

THIS IS THE FINAL DURHAM TEXT FROM GROUPS 1/2 AND 3/4. NB THE CORRECTIONS MADE BY THE TWO GROUPS ON PRESENTATION TO PLENARY HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED, BUT NOT OF COURSE SUBSTANTIVE POINTS ARISING FROM THE PLENARY DISCUSSION, WHICH WILL BE THE WORK OF THE FUTURE SUB-COMMISSION. (I.E. THIS IS SIMPLY A CLEAN TEXT RATHER THAN THE REVISION.) CJH

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GROUP 1/2

INTRODUCTION

1. At their meeting in Canterbury at Pentecost 1982, Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie charged the second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission "to examine, especially in the light of our respective judgements on the Final Report, the outstanding differences which still separate us, with a view to their eventual resolution". Two topics have already claimed our attention.

2. Readers of our predecessors' Final Report have said that their agreed statements on Eucharist, Ministry and Authority need to be completed by a study of the place of the Church in salvation. Indeed, our predecessors anticipated this request in their introduction to the Final Report which included the following important sentences:

"The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace. It is also the reconciling Community, because it has been called to bring to all mankind, through the preaching of the Gospel, God's gracious offer of redemption." (para. 8)

3. It has been urged that reconciliation between our two communions requires agreement on the doctrine

of justification. This was, in the sixteenth century, certainly a central matter of dispute between Roman Catholics and the Reformers. Further, many people believe that this doctrine still raises substantial issues which cannot be ignored if true reconciliation is to be achieved.

4. Our discussions have convinced us that these two questions, the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of justification, must be treated together. First, this is a matter of content, in that both are concerned with the nature and manner of our salvation. The individual is called to faith and brought to salvation through incorporation into the believing community. The individual receives his or her call to witness to the Gospel as a member of Christ's apostolic people. Secondly, reflexion on the history of the Reformation shows that fundamental issues about the nature of the Church and its role lay at the heart of the whole dispute. Protestants felt that Catholic teaching and practice had interpreted the mediatorial role of the church in such a way as to derogate from the place of Christ as 'sole mediator between God and man'. Catholics believed that Protestants were abandoning divinely appointed means of grace. Protestants expressed a concern for the total gratuity of God's saving action, that is, of grace. Catholics were afraid that this Protestant assertion implied a view of God's justice as that of an arbitrary sovereign and a view of man, his creation, as totally worthless. This, in their judgment, led to the negation of human freedom and responsibility,

and to the denial of the value of works, though supernaturally inspired, as good or deserving of any reward.

5. We are convinced and hope to show that the Reformation controversies in these fields no longer constitute a sufficient reason for the separation of our communions. We have found it possible to express an agreement on the role of the Church in Salvation which meets the concerns of both our traditions.

6. At first sight, because of the form in which we have inherited them, the questions of justification and grace may seem to be of little relevance to most people today. However, we believe that when studied seriously, they raise issues which are of contemporary concern. These are the issues of modern man's search for meaning and happiness. The common use of the phrase 'one must justify one's existence' is itself revealing. This secular use of the term points to the human need of some kind of validation. Apart from God this quest leads to captivity to one's own efforts and slavery to lesser goods. Belief in the God who has created and freely accepted human beings in Jesus Christ provides the assurance of worth, which everyone needs, the assurance of his or her personal value and of the real significance of all that he or she does in dependence on God. In a deeply fragmented and divided world the Church is called to be a sign and instrument of reconciliation and forgiveness.

