

(A. R. C. / P. J. C.)

## ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC PERMANENT JOINT COMMISSION

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## GROWING TOGETHER

An assessment of the opportunities for collaboration between the two Churches

by

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1. "There remain fundamental theological and moral questions between us where we need immediately to seek together for reconciling answers. In this search we cannot escape the witness of our history; but we cannot resolve our differences by mere reconsideration of, and judgement upon, the past. We must press on in confident faith that new light will be given us to lead us to our goal" (Malta Report, § 17).

Non-theological factors (a vast category inexhaustible in a single paper) are here approached in this same spirit. It is assumed:

- a) that historical divisive non-theological factors are only interesting if they persist today or are likely to revive
  - b) that it is more interesting and profitable to examine uniting non-theological factors: those which make for growing together, or could if they became conscious and operative (some things may belong to both categories - e. g. liturgy)
  - c) Non-theological factors may have influenced, or be influencing, theological divergences. An obvious example is Authority, one of the other subjects for this meeting. Divergent conceptions of it are a theological factor dividing us; some, like Bicknell, would say the root factor. A joint enquiry into the influences now making for a wholly new conception of and attitude to authority might contribute to uniting us (1).
2. Our main focus should be the total Christian situation of today. Only looking outwards, at the Christian mission to the world of today, can ensure the right perspective. What difference would our union make to that? Bryan Wilson has recently written of men's

"... sustained involvement in rational organizations - firms, public service, educational institutions, government, the State - which impose rational behaviour upon them. The Churches, with their dominant function as the institutionalization of emotional gratification, necessarily stand in sharp and increasingly disadvantageous contrast" (Religion in Secular Society, p. 58).

Whatever we may think of this, it shows how we appear to a non-Christian setting out to examine us, and emphasises that the complex and difficult task of making the Christian commitment intellectually and imaginatively respectable

- a) cannot wait upon the solution of our historic differences.
- b) The task needs more than traditional apologetics, which were often disfigured by theological gamesmanship and confused by being aimed as much against each other as against the unbeliever.
- c) The task involves more than resisting attacks or building convert-appeal. It involves a sensitive critical awareness of the life around us; and life, even in the technological age, is still centred in mind, sensibility, human relations, aesthetic experience - in human personality in fact, whose soundest instinct is to react against all that is the enemy of the authentic, in church or outside.

Finally,

- d) the task is not just one for commissions. In the end it is a personal or communal one for pastors and peoples. Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Gazzada Practical Proposals rest on this conviction <sup>(2)</sup>.

You have before you an analysis of world-wide RC reactions to these which reveal negligible opposition in principle but little achievement. What we need above all is a programme for this kind of encounter or some method and/or real will for getting it in motion.

3. We may ask whether any kind of coming together as in these Proposals does not, at present, put us already in a frame of mind heavily biased towards "churchy" matters. Either we are on our guard about hereditary theological or devotional or disciplinary dislikes, or we are taking refuge in the kind of social concerns which are safely treated as common because we share them with all men of good will. These can set up a euphorious feeling of "involvement" without involving us much in difficulties with each other, but also perhaps without fully plumbing what Christian involvement means. It is the Church's business to hunger and thirst after justice, but what the secularist approves may not exhaust the causes and virtues that the gospel implies <sup>(3)</sup>.

4. It is a simple fact that man spends a high proportion of his time neither praying nor theologising nor doing good in socially acceptable senses (it is arguable of course that he should spend far more). He tries to live happily

with his wife and (much harder nowadays) with his children; with his friends and workmates; to develop satisfying human relations; to do his job, diminish his ignorance; to make his life fuller and more interesting (or to kill time and escape from inadequacy) by watching the telly, going to concerts, films, plays, picture galleries; reading, practising an art, holidaying, decorating his home, going to the pub, etc. ,

At various times in history the various church traditions have had a good deal to say about how man should do these things, or in some cases whether he should do them at all. We accept, whether by appeal to some general theory of "secularisation" or simply as a fact, that the Church has retreated from a good deal of this ground, but we are uncertain of how much of the ground we should still be standing on, and what our stance should be. (Part of the trouble has been that after losing institutional or legal initiative in many fields the Church for too long tried to maintain claim to it instead of bending her energies to developing alternative moral initiatives, through other than clerical means.)

