

MEMORANDUM OF "OPEN SESSION", August 27th, 1984. 2015 - 2145

Visitors: Lord Ramsey of Canterbury; the Bp-Designate of Durham, Dr. Jenkins; Bp.Moorman; the Dean of Durham, Dr.P.Baeltz.

Durham: Dr. G. Bonner; Rev. I Cundy; Very Revd. G. Dragas; Miss R. Etchells; Mr. L. Osborn; Dr. R. Roberts; Dr. P.Sedgwick; Canon S.Sykes; Rev. Dr. P. Thomas .

Ushaw: Revd.Dr. S. Hall; Revd.Dr. C.Rand.

English ARC: Bp. Henderson; Bp. Trillo; Canon P.D. Corbishley; Canon R. Greenacre; Revd. D. Johnson.

After Bp. Murphy O'Connor, chairman, had welcomed the visitors, Bp. Santer outlined the main thrust of the work of ARCIC-II and its connection with the process of response to the Final Report of ARCIC-I in both Communions.

Bp.Murphy-O'Connor then invited the representatives of English ARC to say something of this Committee's present work.

Canon Corbishley referred to various levels of work. There is theological work: some years ago ARC anticipated ARCIC's present discussion of Justification; it had now begun a study of ministry both for the theological information of its members and with a view to a more popular exposition that could help with psychological preparation for an eventual reconciliation of ministries. There is also follow-up of the work of theologians, he exemplified ARC's study guide to the Final Report. The Committee had also discussed, less thoroughly, the English question of the relation between the State and the Church of England, and would continue to monitor developments. A recent meeting at an A/RC shared school had prompted further work on the whole question of shared schools.

Bp. Trillo thought that in its earlier days English ARC had been more closely related to ARCIC than it is now. He was grateful for this fresh contact and expressed ARC's willingness to undertake work on behalf of ARCIC. He also noted that ARC had done substantial work on Inter Church Families

Bp.Santer said ARCIC had asked N.American ARC's to do some work on partial communion. ARCIC would welcome closer contacts, and this could be taken up between our secretariats.

Bp.Henderson agreed with Bp, Trillo that ARC was available to help ARCIC in any way possible.

Bp.Santer hoped that ARC's would also tell ARCIC of ways in which it could assist them.

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More General discussion followed.

Lord Ramsey asked what progress was being made on justification. Bp.Santer said we were in substantial agreement but were held up in finding the right way of formulating this.

Canon Corbishley said ARC felt it was urgent that work be done on the reconciliation of Churches and ministries.

Dr. Baelz suggested that different understandings of the character, action and almighty power of God lie at the root of many of our varying understandings of revelation, salvation etc. Was ARCIC taking this into account? Fr. Tillard said ARCIC's task was to concentrate on issues that divided our two Communion, but that some of the problems Dr. Baelz mentioned would arise in discussion of Church and Salvation.

Canon Sykes said that the Enlightenment and its differing reception in the two Churches had considerable effect on our understanding of Reformation issues. ARCIC-I had tackled the Reformation rather than the Enlightenment. Fr. Tillard compared this with the post-Modernism situation in the RCC. It was not a divisive issue between us, but a common problem for both Communion. Prof. Chadwick agreed that the problems of the Enlightenment, and of the Romantic period, are shared problems and not divisive issues, even if we reacted very differently to the Enlightenment. ARCIC-I did not deal directly with such questions because these are general problems of the relationship between Christian faith and modern culture and science. Many aspects of the Romantic period in fact bring us together, e.g. post-Enlightenment biblical criticism is common property.

Lord Ramsey said ARCIC-I had chosen its agenda deliberately; to introduce the whole question of God would have meant a vast agenda. But the kind of God we believe in interpenetrates all our thinking on the matters discussed and in fact ARCIC-I tells us a good deal about God.

Canon Sykes said the doctrine of the Church, being closely related to that of revelation, is closely linked to the doctrine of God. True, this questions has not divided our Communion, but it should be noted that Anglican understanding of authority in 20th century stems from Anglican Support for Modernist RC's. Dr. Thomas said that, given modern theologians' understanding of theological pluralism, the problem is not what ARCIC is saying but the terms in which it says it. Does it allow for necessary provisionality and pluralism? Bp. Vogel said ARCIC claims to describe the ongoing life of the two Churches in terms of their living life rather than using a "polemical" terminology. Dr. Thomas asked why there was no mention of the theology of the Holy Spirit in the Church. An eschatological note was also lacking. In return Fr. Yarnold asked what ARCIC's tactics should be. Given that by 1988 both Communion will have shaped responses to ARCIC-I (probably a good deal of agreement, but a number of questions), and that ARCIC-II is working for reunion by stages, what should we do next, seeing that people will expect something to happen after 1988? Ecclesiology, Theodicy, Morals? Or should it move on to practical steps towards the next stage of nearly full communion (including the problem of ministries)? Fr. Duprey said that ARCIC-I's ecclesiology of Koinonia, though not fully developed, implies a good deal concerning both the Holy Spirit and eschatology.