CHURCH and SALVATION

11. Church and salvation cannot be rightly understood except within the context of the mystery of the love of God for humanity. God's purpose is to draw humanity into a relationship with himself so as to share together in his life. This creates a communion in Christ through the Holy Spirit of those who would otherwise be estranged from God and from one another.
12. Our two churches are in agreement on the absolute initiative of God in salvation and on this theocentric view of the church. We have never doubted our common conviction that the church is the fruit of salvation. Yet we have not been of one mind in our understanding of the role of the church as steward of salvation. Our difficulties stem from the crucial issue of the relationship between the transcendence of God's grace and human responsibility in salvation.
13. This salvation is God's free gift, offered to all humankind. Its once-for-all completion in the saving work of Christ, on which we all agree, and its continuing actualisation in the life of the church together constitute the free gift of God. God's grace embraces the Church's ability to nourish the new life given by the Spirit and its ^{ability} to proclaim the gospel. The salvation gratuitously offered in Christ involves the restoration of the image of God in man which was marred by the fall. To be created in the image of God is to be placed in a special relationship with the Creator and consequently to be given the responsibility of stewardship over the rest of creation. In the new creation, however, the special relationship is now an adoption into the family of God for everyone who has faith and is baptised: this new humanity is the new Israel, the Bride of Christ, the temple of God, the body of Christ, a royal priesthood. In addition to the restoration of fallen man to his original stewardship over creation the Church is given the responsibility to produce the good works of the life given by the Spirit (Eph. 2:10): its duty is to proclaim the good news

of salvation and to provide what is needful for believers to remain faithful to Christ.

I.4. Faithful transmission of the gospel involves more than mere repetition of the apostolic message. The manner in which the Christian community lives its faith affects the credibility of what it proclaims, for it is within the Church that the Holy Spirit gives and nurtures the new life so that the gospel becomes a manifest reality. It is also through the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church proclaims to the world that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19). In this way the Church is called to share in God's work. Such cooperation in no way detracts from the sovereign work and grace of God. This is what is meant by the instrumentality of the Church.

The Church as Sign

I.5. Since God's purpose is that we should all be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29), the Church's vocation is to devote itself to the achievement of that goal, thus revealing and embodying the redemptive power contained within the Gospel. What Christ achieved through his cross and resurrection is communicated by the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church (Rom. 8:1-4). In this way the Church becomes a sign to the world both of God's gracious purpose for his creation and of the possibility of this being realised for sinful humanity. It has to follow the way of Jesus, at the same time the divine image and the Suffering Servant, who had to be made perfect by suffering and so become the Lord of all creation (Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Phil. 2:8-11). In the opposition and persecution it experiences and in its constant struggles with sin and its own weakness, the Church is a living reminder and witness that in his compassion God chose the way of the Cross to save the world.

The Church as Steward

16. From the beginning the people of God have been called to be a servant people. So the Church as a whole is called to serve and given a responsibility of stewardship. This includes both the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and the provision of what is needed for perseverance in the faith and growth in holiness, of which the source is always the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church has no authority over the essential content of the Gospel of God nor has it any power of itself over the effect in the hearer. However, the manner in which the word is preached, taught and demonstrated in the Church's life is crucial. Its presentation by the Church must vary from age to age in different cultures. What the Church also does in nurturing and strengthening the spirit-given life through its sacramental, pastoral and missionary activities can only be carried out through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way the Church is the servant of God's design.

The Church - called to share in God's work

17. All the distinctive activities of the Church as servant of God's design spring from what the Church is already experiencing as the community of people redeemed by God's grace. The Church is called to be a living gospel, evangelised and evangelising, reconciled and reconciling, gathered together and gathering others. In its ministry to the world the Church seeks to share the grace by which its own life is created and sustained. Thus the Church as living gospel is inseparable from the Church as steward of the Gospel.

II. 1 All human beings stand in need of salvation and forgiveness, which can come only from God. The entire hope of the Christian rests on God's incarnate Son and on the Gospel of God's freely given and merciful action in Him. God's gracious action in Christ is proclaimed to us by the Gospel. Our God-given response to the Gospel is faith. By faith we accept the effects of Christ's saving action on our behalf. This faith, expressed in the reception of baptism, unites believers with Christ, makes them members of Christ's body, and enables them to participate in the life of the Church. Faith is sustained and deepened by the life of the eucharistic community. Faith is the obedient assent by which human beings offer up to God their whole self, intellect, feeling and will. It is not to be identified with merely intellectual assent to credal propositions, though it includes intellectual assent to such propositions. This faith, expressed in repentance, includes a sure confidence in God's mercy and in the efficacy of Christ's saving work on behalf of each ('I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me' : Gal. 2:20). Faith is not at all a presumptuous confidence which removes the necessity of working out one's salvation in fear and trembling. Faith is inseparable from hope and love and issues in good works which are pleasing to God (cf. Eph.2:8-10).