5. Achieving more certainty here seems a common task in which the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions can do much to supplement each other. "Clericalism" or "churchiness" is a charge which (with different accents perhaps) has been levelled at both, so neither need feel either complacent or nervous in examining the charge. It is disturbing for instance to find Wilson arguing that the present tendency of ecumenism is to increase professional (as distinct from denominational) allegiance: to see enhancement of status as one of the attractions of Church unity. The charge is at least worth examining. We need to ask how far clericalism has contributed to secularism; how far it has needlessly restricted Christian (not clerical) criticism of life (in Matthew Arnold's sense) or influence on living, or how far contributed to the incoherence of today's world picture - the "shattering of the mirror". This has become an acute question for both churches recently, but has been subacute for much longer - certainly since the late seventeenth century.

6. A start might be made with this robust assertion:

"For decades, if not generations, Christian faith has lived in a state of imaginative impoverishment. How should it not? The Church has lived in almost total isolation from the arts. Academic theology has lived on its own fat. The supply of fat is running out". (Soundings, pp. 18-19)

People who think of professional ecumenical interests as "churchy" (and a recent questionnaire made use of here suggests that they are numerous especially among university men and women) might not be up to this exercise in analysis; but they say "it bores me" or "it's not relevant". We seem faced with a dilemma: if we narrow our area of concern (theological or "practical" - that unfortunate dichotomy inherited from the Common Declaration) too much, we are out of touch; if we widen it into areas where specialisation is beyond us, we invite the risus infidelium. There might seem no way out except the desperate measure of recourse to the laity. Our official pronouncements - encyclicals, council documents, resolutions of councils of churches, bishops conferences, suggest we are decidedly gingerly about the dilemma and retreat into vagueness. See footnote for examples <sup>(4)</sup>.

The introduction to "Gaudium et Spes" gives as one of a string of contemporary paradoxes

"Men have never had so acute a feeling for liberty as they have today - just when whole new types of social and psychological slavery are appearing",

and another

"the demands men make on each other are steadily multiplied, and the very process of socialisation induces further demands but without promoting a comparable maturing of personality and personal relations".

If the great <sup>impersonal</sup> and supra-personal forces of today are to contribute to rather than threaten the dignity of the human person, man must use them critically, by standards that the public media which take up so much of his attention cannot be relied on to set. The Church should be helping man to set them for himself. This is put well by an American Episcopal writer, Mrs Rodenmayer:

"The Church has always been looked to by the voiceless people to be their voice. How well have we performed? I fear if we look at too much of our activity in the past, we will find much too much of the "do-good" philosophy - go and do it for them . . . Rather than the "do-good" approach, must we not find means to enable the voiceless to find their own voices, to be deciders of their own lives, to help the Church be involved where the people are in a way which is creative and supportive?" (A. T. R., Jan. '68, p. 73)

Section II.

7. Where might RCs and Anglicans begin to collaborate in developing critical judgement, giving voice to the voiceless, clarifying the Church's function in the modern world? They should begin in Church, though not end there. It is logical and practical to begin with joint critical examination of prayer public and private. We shall discover a good deal else on the way. Though most Roman Catholics may be vaguely aware of the common source of our two liturgies, few have any real understanding of the relation between the two. The Anglo-Catholic movement has perhaps meant that many Anglicans are less in the dark, but it is certain that the meetings recommended in Practical Proposals No 3 and even No 2 might usefully begin with people taking along respectively the Book of Common Prayer and the Missal and thumbing them through together. This would be a useful, even necessary supplement to attending each other's services for enlightenment as the Ecumenical Directory envisages. Here as well as among experts this exercise should be aimed not only at the rediscovery of our common inheritance but also at a critical assessment of the adequacy of traditional forms, liturgical and other, to present needs. This assessment should take account of the appropriate literary and artistic standards, which may not be best understood by churchmen. They are certainly misunderstood grossly if they are thought of as concerned with mere optional adornment. You might as well say that sugar is an optional adornment to food. It is so only when it is coating a pill.

