

PROSPECTS FOR ARCIC-II

Membership, programme and mandate of ARCIC-II depend on the "mandate" in para 3 of the Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Runcie, Canterbury, May 29th, 1982. Much will be determined on the order of treatment of the matter referred to the new Commission.

Under the general heading: "to continue the work already begun", three main areas are indicated, and these, in fact, take us well beyond the bounds of the Final Report of ARCIC-I.

1. To examine, especially in the light of our respective judgments on the Final Report, the outstanding differences which still separate us, with a view to their eventual conclusion.

Areas of outstanding difference:-

- 1.1 Matters which ARCIC-I did not claim to have resolved fully .

Before work starts on these there is need for further reactions from both Communions to the Final Report. But it can be useful to map out what may be required. On infallibility the main work will be "elucidatory" (particularly on such key concepts as "guaranteed" and "reception"). The content of the Marian dogmas now seems to present little difficulty; the main issue is their "definibility" and whether their acceptance as "of faith" would be required in an eventual union.

- 1.2 Other matters in the Final Report which either Church may judge to be unsatisfactorily or inadequately expressed.

- 1.21 The CDF Observations relate to points of very differing degrees of importance. The first task is for Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences and theologians to reassure CDF on some of these points; the SPCU could also invite some of its consultants and other contacts to contribute to this process.

- 1.22 SPCU has received a few brief comments from Episcopal Conferences, but it will be some time before there is any quantity of considered reaction from Conferences. Similarly, official Anglican reactions will begin to appear in the next two years.

As yet, then, it would be premature to start work on these issues. Moreover, ARCIC-II must not become a simple repetition of ARCIC-I.

- 1.3 Divergence and convergence on ethical issues has now to be faced.

The first step will be to examine how we understand the authority of the Church with regard to the practical living out of the Gospel; only then can there be useful study of particular areas of difference (notably, but not exclusively, on matters of sexual morality).

NB. 1. In different regions different issues may be judged to be of prior importance. practical

2. In many social issues a variety of positions if open to members of either Church.

Once again, our concern is the agreement necessary for unity.

- 1.4 Other matters Anglicans may wish to add to the agenda.

A study of Justification (on which Catholic/Lutheran dialogue has achieved considerable agreement) is urged by Evangelical Anglicans -- though it may be noted that in 1968 the Joint Preparatory Commission did not feel it urgent to pursue this issue. Other "reformation issues", no longer in the forefront today, may

require treatment in due season (cf Fairweather, "Where should dialogue begin?", Gazzada, Jan 1967, in A/RC Dialogue: the Work of the Joint Preparatory Commission, pp 37ff, esp pp 54-6 on purgatory, prayer for the dead, indulgences etc).

1.5 Other matters Roman Catholics may wish to add to the agenda. There may be need for further work on doctrinal aspects of Marriage, especially re indissolubility. The status of the 1975 in both Churches needs clarification. Practical-pastoral aspects of mixed marriages are also important: they might better be dealt with in connection with "practical issues" (para 3 infra). Very recently (30 Oct 1982) Cardinal Ratzinger, speaking as a private theologian, has spoken of need for further work on the authority of the Church and of Tradition with regard to Scripture.

Agenda possibilities:

- Christian moral principles and the Church's authority in this field.
- Justification by faith.
- Marriage and Indissolubility.

Query: Is there also need to develop further the ecclesiological principles so fruitfully outlined in the Introduction to the Final Report?

2. To study all that hinders the mutual recognition of the Ministries of our Communions.

2.1 If both Communions accept the Final Report as expression of a common faith regarding ordination and apostolic succession many related questions of doctrine and intention will have been resolved. (Some Anglican critics maintain that ARCIC does not sufficiently establish episcopacy; some Catholics would likewise wish to see further elaboration of the treatment of apostolic succession. There is also the question of how far the development of ecclesial structures can be ascribed to the will of God - but see Eluc.Min. n.4 and Eluc.Auth.I.n.3).

2.2 Given such basic doctrinal agreement there will be need to examine "Apostolicae Curae", 1896, since this is "in possession" and determines current Roman Catholic practice. In one sense it is for Roman Catholics to "contextualise" the Bull, but this can really be done only by joint study both of the historical evidence and of subsequent doctrinal and liturgical developments in both Churches, not least the 1897 "Responsio" of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. To what extent are we in agreement on the doctrinal principles invoked by the Bull, even if we differ concerning the practical conclusions it draws? (It should be stressed that the study of "Apostolicae Curae" is a part, not the whole, of the work required for reconciliation of ministries).