II. 2 In describing the merciful action of God we use the language of grace. Grace is not to be conceived as a thing or substance. It refers to God's saving action as a free gift which is totally undeserved on our part. Grace also refers to what, in this saving action, God bestows: viz. the Holy Spirit who dwells within us and confers on us his gifts. By grace we become children of God. The power to respond to God's saving action is itself a gift of grace. This response is nevertheless a truly human and free response. We are not passive under God's grace.

II.3 The New Testament contains many images and concepts

representing this gospel of salvation. They all concern at the same time both the Church as a whole and its individual members. Among them the language of reconciliation, forgiveness and expiation stresses the restoration of broken relationships (E.g. 2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:13-18; Rom. 3:24-25); that of adoption, our restoration as children of God, made and renewed in his image (e.g. Rom. 8:15-17, 23, 29); that of regeneration or rebirth, a work of recreation and the beginning of new life (e.g. 1 Pet. 1:23). The language of new creation speaks of radical renewal (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:17); that of redemption or liberation, of rescue from bondage so as to become God's own possession, and of freedom bought for a price (e.g. Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18f, 2:9); that of justification, of removal of condemnation and of a new standing in the eyes of God (e.g. Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11). The concept of sanctification underlines the fact that God has made us his own and calls us to holiness of life (e.g. John 17:17; 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:11). Finally the key concept of salvation (soteria) has the wide connotation of deliverance of human beings from evil and their restoration to what God wants them to be (Lk. 1:77; Jn. 3:17). These and other terms which are employed in Scripture, both of the people of God and of the individual, complement one another in expressing various aspects of God's work of salvation which is one and indivisible. In fact the polemics associated with justification by faith arose mainly from the application of this Biblical image to the salvation of individuals.

II. 4 These Scriptural images combine two contrasting but complementary aspects of God's saving love: that which is once for all and the continuing process. Thus Scripture speaks both of God's eternal will, realised in the once-for-all Paschal event, and of his abiding presence and action through the Holy Spirit in the Church; both of God's decisive act of reconciling each sinner and of his continuing gift of grace; both of God's saving act in Christ and of our continuing response; both of our initial response to the Gospel and of our continuing life and growth in grace. This last instance is reflected in the relation between baptism, which is the unrepeatable 'sacrament of justification' (St. Augustine, Sermon 152.3) and of incorporation into the Church, and the eucharist, which is the repeated sacrament by which the life of the body of Christ is nourished.

II. 5 Many examples can be given of the polarity of the biblical language of salvation. Thus St. Paul, using the metaphor of putting on clothing, speaks of his hearers as men and women who have put off the old nature and put on the new humanity, and at the same time speaks of a nature which is being renewed, telling them to put on the qualities which belong to this new humanity, such as compassion and the peace of Christ (Col. 3:10-13). Again, sanctification on the one hand denotes consecration to God and is associated with the moment of baptism (1 Cor. 6:11); on the other hand it denotes constant re-appropriation of this consecration by holiness of life (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Yet again, while we are said to be already saved (Eph. 2:8), we are also told to work out our salvation (Phil. 2:12).

II. 6 Misunderstandings have occurred in the past* through the dissociation of justification from the complementary terms, notably when an unreal distinction

*FOOTNOTE. In the sixteenth century discussion of these issues was confused by a misunderstanding between Protestants, who followed the NT in referring justification (dikaiosis) primarily to the act of salvation, and Catholics, who followed medieval usage in referring justification (justificatio) also to the process.

is drawn between justification and sanctification. This misunderstanding has been compounded when the act of justification has been seen not so much as God's decision to justify the ungodly as the beginning of a temporal process continued by sanctification.

