say.

It is true however that in the discussion between the four of us on that date¹⁾, various subjects were touched upon by each of us and I hope that these points will find their way into this opening address.

It became apparent that we were severally and in different ways uneasy lest the International Commission, while holding to the very proper determination to work on the problems of disunity at as deep a level as its members could sustain without experiencing the theological equivalent of the deep-sea diver's 'bends', might slip into the more comfortable routine of a theological debating society. This apprehensiveness has been voiced more than once by members of the Commission since the inception of its work.

AN ASSESSMENT

It seemed to us that, with two years work of the Commission behind us, and with the work of the Preparatory Commission behind that again, we ought as a body to take stock of our situation: to see where we have been and where we are and to ascertain if there is any difference between the two positions. More than this, it seemed to be time to ask where we were going and whether we had an objective in sight. The answer could be made that the organic unity of Christians is the objective, to which it might be replied, Is partial communion an intermediate objective, a stage on the way to the ultimate goal. Or have we forgotten the Malta Report with its emphasis on stages?

So I was asked to hang this discourse on the peg of the Malta Report, particularly paragraphs 6 and 7, and the Bishop of Ripon was to be invited to give us a paper on 'The Requirements for Partial Communion and how it might work out in practice.'

My colleagues, speaking with that fine courage so strikingly shown by those who speak and act vicariously, invited me to be provocative and to stick my neck out! It was even suggested that a Commission such as ours ought not to forget that a vocation of prophecy might be part of its service to our generation.

Be that as it may, I shall not inflict on you anything so lame as studied provocativeness, nor would I dare to class what I have to say as 'prophecy', either in its sense of forth-telling or of fore-telling. I do think however that it is time for us to set our sights higher than the production of the next round of papers for the meeting after this one. We shall need more papers certainly but we shall also need vision. It may be that we shall need courage too.

1) The Right Revd. A.C. Clark, Co-Chairman, the Very Revd. Canon W. Purdy, (Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity) and the Revd. Colin Davey (Church of England Council on Foreign Relations).

All I can do is to suggest that it may be possible that the Holy Spirit is requiring us to say whether we think we have the conditions for partial communion or whether we do not think so, and, in that case, to say what we think those conditions should be and how they may be achieved.

For that reason, we are asking the sub-commissions to bear this question in mind as they discuss

'The Notion of Sacrifice in Anglican and Roman Catholic Theology':

'The Real Presence in Anglican and Roman Catholic Theology':

'An Examination in Depth of our Various Eucharistic Rites':

'Authority and Ministry':

and 'Growing Together'.

Given our raison d'être as a Commission I do not think that to do so will be to obtrude fresh and extraneous element into the work upon which they have been engaged. I would rather hope that it might add a further dimension of reality to the questions they are posing and endeavouring to answer.¹⁾

OBJECTIVES

May I begin by trailing a coat (or rather by allowing Fr. Robert Adolfs O.S.A. to do it for me). In an article to which I shall return he writes:

"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."²⁾

Having done so, and trying to suggest that it is some such idea as this, whether it be partial communion, limited communicatio in sacris, or collegial communion, which should be informing our investigations of the various subjects currently under review in the Commission's programme, I shall return to my brief. I hope that this over-all consideration may show itself again in the course of what follows and in the continuing work of the Conference.

EVALUATING THE WORK OF TWO COMMISSIONS.

I would suggest, first of all, that there is a real difference between where we have been and where we are, and, in order to substantiate this opinion, I would ask you to make a brief and necessarily selective tour into the immediate past, into the affairs of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission and of the present Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission. You must permit me to provide the Baedeker for this tour on the understanding that any of us might well star a different selection of themes and concepts as being most worthy of note.

Looking over the papers delivered and discussed during the Preparatory Commission's existence, one must, I think, agree that it is not the administering of the conventional bromide to say that valuable work was done. Its value may indeed be more clearly perceived in the future by those more separated from it in time. There were papers which might be described as position papers but

1) There is, in fact, no need to apologise since the recommendations of the Malta Report, which was accepted by Cardinal Bea and by the Lambeth Conference of 1968, included a recommendation (para. 22) for "the constitution of two joint sub-commissions, responsible to the Permanent Commission, to undertake two urgent and important tasks: One to examine the question of intercommunion, and the related matters of Church and Ministry; The Other to examine the question of authority, its nature, exercise, and implications."

2) New Christian (4. May. 1967), p.12, Rome and Anglican Orders.

these too were very necessary as it was quickly discovered by the members that not infrequently they did not understand each other's position as clearly and as factually as they thought they did. What was remarkable was the speed at which understanding developed. But that is all past history although it should be noted, since it was the first-fruits of the setting up of the Commission and it created the necessary conditions for genuine dialogue. In fact, the first few papers read were on the subjects 'Why is Dialogue now possible?' by Cardinal Willebrands and the Bishop of Ripon, and 'Where should Dialogue begin?' by Professor Fairweather and the Revd. Michael Richards.

The factors which were seen as producing movement were the growing conviction of the scandal of disunity; the change during the previous five years in the Roman Catholic attitude to the problem of Christian Unity; the work of the second Vatican Council and the meeting of the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury in March, 1966.

In the course of the Preparatory Commission's work and meetings at Gazzada, at Huntercombe Manor and in Malta, some outstanding contributions were made. We remember papers such as 'What is the Word?' by Father Georges Tavard to mention but one and we recall the way in which all the papers led into prolonged and detailed debate which culminated in the Malta Report.

If, however, I signalise two papers out of the extensive material presented to the Preparatory Commission, it is because of a feeling that they provide a link of continuity with the position in point of time which some of us believe must soon be reached. The papers referred to are two Huntercombe papers; 'To What extent can or should there be a diversity in a United Church: Freedom and Authority', by Cardinal J.G. Willebrands, and 'Unity and Comprehensiveness: Freedom and Authority' by Professor H.E. Root and the Bishop of Ripon. Both papers should be read again and I hesitate to subject either to the indignity of being summarised. Yet points from each need to be emphasised again in the context of the present state not only of this Commission's work, but of ecumenism today.

If we accept the principle of diversity in unity we have some theological background for the concept of an interim period of partial communion. Having commented appreciatively on the Venice papers, Cardinal Suenens said in the New York lectures which he shared with the Archbishop of Canterbury, 'We must not be afraid of plurality because plurality and unity are both essential dimensions of the Church'.¹⁾

The idea has at last acquired among Roman Catholics the theological respectability which is its due, and we recall the references to 'variety' and to 'pluralism in practice' by Pope Paul at the opening of the Second and Third sessions of the Vatican Council.

PAPER BY H.E. CARDINAL JAN WILLEBRANDS

Cardinal Willebrands divided what he had to say under the headings of theological considerations, historical considerations and the application to the present problem.

Among the theological considerations to be noted is the fact that 'it is a people that believes', as in the Creed of Constantinople (381) we confess "Quod unus in unam sanctam Catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam". 'A people means a multitude, and in a certain sense a diversity, by its diversity of function, by its continuity in history. At the same time a people means a racial, spiritual, cultural unity.'