2.3 Such work would provide background for joint study of what is involved in "mutual recognition (and/or reconciliation) of ministries" as between our two Communions, and particularly of the extent to which some sacramental action would be necessary, desirable. Attention should be paid to work already done in other dialogues (F and O, LWF/RC, the Covenant proposals in England). Since this is a vast area the new Commission would need to plan a detailed path lest discussion become unmanageably complicated. (NB: "Mutual": Anglicans do in fact recognize Roman Catholic orders ...)

2.4 ARCIC-II must also face the question of the ordination of women. The urgent priority is clarity about the principles (of faith, doctrine, discipline) on which some Anglican Churches ordain women and the Roman Catholic Church does not. Only then could there be profitable discussion of the more pragmatic question (cf Versailles 1978): "To what extent and in what ways Churches with women priests and Churches without women priests can be reconciled in sacramental fellowship".

2.5 Other questions requiring some discussion:

- the order of diaconate
- discipline concerning celibacy.

2.6 Both Communions agree that the question of recognition of ministries is to be studied not in isolation but with a view to unity of our Churches.

Agenda possibilities:

It seems essential that the new Commission make a prompt start on the whole question of the recognition of ministries.

3. To recommend what practical steps will be necessary when, on the basis of our unity in faith, we are able to proceed to full communion.

3.1 Many apparently 'practical' issues have in fact their implications for faith: many practical issues need early consideration in order that, once sufficient unity in faith is achieved, there may be no undue delay before practical steps are taken.

3.2 This is a vast area and ARCIC-II must not get immersed in a sea of detail. A number of practical issues are peculiar to particular countries or regions, and would be better studied locally.

3.3 Key issues appear to be the relevant "models of unity" (or "models of the Church"), and the closely related questions concerning the continuance of an "Anglican identity" (and this too is something that could differ in various regions). Some of these studies could have considerable influence on the way each Communion reacts to the work already done by ARCIC-I.

3.4 ARCIC-II must also pay suitable attention to any questions raised by the existing relationships of either Church with other Christian World Communions and national Churches.

3.5 It will therefore be important to decide correctly what issues are to be tackled internationally and which should first be examined at regional/local level. It will be important for ARCIC-II to establish closer links with existing national ARCs, both to solicit their aid on more regional issues and also to stimulate the collaboration urged in para 4 of the Common Declaration of May 29th 1982.

Agenda possibilities:

- Models of unity/Church
- What is of international importance, what of regional?
- Involvement of national ARCs.

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SOME CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 If ARCIC-II is to work effectively and concentrate on what is essential for unity and if, moreover, it is to avoid overloading its programme, this programme will have to be worked out very carefully. However, while some broad guidelines and structural recommendations must be prepared in advance, it would be disastrous to impose too ambitious or constricting a programme on the new Commission before it even comes into being. Many details - order of treatment, method etc - have to be the responsibility of the Commission itself.
- 4.2 Both the amount of matter to be studied and the general desire for wider representation suggest a larger Commission (e.g. twelve on either side, plus staff). A larger Commission could not work in exactly the same way as ARCIC-I. (Indeed, while ARCIC-II must consciously be the "heir" of ARCIC-I and has "to continue the work already begun", it must not feel tied to the previous Commission's method; indeed even the Final Report, although it will be a frequent point of reference, should not be unduly "canonized"!)
- 4.3 A larger Commission would need to do more work in formally established sub-commissions. One pattern could be:-
- 4.31 The work would start with a plenary meeting of the new Commission (before the end of 1983). Preliminary staff-work could draw attention to work prepared for the Preparatory Commission and for ARCIC-I which is relevant to present work and has not been fully used. Introductory papers could lead this first meeting to a careful survey of the whole Christian scene today, as compared with that of 1966, with particular relation to A/RC relations, the improvement (and/or deterioration) of possibilities of common witness, collaboration etc as well as of growth towards unity. This would provide a broader context in which (at least the first stage of) the new Commission's work could be mapped in more detail. NB A possible fruit of this first meeting could be a clear statement of the present situation and of how the new body sees its task. Such a statement would need to be precise and to avoid pious generalizations!
- 4.32 The members of the Commission could be formed into three properly constituted sub-commissions, to be given clear terms of reference with regard to the three main areas specified in the Common Declaration, since simultaneous work on all three seems necessary. Although clear terms of reference would be essential, sub-commissions should not be over-organized as regards method. Each sub-commission would have its own chairman and secretary (and there could be room for the nomination of a few ad hoc consultants). To ensure coordination of effort, the chairmen of the sub-commissions, with the chairmen of the full Commission, could form a standing committee - but not, it would be hoped to the detriment of the "oversight" of the whole Commission and its full responsibility for all final texts.
- 4.4 Only in the light of the progress of the work and of further reactions to ARCIC-I could decisions be made about when and how to communicate the results of fresh work. But clearly 1988 will be a watershed in the life of the new Commission, and some of its work should be programmed with that date in mind.