8. A recent joint meeting at Wood Hall suggested a vein of joint activity that offers prospect of much profit. Catholic and Anglican papers written entirely without collusion revealed shared concern about conventional spirituality. A 19th century RC tradition (which in places still needs hard digging to loosen) was shrewdly if over-strongly described: a "Spiritual Combat" in which body and soul, nature and grace, weekday and Sunday were always at war or in Cartesian separation; the Church was Noah's Ark, the world hostile and not properly the sphere of religion, and everything was forbidden until it was compulsory. (Within this decade a little book in which Monica Lawlor used psychological enquiry techniques to explore Catholic Attitudes was significantly entitled "Out of This World", and showed a

similar imbalance persisting. The groups tested revealed a preference for a detached, heaven-centred, "spiritual" way of life, and a people "trigger-happy about their religion, liable to become very hostile if it is commented upon".)

From the Anglican side at Wood Hall it was suggested (and corroborated by RCs) that the pendulum is swinging too far: an activism which equates perspiration with inspiration, makes God a code-word for human **together-ness**, is merely substituting one kind of distortion for another. A religion sacramental and incarnational reveals balance, fruitful tension. A balance between awe and intimacy - in the Lord's prayer "Father" and "heaven" need equal stress. Christian involvement springs out of contemplation and returns there to gather fresh force. We gain nothing by moving from the ghetto to the boulevard.

9. This short consultation showed that such shared contemplation whether of our special limitations or (ultimately and more profitably) of our common problems makes strongly for growing together, and doing so in wisdom, but that the obstinate problem remains of how to spread and generalise the process. It is significant that the samples in Mrs Lawlor's experiment came from people in further education - chiefly from those preparing to be teachers, priests and nuns and therefore to spread their attitudes far beyond themselves. They will find it increasingly difficult to do so among the young, but for the moment these attitudes and no doubt comparably unsatisfactory Anglican ones dominate the middle-aged and elderly who determine policy, and they derive from education, which has been a chief divisive factor between Anglicans and RCs, and in spite of accelerating change continues to be such. It is now much less so in universities, especially elder ones, and therefore those who live in them tend I think to underestimate it.

10. A little history is unavoidable here. Roman Catholicism in England survived the age of repression without either internal social cohesion or any vital links with the culture on the country. The Catholic gentry, who so long remained without prospects of a career, were a narrow Cisalpine group, unemployed and subject to atrophy, divided from their own clergy as much as from their Anglican equals. In an effectively aristocratic society

this was **disabling**. Moreover there was for Catholics no equivalent of the dissenting academies, which were effective enough even to produce Anglican bishops. The Irish and Oxford reinforcements at first only aggravated this, making a heterogeneous community ill-equipped either to profit from emancipation or to resist and disarm the anti-Roman scares of the mid-19th century. Disraeli said the Catholics he knew were "sophisticated, mundane and not erudite": a description faithfully reflected in the novels of, say, Mrs Wilfred Ward. The countless others that neither of them could know had no chance to be any of these three things.

It is an irony that Manning brought his upper-middle class talent for administration, his melodramatic ultramontanist and the arrogant tenacity of the Great Victorian to determine an attitude to higher education which RCs have not yet <sup>got</sup> out of their system. The RC Church in Britain has mistrusted the universities, seeing them as at best factories for clerical schoolmasters: an attitude compounded of some real if misguided scruple, some philistinism, and an ambiguous attitude to Establishment in which Irish coolness has gone with the occasional over-protestation natural to an insecure minority. The siege mentality has, in the sociologist's jargon, produced strong associational ties and only medium communal ties, and (until very recently) an emotional acceptance of paternalism at every level of Church authority. One must add, I think, an uncertain critical sense deriving from insecure links with the national culture, and a social responsibility hardly proportionate to Catholic ideals.