The people of God has a wider and more radical diversity, being drawn from

1) The Future of the Christian Church (1971) p.84 by Arthur Michael Ramsey and Leon-Joseph Suenens.

all nations, and it is also 'a people by election, by sanctification.' Its unity is from Christ and its ultimate principle of unity is trinitarian. Christ, sent by the Father, established the New Covenant in his blood and 'left to His Church the sacramental sign of this covenant in the mystery of the Eucharist by which the unity of the Church is signified and brought about.' The Holy Spirit, guiding us into the fulness of truth, 'creates in us that new life by which we are the people of God.'

The Cardinal goes on to say that all this unfolds itself in certain structures and he draws attention in the New Testament both to continuity and to God's intervention in that continuity: 'There are the twelve, but there is also the election of Paul...'. There are interventions of the Spirit, instances of which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

There is in the Church both 'institution' and 'event', 'institutional structures and a liberty of the Spirit in the history of the Church.' He writes: 'The dialectic "freedom-authority" does not seem to me to enter into the theological aspect of the problem we are discussing. Or rather it arises only secondarily when we have seen that the covenant in Jesus Christ supposes structures and at the same time liberty in the Spirit. Authority itself is submitted to liberty. Otherwise it remains purely in the juridical order.'

That is an important part of the theological analysis which is followed by a glance at the way in which the early Church handled the principle of liberty. Quoting a study by Fr. Lanne O.S.B. of 'The Differences compatible with unity in the tradition of the ancient Church down to the 12th century', he denotes three areas in which diversity in unity obtained, namely, those of liturgical and disciplinary usage, of theological "terminology" and of theological "systems". Cardinal Willebrands examines various thinkers and situations in the early centuries and I must content myself with choosing a few quotations from his paper. For example, speaking of St. Augustine, he remarks that 'For him the variety of local usage expresses the richness of the Church, Spouse of Christ. As a theologian he acknowledges here a positive value; as a factor he adds the principle that we should not harm the brethren who follow different usages. Apart from what is prescribed by Holy Scripture, apostolic tradition and the General Councils, we should conform to the usage of the local church so as not to arouse vain disputes.'

This is a very Anglican exposition and I am reminded forcibly of passages in Branhall and in Taylor when, passing on to the more important area of theological 'liberty of thought and expression within the communion of the same faith', the Cardinal speaks of the 'spirit of comprehension' in some of the Fathers and writes: 'They demanded that the Nicene faith should be confessed,.... but nothing more!'

This was precisely the line taken by John Branhall and other leading Anglicans and I think that again and again in Church history, not least, in our own time, we come back to this. We shall have to look at it again in the light of the linked questions of the content of the faith, its formulations and criterion.

Cardinal Willebrands' first conclusion under the heading of 'The present problem' is that history shows 'that not merely liturgical and disciplinary differences but also those of terminology and even of theology are found at the ecclesial level itself, within the reality of the local Church. They are found within a unity of faith, of sacramental life, of structure.'

I should be inclined to add 'of spirituality' too and I would draw attention to the stress which is laid in this paper and in the documents of Vatican II, and in the early thinking and discussions of the Preparatory Commission, on the idea of the local Church.

The context of this diversity in unity in the local Church and the history of the early Church demonstrates that 'unity is not uniformity now any more than it was then, and diversity may well become richer within a more striking and edifying unity'.

THE UNPRECEDENTED SITUATION

I cannot see humanly speaking, much hope of any unifying action by which 'the world may see and believe' (John 17.21) until we are prepared to learn this lesson from the history of our Christian past and, applying it to our present separation, evolve what I would call a theology and an ecclesiology of the unprecedented situation. Indeed this phrase 'an unprecedented situation' was used by Bishop Butler in a paper to the Preparatory Commission and also by D.J. O'Hanlon in an article on 'A New Approach to the Validity of Church Orders.'¹⁾

We are dealing now in terms of separated Churches, of whole ecclesial communities of Christ, which are sundered from each other. This is the unprecedented situation and it is here that we need vision, for 'where there is no vision the people perish.' (Proverbs 29:18) We have to face the fact of plurality, and building on our common heritage of faith and order, our shared traditions and practice, convert this plurality into diversity in unity. We need not expect it to happen over-night but we can learn from the experience of the Church of South India where growing together has become a marked consequence of diversity in unity within the common life of the Body of Christ. If we regard the establishment of partial communion as a stage in this process - as a rich notion, to quote Bishop Clark - we may have sober grounds for hope. Otherwise, the situation of separated Christians seems to be that described in another context and at another time by T.S. Eliot;

'What does the Archbishop do, and our Sovereign Lord the Pope
With the stubborn King and the French King
in ceaseless intrigue, combinations,
In conference, meetings accepted, meetings refused,
Meetings unended or endless
At one place or another in France.' (Murder in the Cathedral).

In other words, we have to extend our thinking on comprehensiveness and on the legitimate limits of diversity into the wider area of national and world Churches now in separation from each other. By definition, history cannot furnish precedents for dealing with an unprecedented situation. It can only offer analogies and suggest directions to be taken or avoided, but we, the people of each generation are the history-makers and Christians must always allow for what Cardinal Willebrands described as 'interventions' of the Holy Spirit, for God is the Lord of history and men but his executives or his frustraters.

Our situation is described at the close of the Cardinal's paper as one in which, '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. Christianity no longer manifests the varied richness of a communion of sister-churches.'

To restore the communion of sister-churches, recognising and accepting, in another of Cardinal Willebrands' phrases, 'the legitimate and authentically Christian differences which have developed during the centuries of separation, in the spirit of Cyril and John', accepting also 'the dialectic between structure and liberty - both of them given and guaranteed by Our Lord Jesus Christ' - is this not the direction which should be taken?

PAPER BY PROFESSOR H.E. ROOT AND THE BISHOP OF RIPON

The Bishop of Ripon and Professor Root addressed themselves to eliciting the meaning of comprehensiveness which, in this context, they regarded as virtually indistinguishable from diversity in unity.

They insist that they are not interested in what I would call theological minimalism, 'unity... based on a series of lowest common denominators in belief and practice.' Nor are they concerned with the sort of comprehensiveness, examples of which are afforded in the world of politics or of business.

1) Worship (Vol. 41, no. 7).

They wish rather to expound that idea of comprehensiveness which in Anglicanism, is in essence not the product of historical circumstances but a conviction that this 'is a necessary quality in any Church which pretends to catholicity.' It is born of the fusion in Anglicanism of the Catholic inheritance and of the Reformation insights.

The Bishop of Ripon and Professor Root note the allocution of Pope John at the opening of the Council: "The whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. 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 relevance of the last sentence to the concept of diversity in unity has frequently been commented upon but I would like to emphasise also the phrase 'through the methods of research.' The work of critical scholarship, and its results in so far as these can reasonably be taken as assured, cannot be ignored, for their bearing on such problems as the origins of the Christian Ministry have immediate consequences for ecumenism. To ignore the implications of this has an air of unreality, I suggest, comparable to chess-players making elaborate moves with pieces which have already been removed from the board.