Mr. Johnson asked what immediate signs of practical progress ARCIC-II expects. Some fear words will not be matched by deeds. What will ARCIC-II produce in the next decade?

Bp. Santer asked if people really want us to agree? The ecumenical threshold is constantly raised by further questions. There is a desire for unity and this is most important, yet constant questions suggest a legitimation of remaining as we are.

The Bishop of Durham thought it logical and theological for the Commission to get on to the role of the Church (always interpreted by the doctrine of God) since a new and lively vision of what the Church is really for is vital if people are really to want to get together. In relation to our respective authorities we again come up against the question of ecclesiology; how far do previous controversies relate to the task of articulating a lively ecclesiology in the world of today and of the future?

Bp. Cameron said ARCIC-I achieved a consensus and now it is the Churches' response (including the *sensus fidelium*) that matters. We should look for signs not of a sudden spring but of a slow harvest. To get congregations together is no mean achievement, especially when in many parts of the world there are differing understandings of diverse matters, not least in the Third World.

Bp. Ashby agreed with Bp. Cameron. English ARC had asked ARCIC what it could do? His answer was "Get on with it." He instanced the events in New Zealand in 1982 and those planned for 1984. The laity were well ahead and waiting for us to catch up.

Dr. Roberts referred to Canon Sykes' treatment of the internal diversity of Christianity in his recent book "The Identity of Christianity". ARCIC did not seem to perceive how forms of words relate to forms of life. One can gradually narrow the grounds of divergence in forms of words while evading the real relation of these to forms of life - depending, for example, on whether the Church was seen as Pneuma-Christ-centred or episcopal-centred. Questions of sociological perception must be faced if we were to promote a unity which allows of diversity.

Canon Sykes added that by the end of the book he conceded a Church united in worship but containing diversity through dialectic.

Bp. Santer said diversity has to be contained in some limits but gives an internal coherence to the Church and to worship.

Fr. Yarnold pointed out that doctrines have got an importance and you can only compare them by words.

Dr. Roberts spoke of the RC desire for homogeneity. Fr. Yarnold responded that ARCIC's insight is to give full range to the richness of diversity held together by ministry. RC ecclesiology encourages diversity even in doctrinal formulation as well as in worship, as desirable not just tolerable.

Lord Ramsey spoke of a very sharp theological group on the Church at WCC Amsterdam 1948. Barth had been radiant and full of hope because "our disagreements are within our agreement". This was applicable to the ARCIC dialogue.

Bp. Murphy-O'Connor remarked that at practical level the influence of ARCIC-I is not just in the field of theological agreement but in forcing local Churches to live together more closely. Office-bearers need to meet more frequently to direct local congregations and to help many people in their fears and their hopes. It is a question of unity by stages, not a matter of ARCIC solving everything by one or two statements.

Fr. Rand said that ARCIC should relate to other theological styles. Is it sufficiently integrated with other styles of theology? There are theologians who take a far more theological approach.

Abp. Butelezi said that when ARCIC-I was appointed there was no thought of an ARCIC-II, but the work of I led to II within the terms of the Common Declaration of 1982. But one must pay attention to the difficulties experienced in understanding this style of work.

Revd Dr. Thomas said that the way the churches respond to ARCIC-I will itself be an example of unity in diversity.

Mgr. Stewart explained the process by which responses are being prepared in the RCC (all episcopal Conferences etc), and observed that in some ways our respective procedures in this matter were themselves a "worked example" of the principles of Authority I and II.

Bp. Gitari was interested by the progress made by English ARC. The situation in East Africa was very different. He did not know whom he should approach in order to initiate a dialogue with RCs there. He was concerned lest countries like UK, USA, Canada, made a lot of progress towards agreement, while Africa was left to lag behind and to feel betrayed (as it had at the publication of the Final Report - through insufficient explanation etc). Europe brought its divisions to us in Africa - and now it is telling us to unite.

Bp. Santer said the process of dealing with ARCIC is forcing Anglicans to face problems of authority in the Communion.

Bp. Murphy-O'Connor felt that a particular responsibility lay on Catholics and Anglicans in England; the divisions between our Communions had started here.

He then thanked all those who had taken part in this session and invited the Bishop of Durham to lead a closing prayer.