These attitudes are dissolving, but not quickly enough for our purposes.

11. From the Anglican side we have this judgement:

"Christian faith has been an ark of retreat (note the same phrase used by the Catholic writer at Wood Hall). We could shut ourselves inside it when the **pressure** on our lives and imagination seemed to lead to nameless perils. We have relied upon the several establishments, religious, political, moral, to protect us from the barbarians. Our first lesson will be to learn that our greatest ally is not the dying establishments but the hungry and destitute world which is still alive enough to feel its own hunger". (Soundings, p. 19).

This or any form of the siege mentality turns the Christian faith into the "religion" Bonhoeffer wanted to separate from it. The worst form of siege mentality exists where in one nation two traditions are embattled against each other. Elements of rejection, of hatred, of fear, crystallize religion, render it sclerotic, in danger of sterility. The Church diminishes as a creative force in society, ceases to be Incarnational, thus mocking its own origins; creates no criticism of life, offers no voice to the voiceless. Finally and inevitably it falls under siege from those it has failed to hold, and is judged to have conceded human values to the agnostic.

12. Hints towards illustrating this process may be briefly offered in three fields:

i. Literature. Chapter 5 of Sir H. Grierson's "Cross Currents", which should be required reading for every ecumenist, reminds us that

"Piers Plowman, as an appeal to bring Christian charity into every relation of life, has more of the Humanist spirit of Christianity than whole folios of Puritan sermons";

he recalls the persistence of the ideal of Chaucer's "Poor Parson", though often more among rabble poets and playwrights than theologians. He asks

"how far did the spirit of Erasmus or Montaigne or Bacon or Shakespeare succeed or fail to modify the Christian temper of these great (17c. polemical) treatises and innumerable sermons?"

He can only give one answer: it did so most in the high moment of Anglicanism. "Hooker, Andrews, Laud and Charles" he says, "were on the side of the spirit of man." In effect he adds many other names, bestriding the Reformation. One would go further and say "on the side of Incarnation". A persisting Catholic tradition, in fact. Non-Christian critics have shown (e. g. Knights) how metaphysical poetry found its audience in a varied and fruitful local life where the idea of man implicit in religious tradition and marvellously expressed in Hamlet's "What a piece of work is man!" survived and where religion was not set over against life. This was in large part a medieval inheritance. Had it been able to make its natural contribution to continental Catholicism, softening the harshness or checking the sentimentality of counter-reformation humanism, the Christian tradition would have benefited and the spirit of the Anglican



classical moment might have better survived the civil war. As one of the last and greatest of metaphysical poets said of the latter, "the cause was too good to have been fought for", and he was convinced, though formally a Puritan, that it was fought for because theologians had forgotten the reasonableness of Hooker, which was not unrelated to the reasonableness of Aquinas.

We may turn again to Wilson for an outsider's view of what happened subsequently:

"There was an imperceptible gradualism in the way in which the arts freed themselves from religious preconceptions. . . . But once the process began the arts still in the service of the Churches were steadily emaciated: they lost spontaneity and lost their earlier deep sense of values and their sense of intrinsic association. Late 19th century religious art, poetry and architecture make evident this emaciation. Outside the service of religion, the arts came - however uncertainly - to represent other values, whether drawn from human predicaments, political ideals or the theory of art for its own sake" (op. cit., pp. 66-7).

13.

ii. Science. The late 17th century withdrawal of the Church from the "points of high sensitivity" in the life of the time coincided with the scientific development which was the outstanding feature of the age <sup>(5)</sup>. The first Christian reactions to scientific advance were rather shallowly optimistic in Britain (in Locke, e. g. and Addison) but by 1736 Joseph Butler could write what might easily be echoed today:

"It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much as a subject for enquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious, and accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment".