The essayists draw attention to two very significant passages in the Decree on Ecumenism (4 and 11): "While preserving unity in essentials, let all members of the Church according to the office interested 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 elaboration of revealed truth. In all things let charity be exercised." and "When comparing doctrines, they [theologians] 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."

Here are key-concepts for the approach to diversity in unity and to the idea of partial communion and I want to return to them later.

The paper goes on to underline, very rightly, important general theological considerations which justify, at a deep level, diversity or comprehensiveness in the terms outlined. Diversity is necessitated by the mystery of Christian faith itself; by the inadequacy of language or images to achieve fullness of expression; by the dynamic rather than the static nature of revelation and by the dynamism of Christian faith itself.

All of this, I believe, is very much to the point and those who are conversant with the views of, for example, Schillebeeckx, Schoonenburg and Vander Gucht will be aware how closely this line of thought bears on the whole area of Gospel and dogma, formulation and interpretation and on the authority of the magisterium and on papal infallibility.¹⁾

Finally, they refer to the difficulties created by this diversity which nevertheless they hold to be an essential and they pose such questions as 'How is essential continuity in faith to be understood and guaranteed?' and 'What are to be the criteria for distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate development in doctrine, belief and practice?'

They do not suggest an answer and I agree that this is a much more fluid area than perhaps 19th-century theologians would have held, and I agree that

1) See H.R. McAadoo's '1970 Thoughts on 1870: Vatican I' in New Divinity (Vol i, No. 2. November, 1970.)

even "defined doctrine" reveals problems about the meaning of definitions, which are not always static in themselves.

The growing realisation of what I would call historical conditioning and its effect on the formulation of dogma is a confirmation of what the essayists wrote: 'Once again it is problems about method and criteria of interpretation which need closest attention. Definition as such does not foreclose discussion.'

I should like to make a comment here on this subject.

CRITERIA AND THE NORMATIVE ROLE OF SCRIPTURE

I do not think that you can understand Anglican thinking on comprehensiveness without understanding at the same time Anglican insistence on fundamentals, for here is the limit of legitimate diversity, the framework of comprehensiveness. This is close to Vatican II among the documents of which the Decree on Ecumenism (4), while urging the necessity for 'preserving unity in essentials', presses also the preservations of 'a proper freedom...even in the theological elaboration of revealed truth.' The decree further distinguishes between doctrines which, in the hierarchy of truths, 'vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith.' (11).

There is surely revealed here a convergence adequate enough to satisfy reasonable people who see that it has emerged from two different ecclesial settings and passed through different experiences of theological and historical conditioning.

Georges Tavard's paper, Hierarchia Veritatum: a Preliminary investigation, is too important to summarise and I hope that copies of it can be made available. It is an illuminating account of the various interpretations of this passage in the decree and of the different distinctions of meaning attached to it. For example, the distinction between truths on the level of our final goal and those on the level of means towards salvation is extremely relevant here. In his brief glance at the past in search of earlier parallels to this concept of the hierarchy of truths, I was particularly struck by his example of a formal and a material principle regulating the hierarchy of truths, namely, that of 'a clear criterion for a hierarchy of doctrines: their necessity or non-necessity for salvation' which 'corresponds to another criterion: their explicit or implicit insertion in the Bible.'

This is extremely close to the Anglican Articles VI and XX, which hinge on both concepts, that of 'all things necessary to

salvation' and that of being contained in or consonant with Holy Scripture.

Time allows only that I should point to this convergence and to another, more important still, that of the emerging convergence between the Anglican belief in the sufficiency of Scripture and in tradition's function as being a hermeneutical one, and what Vatican II has to say on Scripture and tradition. There is a marked shift of emphasis in the Constitution on Divine Revelation (9) which, in spite of ambiguity, permits Roman Catholic theologians to share the view of Anglicans on the sufficiency of Scripture and its normativeness for doctrine. Rahner says the Bible is the 'norma normens, non normata of both dogmatic and non-dogmatic statements of faith.'¹⁾ The nature of this convergence between theologians has been noted by many.²⁾

Three centuries ago William Payne wrote that 'nothing but revelation makes any doctrine necessary to be believed'³⁾ and scripture is the only record of revelation. The question is, If the fundamentals are not in Scripture (and the creeds), where else are they to be found? Or to put it another way, What are the revealed truths on which we are not agreed?

The Bible therefore is 'the independently normative source and guide to the understanding of all that pertains to revelation, including the Church's doctrinal decisions.'⁴⁾ Here, however, the growing realisation, of which there is evidence in the Constitution that revelation is not propositional but consists of God's mighty acts, the record of which is contained in Scripture, has a marked impact on the formulation of faith: 'because revelation centres in events, not propositions, doctrinal formulations can no longer be thought of as deductions from or summaries of its contents. Rather, they must be understood as necessarily inadequate or partial efforts to understand and interpret the mysteries of faith'⁵⁾

Here one recalls E.J. Bicknell's comment that the Church is not the organ of a new and growing revelation but a witness and interpreter of a revelation once given; and that there is at the same time a progressive understanding by the Church of the faith once for all delivered to the saints: 'The truth does not grow, but we grow into it.'⁶⁾

The Church chose to subject itself to the Bible as a norm of belief and doctrine, and the historicity of revelation, if I may so put it, controls the development of Christian doctrine. 'No dogmatic decision of the Church can go beyond what faithfulness to Christ, (as witnessed to in Scripture) clearly demands'⁷⁾

As the Constitution on Divine Revelation (21) lays it down, 'All the preaching of the Church must be nourished and ruled by sacred scripture.' The interdependence of the Church and the Bible is far-reaching and goes deep, in that the Church has no other record of its own foundation and authority than the Bible. At the same time the Church is, as the Anglican article says, testis et conservatrix, a witness and a keeper of holy writ. Its relationship to the Bible is analogous with that of a judge to the law: he interprets and expounds it, but he is subject to it and cannot alter it.

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- 1) Quoted in G.A. Lindbeck's The Future of Roman Catholic Theology, (1970, p. 110.
 2. cp. Lindbeck, loc. cit., p.113 and C.W.C. Quin in Directions (Dublin 1970), p.24.
 3. Anglicanism (1935), ed. More and Cross, p.140.
 4. Lindbeck, loc. cit., p. 111
 5. Lindbeck, loc. cit., p. 100
 6. Theological Instruction to the Thirty-nine Articles (1936), pp. 318-26.
 7. Lindbeck, loc. cit., p.115

In the formulation of faith, and in ensuring that it is in accord with the Gospel, we cannot get behind this in looking for a criterion and I would remind you of the function of creeds already referred to by Cardinal Willebrands when writing of criteria and essentials in the early Church.

THE MALTA REPORT

Out of all this work emerged the Malta Report and my directions were to draw your attention to the following paragraphs 6 and 7.

6). 'In considering these questions within the context of the present situation of our two Communion, we propose particularly as matter for dialogue the following possible convergences of lines of thought: first, between the traditional Anglican distinction of internal and external communion and the distinction drawn by the Vatican Council between full and partial communion; secondly between the Anglican distinction of fundamentals from non-fundamentals and the distinction implied by the Vatican Council's references to a "hierarchy of truths" (Decree on Ecumenism, 11), to the difference between "revealed truths" and "the manner in which they are formulated" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 62), and to diversities in theological tradition being often "complementary rather than conflicting" (Decree on Ecumenism, 17).'

