

PROPOSAL FOR AN ECUMENICAL STUDY OF THE ANGLICAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNIONS

It has recently been proposed by the San Francisco Institute for Socio-Religious Research that a sociological study should be made of the growing together of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Communion.

The immediate aim of this study would be to investigate factors associated with the growing together of Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The further aim is to contribute directly to this process and to provide information on the basis of which educational and other policies can be planned and decisions taken.

The method of study at present proposed would be to investigate samples of Anglicans and Roman Catholics in different countries, e.g. England, Canada, the United States, South Africa, Australia. It would be concerned with those areas which seem to be related to the process of growing together as Christians and as Churches. These are:-

1. Faith and Life - (basic Eucharistic beliefs, patterns of prayer and devotion etc.).
2. Community and Communication - (the quality of relations between individuals and groups e.g. parents and children, bishops and priests, clergy and laity, and between congregations).
3. Authority, Freedom, and Ministry - (attitudes to and expectations of those in authority, the parish fellowship, and the church's mission to the world).
4. Personal Fulfilment and Development - (the quality of moral awareness and conviction, levels of religious maturity)

It is proposed that this study be conducted under the joint directorship of Fr. Eugene Schallert S.J. and Dr. Leslie Paul, who would be responsible for its planning and development stage by stage and for obtaining the funds necessary to finance the project. They would hope that some members of the Commission would be ready to give help as consultants at the planning stage.

The Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission is asked to approve in principle this research project.

Such approval is needed in order to commend the proposal to the authorities in our Churches, and to help its directors to obtain the necessary funds. Such a commitment would also help to convince Christians of the importance of the Commission's own work, and the whole process of growing together.

A Proposal for an Ecumenical Study of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Communions:

The study should be divided into a series of phases the investigation of which should encompass approximately five years. The planning, development and pre-test of the theories, hypotheses and questionnaire items will take about one year. The order of investigation should be determined by a Study Commission working in close liaison with the International Commission. Each area of investigation is, theoretically at least, associated with growing together.

Phase I. Faith, Order and Manner of Living:

A. Faith and Order:

1. The Church and Ministries
2. The Church and Authority
3. The Church and the Eucharist

B. Manner of Living:

1. Spirituality
 - a. Devotional practices, orientations towards the liturgy, prayer.
 - b. Spiritual growth, religious openness and flexibility
 - c. Ecumenical activity
2. Secular life-style patterns
 - a. Frequency and intensity of involvement in the secular sphere
 - b. Interactive and relational patterns of behavior
 - c. Detectable "gaps" between divergent people.

Phase II. Community and Communication:

A. Vertical and Horizontal Communication:

1. Frequency and intimacy of communication with superiors; laity with clergy, clergy with bishops, bishops with archbishops and so forth.
2. Expectations vis a vis vertical communication
3. Frustrations?
4. Communication with peers, i.e. between spouses, parents & children, friends, relatives, etc.

B. The Christian Community:

1. Pastoral priorities and the place of the brotherhood in the hierarchy of service.
2. The aspirations and the reality.
3. Ecumenical factors associated with the absence of community.

Phase III. New Ministries and Freedom:

A. New Ministries and the Social Apostolate:

1. Existing ministries and socio-religious needs.
2. Religious needs emerging from the unprecedented situation
3. Ministerial followership, i.e. aping the good done in and by secular society.
4. The specifically Christian gift to the secular world?

B. Authority and Freedom:

1. The authoritarian personality, prejudice and power.
2. Estrangement vs ecumenism.
3. Freedom, responsibility and order.

Phase IV. Human Satisfaction and Human Development:

A. Career, Job and Personal Satisfaction:

1. Frustration and Ineffectiveness (the drop-out from within).
2. Tyoes of stress and the squandering of human energy.

B. Growth and Morality:

1. The level of socio-religious maturity of clergy and laity.
2. The moral dimensions of human growth.
3. Morality, moral expectations vis a vis the Church and legalism.

Phase V. Growing Together:

A. Ecumenicity:

1. The religious and secular complexity of growing together.
2. Ecumenicity as process.

B. Multiphasic, gradual implementation

1. The strengths to build on, barriers to overcome.
2. The extension of the findings to other areas.