Conversely, a passage written the other day by a Dutch professor of religion might have been written by Butler:

"Our world is neutral, a framework for research, it stimulates curiosity but not timidity and reverence: it has changed in quality. The outer world is no longer charged with another reality; it has become a chain of facts and facts are there to be investigated" (H. Fortmann in Concilium, Sept. '69, p. 11).

It is not surprising that the great scientific upthrust of the late -18th and 19th centuries was seen as inimical by most Christian thinkers - one with that Revolution which Joseph de Maistre saw as the single explanation of all the evils of the time. Out of this spirit came such papal documents as "Mirari Vos" and the "Syllabus"; the initial Anglican reception of Darwin; the fundamentalist trials in the United States. The savior of Anglicanism was the revival of learning and the spirit of scholarship with and following the Oxford movement - something from which English-speaking Catholics were too long cut off.

But in spite of anybody's efforts, John Habgood's contention <sup>(5)</sup> seems justified that there is only an uneasy truce between science and theology, reflecting a lack of communication not merely between two different kinds of specialisation but between two different kinds of world. The prestige of one compared with the other, what Habgood calls the emotional effect of scientific confidence going with the emotional rejection of religion, makes talk of conflict or no-conflict equally irrelevant to the lay mind. But insofar as the newer human sciences are confusedly regarded as using the same methods as the positive sciences and enjoying the same prestige, they are likely to prove a greater threat to the Christian conception of the human person, who belongs not on a laboratory bench or in a world of abstractions but in the world in which (if the scientist will let him) he lives. Dr Vogel has argued that

"Contemporary man has lost the nerve necessary to live in his world, the world correlative to his own being. (He is) more anxious to protect himself than to be himself" (The New Christian Epoch, p. 10).

Can theology, without allies, restore his nerve?

14.

iii. Natural Theology. Prof. Ninian Smart wrote some time ago: "Natural Theology is the Sick Man of Europe". Americans might think this a somewhat parochial assertion. In a later, more light-hearted essay (Theology, January '65, pp. 36-7) he wrote

"unless transcendence is taken seriously, there can be no truth-claim in Christianity... These points imply something about theological education. Philosophy should become an integral part of it, where this

is not already so. Even Barthianism ("philosophy is a waste of theological time") implies this, for one has to see that philosophy is a waste of time, and this is partly a philosophical insight".

It is odd that he should have written this towards the end of the Second Vatican Council, just when Catholic seminaries in many places were bracing themselves in the euphoric air of that time to depart from long tradition in the matter with varying thoroughness. Often, one suspects, the thoroughness was not very thorough. Vested interests were no doubt involved. "However", as John Hick has said, "if some of us have a vested interest in traditional philosophy of religion that is hardly a philosophical issue" (Theology, March '58, p. 105). The real issue is whether we can do it. This is not the place to examine the problem in detail, much less to trace the defects, pedagogical or other, which historically have brought conventional natural theology into disrepute. What is crucial is not the validity or obsolescence of this or that method or "proof" but the radical validity of the whole enterprise which

"must begin with the natural world, the external world in which we live and the internal world which gives our life and experience its impetus and shape" (Soundings, p. 18).

Is philosophy only "talk about talk", or what relevance has it to that King Charles Head of Vatican I, the infallible assertion that the existence of God is demonstrable by reason? (De Fid. Cath., cap. 2). The passage quoted from Wilson in § 2. above suggests we have a motive for taking a mild joint interest in the matter. It interests a surprising number of people who have no conceivable vested interest. It may of course be argued that they are serious philosophers, who must always be a tiny minority, and this is an argument that has been used to favour seminary reform as against the view of Prof. Smart quoted above. If people are still coming out of seminaries saying they have done natural theology, without having heard of the Verification Principle, the Idiosyncratic Platitude, Disclosure Models, Self-Ascriptive Language, Descriptive and Revisionary Metaphysics, it is arguable that they were better coming out saying the subject had been crowded out of the curriculum. But we ought to make up our minds whether or not this would be merely the lesser of two evils. This should re-direct our attention to Gazzada Practical Proposal No. 7.