7. 'We recommend that the second stage in our growing together begin with an official and explicit affirmation of mutual recognition from the highest authorities of each Communion. It would acknowledge that both Communion are at one in the faith that the Church is founded upon the revelation of God the Father, made known to us in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, who is present through the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and his Church, and is the only Mediator between God and Man, the ultimate Authority for all our doctrine. Each accepts the basic truths set forth in the ecumenical Creeds and the common tradition of the ancient Church, although neither Communion is tied to a positive acceptance of all the beliefs and devotional practices of the other.'

You will recall that the Malta Report thought in terms of stages, the first of which is the present existing state of official dialogue. It then spelt out in detail what it refers to as 'the second stage in our growing together' which should begin with and be marked by official and explicit mutual recognition 'from the highest authorities of each Communion'.

It is in fact, as paragraph 7 elaborates, a recognition by each Church of the other Church's basic orthodoxy and adherence to fundamentals. It sets forth the substance of this second stage, which could also belong to a basis for partial communion, in a phrase which derives in part from the Bonn Agreement of full intercommunion between Anglicans and Old Catholics and which followed the Old Catholic declaration of 1925 on Anglican Ordinations.¹⁾

PRACTICAL MATTERS

The Report makes certain suggestions such as joint meetings of representatives of the two hierarchies. Not much has happened in this connection, save that I believe one such has taken place in South America and there may be other instances of which I am unaware. Much the same applies, I think,

1) 'Each accepts the basic truths set forth in the ecumenical Creeds and the common tradition of the ancient Church, although neither Communion is tied to a positive acceptance of all the beliefs and devotional practices of the other' (Para. 7)

to other suggestions but there have been moves about co-operation in theological institutions and education in some countries and a few cases of shared churches and facilities will be known to most of us. However, there is success to report in the matter of the liturgical suggestions and the International Consultation on English Texts has produced the agreed common forms referred to in Paragraph 13 and in the Appendix.

MIXED MARRIAGES

There has been really very little advance in the crucial area of mixed marriages. (Paragraph 16). Anyone who thinks that an authentic and open relationship of partial communion can be effected without the removal of this obstacle is not living in the real world of the laity, since the present situation is an obstacle to even those friendly and fraternal relationships which at least should be the norm everywhere and in some areas it is one of the contributory factors in community strife, suspicion and tension. I heartily concur with Father Eoin de Bhaldraithe in his recent article on Joint Pastoral Care of Mixed Marriages 1) when he wrote: "The comment of the Church of Ireland bishops concluded by saying: 'only a rethinking of the subject by both Churches together holds any hope of a solution....' It would be a pity if it were us who would refuse to co-operate".

I have been saying this publicly for years and I hope that now it can be faced jointly, for it is an obstacle which renders suspect to countless numbers the genuineness of our dialogue, and we are foolish indeed if we do not realise this. The clearing away of this 'matter of practical difficulty' 2) is a sine qua non for a relationship of growing together.

The Malta Report concluded by expressing the view that "We cannot envisage in detail what may be the issues and demands of the final stage in our quest for the full, organic unity of our two Communions," but it specified the areas of the interpretation of the historic faith and of Church and Ministry and Authority as requiring further study. It referred particularly to the need for examining the idea of intercommunion, and as we know recommended the establishment of a Permanent Commission.

What led up to the Report was a directive to Bishop B.C. Butler and myself to prepare a joint outline and individual papers. This we did, and I do not intend to do more than make a couple of comments on matters there dealt with by us which are relevant to where we are and where we are going.

JOINT STATEMENT AND PAPERS BY THE AUXILIARY BISHOP OF WESTMINSTER AND THE BISHOP OF OSSORY

In our joint statement, our view of the stages was not quite identical with that of the Malta Report in what we visualised the possibility of either limited intercommunion, as between Rome and Orthodoxy or of full intercommunion as it obtains between Anglicans and Old Catholics. We itemised two fields for action, that of the 'hermeneutics' of Christian doctrine, and that of Anglican Orders and Apostolicae Curiae. Again and again these two keep re-appearing and the question is how do they relate to partial Communion?

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- 1) The Furrow (Vol. 22, No. 3, March, 1971)
 - 2) See the Joint Declaration of March, 1966 by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Both our papers dealt in some detail with these questions which impinge directly on diversity in unity and on partial communion and we jointly referred to the approach to this by way of a joint examination of Apostolicae Curae or along the lines of other reunion schemes, with their procedure for the unification of ministries. There is of course at least a third possibility, an ecclesiology of the unprecedented situation, Perhaps something of all three might enter into a practical approach, for the International Commission has now gone some distance with the examination of the doctrine of the Church, priesthood and sacraments which we called for in that Joint Statement.

PRESENT POSITION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

It is a fair question to ask, Has the International Commission then after two years contrived to reach the point reached by the Malta Report? To say, Yes, without qualifications would be absurd, but to say, No, without explanation, would be to court a charge of self-delusion.

The fact is that a largely newly-constituted body appears to be arriving at the same destination but by a different route which has taken the members through some of the subjects which the Malta Report said had to be tackled. This is a fair account of what has been taking place and the Venice papers are some of the garnerings of that journey. That we should be approaching this point sketched out by the Preparatory Commission is not, I think, evidence that we are getting nowhere but that we are in the neighbourhood of decision-making about the objectives outlined in the Malta Report.

I venture to quote again from T.S. Eliot, this time from 'Little Gidding'. 1)

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

It may be fair criticism that, as a recent article in The Month put it, 'The Anglican-Roman Catholic conversations proceed like a medieval disputation' 2) though it might be argued that the way in which the article states an ecclesial preference as if it were a proven position is in itself an indication of the need for such a 'disputation' !

But the fact is that we are being moved towards a point of decision. Which is the right course - to look at partial communion and the theological and practical implications which flow from it, or, to continue with the investigation of specific subjects and then, after an unspecified period, see whether we can confront the idea of partial communion?

SOME INDICATIONS

Cardinal Willebrands, at Cambridge, gave us five years as a target for our work. 3) In the same week, Cardinal Heenan, said that delay was essential, though he was thinking not so much of the theologians' work

1) T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

2) Venetian Conversations in The Month (Vol. CCXXI no. 1244, April, 1971, by Michael J. Walsh.

3. The theologians meeting at Windsor might "expect to see in the none too distant future, a vision of that unity in truth given us in Christ. I would go so far as to hope that a limited period, say of five years might allow them to give, conscientiously and loyally, this service they are qualified to give to the Churches.' (Cambridge Sermon).

as of the business of commending it to the people. 1) The Archbishop of York, on the occasion of his visit to Belgium in May of this year, answered Canon Dessain's question as to what he saw as the next stage in Anglican/Roman Catholic relations, by posing another question for all to consider: 'Is the Holy Spirit leading us to make a break-through with Intercommunion? Is it the case that we are held up on other points because we have not taken this step, without which they will remain insoluble? He believed that fear was the thing which most kept us apart.