II. 7 The term Justification speaks of a divine declaration of acquittal. God declares that we are forgiven and accepted, and that through the blood of Christ we are reconciled with God (Rom. 5:1,9). This declaration^{is forensic but} is not so rigidly forensic as to be impersonal, nor divorced from Christian life in the Spirit. For the remission of sins is also a renewal, a rebirth to newness of life. This new life begins from the moment the believer receives the forgiveness of sins, and to that forgiveness he contributes only the will (or willingness) to be delivered. The culmination of the process of sanctification

is the making in the believer of that righteousness and holiness without which no man may see the Lord. Our entire hope of justification and salvation rests on Christ Jesus and on the gospel of God's gratuitous and merciful action in him. The prerequisite of final salvation is righteousness, which is both a judgement made by God in favour of the sinner declaring him righteous, and at the same time a gift which God bestows on him making him righteous. God's judgement is therefore not to be seen as a mere legal fiction: God's grace effects what he declares.

II. 8 The language of merit and reward has caused difficulty and misunderstanding in the past, because it has been thought to imply that human beings are the authors of their own salvation. Neither of our two churches has ever held that justification itself is anything but a gift. Even the very first movements, such as repentance and the desire for forgiveness, which lead to justification, are God's work in us touching our heart by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

'What have you that you did not receive?' (1 Cor. 4:7). On the other hand,

Scripture speaks of the good works of the justified performed in grace as recompensed by God, the righteous judge (Mt. 25:14-46; 2 Tim. 4:6).

II. 9 The eternal reward promised to the righteous is itself a gift, depending wholly on God's grace. It is only with this understanding that following St. Augustine we can speak of the believer's merits: 'When God crowns our merits it is his own gifts that he crowns' (Ep. 194.5). While he is true to his promise to 'render to everyone according to his works' (Rom. 2:6), when we have done all that is commanded we must still say, 'We are unprofitable servants, we have only done our duty'. (Lk. 17:10).

II. 10 Thus the believer cannot rely on his good works as though these were not entirely the fruit of God's grace, or boast of his own merits as though he were not still in need of mercy. Sin no longer reigns in one who is justified, yet he remains liable to sinful inclinations, continues to fall repeatedly, and may even depart from the grace God has given. The Christian, even though he actively participates in the life and worship of the Church, may never presume on the gift of final perseverance, yet he should live his life with a sure confidence in God and with the firm hope that God will bring him to final salvation.

II. 11 We have spoken of God's once-for-all declaration that a person is righteous. We have spoken also of the effects of God's grace in human lives. These two sayings in the past have often been held to be contradictory. We have tried to show that they are not only compatible but both are indispensable for the fulness of Christian faith. The first statement places the believer in reverence before the mystery of God's eternal and free decision on our behalf; the second reminds us that God's plan, achieved through the Incarnation of the eternal Son, restores and makes God's own all that is authentic in human existence. The very fact that these positions were held with such passion indicates their

lasting importance for the understanding of the Christian faith and the living of the Christian life.

II.12 That faith cannot be held with consistency and that life cannot be lived with authenticity without conviction both of God's forgiveness and human need of that forgiveness, a sense of acceptance by God, incorporation into a Divinely ordained community and an awareness of God's love freely given and joyfully received. If these issues were the cause of division in the past, our reflection on them has enabled us to become more deeply aware of their eternal significance. This applies also to our mutual understanding of the role of the Church. To show in what way the Church of Jesus Christ is a sign or instrument of God's saving action in the world helps us to understand what we mean when we say 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church'. To show that the Church is not only the Sign but also the Steward of God's gifts helps us to appreciate the responsibility of all Christians to spread the word of God and to give witness to Christ in the world of today. For if the Sign is to be truly effective, if the stewardship is to be truly faithful, then Christ's will that the Church should be united is crucial. For our two churches, growth towards unity is not for our own sakes but "so that the world may believe that it was God who sent me".