

WYCHCROFT: A SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Members of ARCIC unable to be present at the Wychcroft meeting will value some account of the course of discussion which resulted in the draft Introduction to the Final Report now offered for consideration in Italy in the coming autumn, ARCIC 217/A and B/3. Members who were present may, I hope, also find this summary useful as an aide memoire.

The Commission began by considering Fr. Edward Yarnold's paper The Church, ARCIC 205. Discussion made apparent a divergence of thought on method: should the Commission compose a full ecclesiological statement and summarize all the relevant passages in Windsor, Canterbury, and Venice (the latter had been the mandate expertly fulfilled by Fr. Yarnold); or should it rather concentrate only on the particular ecclesiological theme which has enabled agreement, namely koinonia. To see whether divergence was real the Commission divided into two Sub-Commissions charged with the task of writing draft outlines. Sub-Commission A took as its basis the Yarnold draft. Sub-Commission B limited its attention to the theme of koinonia. Both utilized a suggestion by Bishop John Moorman that the last paragraph of the Yarnold draft should in fact open the Introduction. Both were indebted to the Oxford Sub-Commission paper on ecclesiology, ARCIC 115. It was also agreed that there would need to be a factual Preface recapitulating and taking further the three Co-Chairmen's Prefaces.

Members will find the first results of the Sub-Commissions as ARCIC 217/A/1 and 217/B/1. Comparison will reveal both similarities and dissimilarities. It was decided that not all of Sub-Commission A's outline need eventually appear and that Sub-Commission B's scheme needed expansion. A was asked to begin to draft the opening paragraphs of the Introduction and B was asked to draft material to follow on the theology of koinonia. ARCIC 217/A/2-4 and 217/B/2-4 may be seen as the progressive products duly sharpened by plenary criticism.

How the Commission should put together and conclude the material provoked some considerable thought. Bishop Edward Knapp-Fisher (of Sub-Commission A) and the Revd. Julian Charley (of Sub-Commission B) were asked to meld the two, while Fr. Yarnold (of Sub-Commission A) was invited to make up a 'scissors and paste' continuation utilizing his own draft. These can be seen as ARCIC 217/A and B/1 and 217/A/5. Discussion followed on how to incorporate the latter into the logic and style of the former and a drafting group consisting of Fr. Yarnold and Bishop Knapp-Fisher (Sub-Commission A) and Fr. Jean Tillard and Revd. Julian Charley (Sub-Commission B) were asked to attempt this. Thus ARCIC 217/A & B/2. After plenary criticism and amendment the final Wychcroft draft Introduction emerged as ARCIC 217/A & B/3.

Meanwhile the Co-Chairmen had invited Mgr. William Purdy to write a draft factual Preface. This is seen as ARCIC 218/1. Points were made in plenary and Mgr. Purdy will revise the draft and circulate it from Rome for discussion at the autumn meeting.

Mention must also be made of a paper offered during the meeting by Professor Henry Chadwick, Teaching Authority, Faith and Freedom, ARCIC 219. This is relevant to contemporary Anglican (and Roman Catholic) anxieties over the recent activity of the

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and also (more importantly) to the description of the Anglican processes of authority in the draft continuation of Venice 24, ARCIC/211/ Infallibility/3 para. 5.

Finally, Fr. Jean Tillard expressed the hope that the Final Report would include some theological treatment of the next stage towards unity as a foundation for the future. He was invited to prepare a paper on the subject.

At the end of the meeting there was a debate on the location of the autumn meeting. It was decided that if the Unity Secretariat found that Pope John Paul II was likely to be at Castel Gandolfo, the meeting should take place near Rome in order that the possibility of a papal audience could be explored. If the Pope would be out of Italy, the meeting would be in Venice. (The dates in either case are 26th August - 4th September.)

Consideration was also given to the possibility of holding the last meeting of the Commission in the early New Year of 1981 in order that the Final Report would be published in time for the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in the autumn of that year. However, it proved impossible to find acceptable dates (especially to those from North America). A slightly earlier meeting than usual (August) was suggested but a final decision was left until after discussion between the Anglican Co-Chairman, Bishop John Howe, Fr. P. Duprey, Mgr. W. Purdy and myself at the offices of the ACC after the conclusion of the Wychcroft meeting.

The Commission gave assent to the setting up of an ARCIC Trust (to avoid the payment of United Kingdom income tax) on the terms of a solicitor's draft which had been scrutinized for the Commission by Bishop Knapp-Fisher. It appointed Bishop Clark, Bishop Knapp-Fisher and Fr. Yarnold as trustees.

At the meeting with Bishop John Howe, already mentioned, it was decided that the usual time for the 1981 meeting was the only one possible. The Bishop did not think it desirable to 'rush' ARCIC's Final Report to the ACC, even if this meant the Council would only officially receive it in 1983. (The dates for 1981 are therefore 25th August - 3rd September.)

The remainder of the discussion centred on the future of Anglican/Roman Catholic relations after ARCIC had produced its Final Report. Concern was expressed that there should not be a vacuum, yet a successor to ARCIC could not anticipate the 'authorities' evaluation of ARCIC's work. It was proposed and found generally acceptable that there should be an 'interim' body charged with the task of preparing for a closer relationship consequent upon a positive acceptance of the Commission's work. It was suggested that such provision might require a close involvement with national dialogues and include both theological and pastoral dimensions.

On the Anglican side it was reported that the Primates considered that ARCIC's Final Report would need to go to the Synods. On the Roman Catholic side the hope was expressed that the 1983 Synod of Bishops would have some part in a decision, as well as the Secretariat and other Roman authorities. In view of the time Anglican Synods might take and the possibility of an interim response by Rome pending more discussion, the suggestion of an interim body seemed both positive and realistic.