These are indications and then there were the noteworthy remarks of Pope Paul at the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs in the course of which, referring to the Anglican Church as the 'ever-beloved sister' of the Roman Catholic Church, he looked to the day when these sisters would be able to embrace each other 'in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ.'

It would be a lamentable failure in matching the hour if these various statements were debased to the value of ecumenical clichés or pious aspirations. For people generally, nothing impugns the credibility of the movement for Christian unity more than the ever-widening gap between purpose and performance, between intentions and results, between objectives and effective attempts to realise them.

One of our members, Bishop B.C. Butler, considers that the allocution 'might be of great significance for the future course for ecumenism' and his article in The Tablet (14 November 1970) visualised a kind of Uniate arrangement which would be 'infinitely better than the present condition of separation' and which, he felt ought to be temporary - a word to which he gave the context of 'perhaps some centuries' 2) He referred to the difficulties inherent in the arrangement and noted that 'the first and basic prerequisite of coming together in the one communion of the family of Christ would be agreement in the area of doctrines held to be essential by either or both the "sisters" even though they may disagree about the theological interpretation of certain formularies.

Here we have cropping up again what I referred to as one of the two vital elements, agreement on the content of essential doctrine. The other element, that of Orders and Apostolicae Curae, was brought out by Dr. E.L. Mascall in an interview (The Tablet, 12th December 1970) in answer to the question: 'When the Pope goes on to speak of the Anglican Church as a "sister church", he talks of a "communion of priesthood and rule". Could you say what you take that to mean?'

Dr. Mascall replied that he would like to feel that this envisaged an acceptance of the validity of Anglican orders and he then went on to say: 'However, the recent meeting of the Roman/Anglican Commission at Venice envisaged the possibility of a "new policy in the Roman Catholic Church" which would include "a careful determination of the arguments behind the Apostolicae Curae and a candid judgment whether developments of doctrine have superseded the theological assumptions of 1896." '

Did not the Section Report dealing with the work of this Permanent Joint Commission at the Lambeth Conference of 1968, underline heavily both these elements and the third, that of the role of biblical scholarship, to which I have earlier referred: 'This commission or its sub-commissions should consider the question of intercommunion in the context

1) Delay, far from being dangerous, is essential. It is impossible for people to discard the thinking of generations in five or ten years.' (Westminster Sermon. Jan. 18th, 1971)

2) The Editor of Theology (Vol. LXXIV No. 608, p. 50) 'warmed' to the time scale but 'chilled' to Bishop Butler's claim that the essential visible union of the Church "inheres today in the Roman Catholic Communion."

of a true sharing in faith and the mutual recognition of ministry, and should also consider in the light of the new biblical scholarship the orders of both Churches and the theology of ministry which forms part of the theology of the Church and can only be considered as such.1)

As one weighs these events and statements, and the trends of which they are indications, against on the one hand the wide-spread conviction that nothing has happened or will happen and against on the other hand the urge towards unofficial intercommunion in some quarters, one may conclude that a moment of decision may well be approaching. Should the talking go on indefinitely or should the talking go on, but centred on ways and means in respect of partial communion?

Karl Rahner, to quote one distinguished example, is sceptical about what the theological discussion has hitherto achieved and sceptical also about its method. More than that, he is mistrustful of the nature and starting-point of ecumenical theology, which he believes cannot overcome the ecclesiastical immobility and the stalemate in dialogue.

His own proposal is that the search for unity of faith in the dimension of the theological thematisation and community life' must proceed onward and outwards from a realisation of an existential unity of faith that is already there, 'that faith already given by justifying grace in all Christians of good will.'

JUSTIFICATION AND CONVERSION

The fact is that we are justified 'and in comparison with this it is really secondary how one interprets more precisely this sanctifying event of justification, what categories are used to express it.'

I think that this is very important and it ties in closely with the whole urgent matter of the content of faith and of its formulation, with the idea of fundamentals or essentials, and of the doctrinal criterion. When Rahner says that 'we have arrived at a postulate of a common and true faith among Christians diverging in their faith according to verbal confession' and the acceptance of this faith which can be objectified in different words and concepts, he is pointing us on to the kind of radical admission which candid seekers for unity must make, and to the stripping down to fundamentals which can be as painful as it is necessary.

Nor may we ignore what he says about the theology of the future which has the task of making the Gospel convincing for the man of the cybernetic culture which is now upon us: 'If this man is a believer, he will no longer have to be loaded with unnecessary burdens over and above the one thing necessary, which is metanoia, the conversion of his whole existence.2)

Justification, sanctification and conversion - here is the heart of the matter and it is part of a crazy lack of perspective that many ecumenists take this for granted or proceed as if it were relatively unimportant.

1. The Lambeth Conference 1968 (SPCK 1968, p. 136)

2. Quotations from a talk given at Campion Hall, Oxford, (17.2.71) on Some Problems in Ecumenism Today by Karl Rahner, S.J.

There is a prophetic note here and many of us would agree with Rahner's theme, but by itself it is not enough. If Rahner's two theses 1) are to be effective it will be in the growing together period, and in the context of action and of the deliberate moving closer of Christian Churches, that they will be fruitful. By themselves, they cannot overcome the stalemate and so risk becoming part of the perpetual postponement, the putting off to a further remove, which he himself so rightly deploras.

POSSIBILITIES

What then are the possibilities? Let us look candidly at some facts and then at some options, and see if there is any way of relating the one to the other and what implications follow. Nothing can be gained by not facing the fact that Anglicans, in common with the rest of non-Roman Catholic Christendom, reject papal infallibility on theological and historical grounds, and this was made clear as recently as the 1968 Lambeth Conference 2) Nor are they convinced, as Küng says, about 'the very existence of papal primacy in the first place.' They regard it as undemonstrable that the Petrine ministry can be 'turned into a criterion for deciding what is Church and what is not Church. 3)

Recently I endeavoured to look at this whole theological situation in detail with a view to a modus vivendi so I shall simply record the fact here 4)

George A. Lindbeck considers the matter in the light of ideas such as a decision theory of doctrinal development, the fact of the historical conditioning of doctrinal formulations and the notion of the hierarchy of truths. He asks 'whether the Roman Catholic Church might conceivably at some future time rate the papal and Marian dogmas which are peculiar to it so low in the hierarchy of truths, so remote from the central Christological dogmas, that it would ask other Churches simply not to deny them or accept them as legitimate optional theological opinions rather than as dogmas which must be affirmed. Is it possible that this might someday be considered a sufficient doctrinal consensus for the re-establishment of full ecclesiastical communion?' 5)

Lindbeck was referring to full communion, but as far as partial communion is concerned, however, there is another fact, namely, the limited communicatio in sacris now possible between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches which do not accept papal infallibility. This was discussed in some detail in the course of a long and careful paper by Fr. Jean Tillard, 6) which took as its text the extract already quoted from the Lambeth Report, and which highlighted the requirements of a common eucharistic faith and mutual recognition of ministries. The two Churches would then be in a situation analogous to that of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. 7)

1. 'The ultimate presupposition of ecumenical theology is a unity (among Christians) already grasped in hope. This is the unity of a single, common faith already existing on both sides. This faith is given by justifying grace and is prior to theology and conceptual formulation in creed,' and 'The most ecumenical theology is that theology for the future which has to be worked out by all Churches, each from its own historically determined starting-point.'

2) The Lambeth Conference 1968. (S.P.C.K. 1968 p.138)

3) Hans Küng, The Church, p.480

4) H.R. McAdoe, 1970 Thoughts on 1870: Vatican 1 (New Divinity, Vol 1, No. 2, November, 1970)

5) George A. Lindbeck The Future of Roman Catholic Theology (London 1969, p. 107)

6) The Church, Intercommunion and Ministry presented to the Commission at its first meeting in September, 1970 by J.M.R. Tillard, O.P.

7) loc.cit. p.35. The paper analyses the numerous difficulties which the essayist recognises as existing.

The Decree on Ecumenism (15) recognises what it calls 'a very close relationship' between these two Churches which it sees to be depending on the possession of 'true sacraments, above all-by apostolic succession - the priesthood and the Eucharist.' Anglicans are quite content that the validity and reality of their sacramental ministrations should stand or fall by the tests of Scripture and tradition, by theological and historical analysis, and equally they apply these tests to the ministry itself and to the possession of the historic episcopate in due succession.

The issue to be faced in our time, I contend, is, What are the right questions to ask about this problem? What is the true eucharistic faith which is under discussion? Is it faith in the

real presence and activity of the living Christ, or is it propositional agreement on the manner of that presence? What modifications on past pronouncements are made necessary by theological developments in both our Communion, for example, on eucharistic sacrifice? What is the meaning of Apostolic succession and, whatever it may mean, if Anglicans have it, what follows? What effect does modern research on ministerial origins have on the content of this concept and on nineteenth-century categories of thought about validity? In other words, just as an examination of the criterion for agreed and essential faith is needed, so an examination of the theology of Apostolicae Curae is needed.

If then, a situation analogous to that of the present Roman Catholic/Orthodox situation, or a more developed relationship of partial communion, is a desirable first step, how is it to be achieved?

There are various options which might be considered, but over each one of them, both as a goal to be reached and as a warning against inadequate motivation might be written not only the words of Our Lord, 'that they all may be one... that the world may believe', but also a phrase from the Decree on Ecumenism (20) 'Christ as the source and centre of ecclesiastical communion.'

Briefly listed, these possible solutions which have been appearing in the course of this survey are the Uniate concept, collegial communion, the re-unification of Ministries as in the Church of North India, and the approach by way of recognising the unprecedented situation. It is of interest that Fr. J. Lerch S.J. described the North India rite as 'unique, intended for an extraordinary occasion without precedent in Church history.' 1) It is worth stressing that it is the demands of an unprecedented situation which should be, and are increasingly coming to be, recognised as one of the key-considerations if there is to be any real advance. Linked with these suggested solutions we may consider proposals for a review of Apostolicae Curae in the light of the theological developments in both Communion, and for the inter-mingling of Orders at Consecrations, both of which were suggested by the late Bishop of Huron in his request of December 1965 to Pope Paul 2)

Lawrence Guillot's dissertation on Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective lists them schematically under four types of solution:
Solution I: Reappraise and revise previous decisions.
Solution II: Recognise and accept ministries just as they are.
Solution III: Hold ordinations, using present ordination ceremonies.
Solution IV: Use special ceremonies, specifically designed to accomplish the reconciliation and unification of ministries, in which doubts about certain past ordinations are dismissed. 3)

- 1) The Clergy Monthly, 1970, p.431. See also The Month, August 1971.
- 2) A Local Item in the Roman Catholic/Anglican Dialogue..1965-66
- 3) Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective by Lawrence Guillot (Rome 1969, pp 101 - 5) A study of Anglican/Roman Catholic relations.

Each solution is provided with various sub-headings and sections. Guillot suggests that it is the duty of those engaged in officially sanctioned dialogue to agree on what solution is called for. Most important, in my view, is his assertion of the need to seek a solution which would contribute to Christian unity, not just to Anglican/Roman Catholic Unity. A similar point is made by Hughes. 1)

If, however, one takes the view that 'History is irreversible' and that the method of proceeding solely 2) by re-examining and re-interpreting the past (e.g. asking the Roman Catholic Church to revise Apostolicae Curae) is not the most fruitful approach, let us ask ourselves whether there are substantial reasons for saying that the conditions for partial communion exist and that, within this setting, Solution II is the proper course, to 'recognise and accept the ministries just as they are'.

a) In the first place, there appears to be sufficient identity of view on fundamentals, as set out in para 7 of the Malta Report. One thinks back to Cardinal Willebrand's patristic assessment: 'They demanded that the Niccan faith should be confessed...but nothing more.' John Bramhall said the same thing in the seventeenth century, that the unity of Christians in the first centuries was founded on the fact that 'no Church exacted more in point of faith than the primitive creed.' 3) It is relevant that the same writer notes that Catholicity derives 'by the uninterrupted line of apostolic 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.' 4) In other words, here are stated our recurring contemporary elements. 5) I like Lancelot Andrewes' definition of the limits of legitimate diversity: '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.' 6) However one may argue with him about the details, this is the scope of catholicity.

And to be critical, it is not only questionable whether it is a fitting and feasible objective for the ecumenical movement to seek propositional agreement on all doctrinal points with a view to producing formulae covering non-fundamental matters. It is questionable whether such definition-making, such seeking for a range of definitive propositions, is a legitimate or a valid function for theology today.

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- 1) Stewards of the Lord, p.6
 - 2) Note 'solely', since a re-assessment of Apostolicae Curae is bound to enter into the consideration of theological developments.
 - 3) cp. also the Epistle Dedicatory to Jeremy Taylor's The Liberty of Prophesying (1647)
 - 4) John Bramhall (Works, 1676 ed.), pp.57 - 61.
 - 5) The dogmatic criterion, the hierarchy of truths, orders and succession.
 - 6) Opuscula (L.A.C.C. ed. p. 91.)

Theology - it is an Anglican conviction constantly expressed from Taylor to Temple - dares not part company with reason. But equally it dares not become rationalist in the sense of becoming obsessed with formulation. For then it becomes closed and static, no longer open to fresh insights into the truth, trapped in a network of secondary propositions alleged to be definitive but all too frequently reflecting the conditioning of an era, and the knowledge of that era. It is a road which leads theology into the waste places of juridical doctrinalism rather than into the unsearchable riches of Christian doctrine. The real function of theology today will be to link the existentialist and the essentialist approaches, to link what is true for me with what is true for all men, to help men to establish once again the link between what is true for them and that which was from the beginning.

1)

"It was there from the beginning; we have heard it; we have seen it with our own eyes; we looked upon it, and felt it with our own hands; and it is of this we tell. Our theme is the word of life." (I John I.1)

It is not inapposite to remind ourselves that the epistle is a recall to fundamentals.

b) Secondly, the Commission is aware of the emergence of a growing consensus on the Eucharist. There is therefore no need to give details save to remind ourselves of the agreement on the Eucharist, accepted by the World Council of Churches at Uppsala, the Anglican/Methodist Scheme and proposed Ordinal, the Milwaukee report of the American Joint Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission, and the work of this Commission and its sub-commissions now in progress.

c) A further and very considerable factor supporting the view that conditions for partial communion exist are the undoubted changes in theological thinking and method as compared with those which obtained at the time of Apostolicae Curae. A summation of points such as that provided by Robert Adolfs O.S.A. gives a sufficient outline of some of this kind of thinking. 2) He asks how the Bull's theme that Anglican Orders are invalidated by a defect of form and a defect of intention stands up in the light of developments within the Roman Church since Vatican II.

He makes the following points:

1. 'The whole Papal Constitution Apostolicae Curae reflects the limited juridical and canonical thinking at the end of the nineteenth century. The mechanistic view of the 'powers' of a priest and the 'grace' produced by the sacraments 'is alien to the new Roman sacramental theology.'
2. 'The self-confident way of speaking about "defect of form" is somewhat surprising, since for centuries the Roman Church did not know exactly what the essential words of the form consisted of.' Adolfs goes on to say that 'In 1947 Pope Pius XII

1) v. Frontier (Summer 1965), ii vol. 8, p.84.

2) Rome and Anglican Orders, a new assessment in the light of Vatican II (Article in New Christian, 4 May 1969). J.J.Hughes deals in detail with this, his book Stewards of the Lord being an assessment of the arguments for defect of form and defect of intention.

published his decision regarding the particular words in the Roman Pontifical, which contain the essential wording of the form, necessary for the proper conferring of Roman Orders. In the light of Pope Leo's pronouncement, it is surprising to discover that what is indicated as the essential form does not make the slightest reference to the "grace and power" of the order, that is, to the powers of the priest to sacrifice and to consecrate.' This, at the very least, Adolf's maintains, seriously weakens the arguments of Apostolicae Curiae about the defectiveness of form.

3) 'The main argument of Pope Leo against the validity of Anglican Orders is that the Edwardine Ordinal omitted deliberately a clear mention of sacrifice and of consecration; in other words, it failed to speak of the priestly power to consecrate and to offer sacrifice.' The argument went that this proved that there was no intention of making priests. 'Here I believe' writes Adolf's 'is where the crucial argument is, and where Pope Leo made his mistake. It was quite understandable that he was mistaken, because he was the victim - like his contemporary theologians - of a faulty Counter-Reformation theology. If we compare the pre-Reformation Ordinal with the Edwardine Ordinal, we find that all language about sacrifice and about priestly powers to consecrate and offer sacrifice have been omitted from the latter. And we may say there was a good reason for this.'

In Adolf's opinion the reason was the current contemporary emphasis on 'the idea of a re-sacrificing Christ' which, if it was not official teaching, was strong and widespread. He suggests that both sides at the Reformation over-reacted, but notes that 'the Anglican Church, in spite of strong evangelical trends, never really accepted the extremes of the Continental Reformers.'

He comments 'How different are the ideas on the Holy Eucharist today! In the Roman Church there is great emphasis now on the idea of a sacred meal, during which the memory of the suffering, sacrificial death and resurrection of our Lord is celebrated as a representation (making again present) of the only and unique sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross.'

4. His fourth point is the changed attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the ecclesiality of other Churches and ecclesial communities, and the special place accorded in the Decree on Ecumenism to the Anglican Communion. He records his belief 'that this decree somewhat obscurely and indirectly suggests the existence of the sacrament of Holy Orders within the Church of England.'

5. Finally, he regards it as extremely relevant and important that nowhere in Lumen Gentium 'is the priest regarded as an ecclesiastical man with powers to sacrifice and to consecrate. The fullness of the priesthood is embodied in the bishop, who is regarded first and foremost as the leader, the shepherd, the servant of the People of God. This is quite a shift of emphasis. Those who are ordinarily called "priests" participate in the priesthood of the bishop. Of these priests it is not said that they possess the power to consecrate, but they make present again (repraesentant) the unique sacrifice of the New Testament.' 1)

1). cp A classical Anglican statement by Jeremy Taylor: "As Christ is a priest in Heaven for ever, and yet does not sacrifice Himself afresh nor yet without a sacrifice could He be a priest, but by a daily ministration and intercession represents His sacrifice to God and offers Himself as sacrificed, so He does upon earth by the ministry of His servants. He is offered to God; that is, He is by prayers and the sacrament represented and offered up to God as sacrificed, which in effect is a celebration of His death, and the applying of it to the present and future necessities of the Church as we are capable by a ministry like to His in Heaven. (The Great Exemplar, Part III Section XV, Discourse XIX).

For a modern Anglican statement, see The Lambeth Conference 1958 Part II, pp 83-5, which contains an important passage on the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

He concludes by stating that 'since the Constitution Apostolicae Curae there has been a tremendous change in the Roman Church's ideas about the priesthood and Eucharist' and it is his view that, taking all this into consideration, we should start working on a formula for 'collegial communion'.

I find a link between this and my next reason for suggesting that there may now be the grounds for partial communion, namely, the ecclesiology of the unprecedented situation, in a paper on Anglican Orders given to the Preparatory Commission by Canon Purdy and the late Canon Findlow. 1)

They took up suggestions in the papers by Bishop Butler and myself and dealt with the recent criticism of Apostolicae Curae, beginning with my own suggestion of 'a joint re-examination of Apostolicae Curae in the light of a revised sacramental theology'. Their paper was a good & critical assessment of the approaches to the handling of the problem and they looked at the possibilities of 'recognition' or 'commission', which they favoured, although not excluding at the same time a re-examination of Apostolicae Curae.

They referred in this connection to the earlier work of J.J. Hughes whose more recent books Absolutely Null and Utterly Void (1968) and Stewards of the Lord (1970) have gone into the question very thoroughly. 2) They also mention the views of D.J.O'Hanlon and Franz Josef van Beeck and this brings me to the next item which cannot be discounted as we assess the possibilities.

d) This is to evaluate the ecclesial significance of the unprecedented situation in which separated Christians find themselves and to consider its implications for partial communion. Van Beeck and O'Hanlon contend that the situation is an emergency one in which Christian Churches, existing in good faith, find themselves separated. The usual norms are inadequate and existing laws simply do not cover the situation. 3)

History has dealt with emergencies before! The sacrament of order has had extraordinary ministers: 'The most recent example of this is vouched for by three fifteenth-century papal bulls which authorized abbots to ordain deacons and priests. It has also been shown that in a number of churches in the first centuries, consecration of bishops by bishops was only gradually introduced... But the most fundamental historical fact of all in this matter is the large gap in our information about the development of the sacrament of order in the second century... What is clear is that there was a style of hierarchical church order in the third century, which is the canonical pattern we know today.

1) Report on Approaching the Problem of Anglican Orders, a paper given to the Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission, by Canon William Purdy and Canon John Findlow.

2) Hughes writes in the introduction to Stewards of the Lord (p.2) that 'It is the argument of this book that both the view of the Reformation as well as the theology of ministerial priesthood which underlie Apostolicae Curae have been rendered untenable by new evidence which has become generally available in recent decades'

3) Josef van Beeck S.J., Towards an Ecumenical Understanding of the Sacraments (Journal of Ecumenical Studies 3/1 (Winter, 1966) pp. 57-112): D.J.O'Hanlon S.J., A New Approach to the Validity of Church Orders (Worship: Vol. 41, Number 7, pp 406-421)

The fact of continuity seems incontestable. What is not so entirely beyond challenge is the assertion that "the power of consecration" has always been the privilege of the "bishops". Perhaps it is projecting the third century (and the twentieth) into the second. 1) I would draw attention here to a difference between Trent and Vatican II. 2)

Both writers are discussing Protestant ministries as distinct from Anglican Orders and their position is that when a Christian community becomes isolated from normal Church order then 'law simply drops out as a standard of sacramental activity' and the community is thrown back on itself for an emergency deputising of eucharistic hierarchs based on the common priesthood of the baptized faithful. There is something of an analogy here with the common attitude of seventeenth-century Anglicans to the non-episcopal Churches of the Continent in so far as these could be regarded as deprived of episcopacy by historical circumstances outside their control.

Van Beeck's conclusion is that 'For a rite to be a true sacrament if administered by a baptized Christian who does not stand in the Apostolic Succession (but who does stand in the Apostolic Tradition) it is required that, besides ecclesial background (baptism?) and intention of doing what the church does, there be found bona fides and a protracted extraordinary situation. The latter makes it possible for the sacrament to be administered praeter ordinem, whereas the former sees to it that this praeter ordinem is not in fact a contra ordinem, and so, ex supposito, contra Ecclesiam.... In view of the extraordinary situation, the bona fides, and the authenticity of the diakonia supported by the faith and the ecclesial character of the community, by the ministry of (the Word and) the sacraments as exercised by Protestant ministers may in terms of the Roman Catholic church order be qualified as recognisable as an extraordinary ministry.' 3)

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- 1) O'Hanlon, pp. 415-6.
 - 2) Hans Küng comments (The Church, p.418)
 - a) While Trent uses the unbiblical word "Hierarchy", Vatican II chooses at this point the phrase "ecclesiastical ministry", (ministerium ecclesiasticum)
 - b) While Trent uses the phrase "divine ordinance" (divina ordinatio) obviously to refer to the distinctions in office between bishops, presbyters and deacons, Vatican II unambiguously applies the words "divinely established" (divinitus institutum) solely to ecclesiastical ministry as such.
 - c) While for Trent there is a "hierarchy established by divine ordinance, consisting of (constat) bishops, presbyters and deacons", Vatican II says that the ecclesiastical ministry is exercised (exercetur) on different levels by those who from antiquity (ab antiquo) not, that is, from the very beginning have been called (vocantur) bishops, priests (presbyters) and deacons."

The Tridentine proposition, if strictly interpreted, does not agree with historical realities, but the proposition of Vatican II does.'

- 3) van Beeck, loc. cit. p.90

The thinking behind this is summed by O'Hanlon: 'In all of these developments - the recognition of flexibility of ministry in the primitive church, the growing awareness of the dated character of council declarations, the acceptance of churches other than the Roman Catholic as Christian, the growing inclination to see the church as the people of God on pilgrimage, the return to emphasis on service rather than power as that to which men are ordained - in all of this the ecumenical experience has played a large part.' 1)

Both writers suggest, as I suggested earlier in this address, that we must be sure that we are asking what I would call the right and the real questions about validity, succession and the purpose of the ministry. Have questions about validity which is 'the juridical claim to ecclesiastical recognition', any meaning apart from 'the prior question, whether the sacrament is truly and effectively celebrated?' 2)

If we believe that it is the Church which celebrates the sacrament through the ministry of its ministers, then, when the normal pattern of diakonia originating through a historical episcopal succession is suspended through extraordinary circumstances, then is the bona fide extraordinary celebration 'the same sacrament as in ordinary celebration'? 3)

Again, 'If order is really for service and not for power, then genuine service to the unity of the church should be a supreme norm, a norm which may dictate the abandonment of rigid demands in all cases for an uninterrupted series of episcopal laying on of hands.' 4)

If the demands of wider Christian unity are requiring a revision of norms by a strict standard of theology and history how much more is charity and honesty and a genuine desire for a movement forward required in Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue on this matter where the norms are agreed in principle?

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- 1) O'Hanlon, loc.cit. p. 411.
 - 2) O'Hanlon, loc.cit. p. 413.
 - 3) O'Hanlon, loc. cit. p.418.
 - 4) O'Hanlon, loc. cit. p.420 and cp. Georges Tavard, quoted in Guillot (Loc. cit. p.99): 'If a given Protestant Church does recognise its ministers as eucharistic hierarchs (even with a totally different vocabulary, with another form of designation or ordination, with another concept of succession and with another theological frame of reference), I see no reason why the Catholic Church should not take note of this fact and recognise the sacramental dimension of which this community has the experience, thus acknowledging its ministry as the authentic ministry of the Eucharist without asking historical questions about the forms in which this ministry was transmitted. In other words, I would suggest that we extend to all Christian Churches the principle which we apply to ourselves; it is not apostolic succession which makes the Catholic Church, but the Catholicity of the Church which guarantees apostolic succession.'

It is enough, by way of rounding off this section on the existence of the conditions for partial communion, to re-emphasise four final points in a few sentences.

e) We must take seriously the implications of what the report to the Lambeth Conference of 1968 said about this Commission's task of considering not only 'the mutual recognition of ministry' but of considering also 'in the light of the new biblical scholarship the orders of both Churches.'

To ignore recent work on the form of the ministry in the early Church as seen in the New Testament and sub-apostolic literature, and the implications of these findings for partial or full communion, is to play blind man's buff with the facts. It is no service to that Catholic episcopacy to which both Churches are fully committed. 1)

f) There is the increasing need for Churches, Commissions, and theologians to remain open to the idea of 'intervention' and 'break-through'. There is, in the life and history of the Church, both institution and event, continuity and intervention.

One cannot see much hope if Christians accept as a preliminary axiom that with God all things are not possible.

g) We need to take seriously, in theology and in fact, the existence of plurality and of legitimate and authentic Christian differences, so long as these are contained within the framework of agreement on fundamentals.

h) Finally, there seems to be no reason why mutual intermingling at episcopal consecrations should not become a recognised practice.

The good effects of partial communion could be almost incalculable, and I refer not only to the major ecclesiastical benefit of planned partnership in mission to the world instead of mere fraternising or even of working in opposition, but to the effect on a world in which so many communities are riven with racial and sectarian strife, tensions and suspicions. The level of relationships varies considerably from country to country and it is not immediately demonstrable that action should proceed pari passu in all parts of the world. What is clear is that we cannot expect to be believed when we speak the word of reconciliation if we ourselves are not reconciled.

H.R. McAdoo
Bishop of Ossory, Ferns
& Leighlin.
Anglican Co-Chairman.

1) cp. Jean Colson's work and Hans Küng's The Church and R.P.C. Hanson's Groundwork for Unity (1971)