15. While we are in this area, Prof. MacQuarrie made recently (Concilium, June '69, p. 74) a supplementary point about ecumenical theologians: that neglect of the Falsification Principle is an occupational hazard for them - in other words that they are specially exposed to making statements that are compatible with anything and therefore vacuous. He even had the temerity to tax Hans Küng with this. Without exploiting a paper on non-theological factors in order to wag a finger at theologians, the question might also be raised whether the disjunction of theological thinking from other sorts of thinking and imaginative expression has not exposed the dogmatic theologian to some weaknesses of method. Whereas, say, an interpreter of the origins of Christianity knows that his work must stand up to the scrutiny of the non-Christian historian, and so he must take care to get it right by the accepted canons, the "pure" theologian, seemingly expecting to be read less critically or to have his pre-suppositions shared by his readers, can be painfully less scrupulous. Such theologians do not often, it seems, ask each other "But how do you know that?"; but if a philosopher happens to notice and chip in the result can be as shattering as Prof. Smart's remarks on vol. I. of Tillich's "Systematic Theology":

"... to anyone with a respect for philosophy (it) must seem to be rubbish. It is a tragedy that this useless nonsense has gained currency among theologians - a part result of the split of the academic world into departments and faculties" (Theology, Jan. '65, p. 36).

and also, one would add, of the deeper rift mentioned above.

As Anglican/Roman theological dialogue develops under our "oversight and coordination", it might do so with a few good resolutions on these points. Again, we are not concerned about agreeing for the sake of agreeing - we have something to say together to a larger and less sympathetic audience.

### Section III.

16. For the rest of the paper we shall be concerned whether this rift in sympathy has been a mutual impoverishment. Can we bring people to see that as the area of religious influence has shrunk, they as well as the Church have suffered from the shrinking? Can we point to evidence of this suffering? St Thomas, in writing of the supreme sacrament, began

with "non est alia natio tam grandis, quae habet deos sibi appropinquantes sicut Deus noster adest nobis!" Fortmann (l. c.) writes: "The history of Catholic Christianity is one vast effort to keep the distant God near at hand". Has human consciousness so radically changed that the effort is finally failing? Fortmann admits that this battle might seem lost, but argues that man has always been aware of and felt a dissonance between the "neutral facts" of technology and the world of the poet and the gods. "Even primitive man already lived in two worlds, that of the gods and that of technology. He listened to the secret voice of things and yet continued to build canoes, using his refined technical skill". Things are themselves and point to something else. (They are sacramental in fact.) And he reminds us that Lovell girdled the earth in his spacecraft reading the first chapter of Genesis.

17. What is the truth of this? Is it true, as Samuel Miller wrote "that in spite of the fact that for 300 years we have been consistently stripping nature of its religious implications, reducing it to a neutral world", nevertheless (or perhaps on that account) the world "is hungering in loneliness and alienation for something better than the prosperity of the twentieth century"? <sup>TC</sup> In this last statement just one of those proper to the pulpit where we preach to the converted, who in any case cannot answer back; or is it a theory under which a significant number of facts of contemporary life can be brought? Can we explain the discontent of youth in terms of this hunger or is some less sympathetic explanation the right one? Or is there a single explanation? What does contemporary art and literature manifest of the hunger? How many of us feel competent to say? If we wish to avoid reading into contemporary art and literature what we want to find there, we must learn to read it properly. This is not so simple as it may seem. We should keep the methodical doubt in mind.

18. For the moment we can note that the evidence provided by the technological society as we see it around us, is depressing enough. The "global village" is another fashionable term, but Miller argues "although it is a global society technically, it is not global imaginatively, morally, artistically or by faith". Ought the technological fact, or tendency, to be a spur to globalizing everything else?

It might be the function of religion to reassert the importance of local values as the necessary framework for reverence for nature, human personality and human scale. We exist as located. Jet sets, social or ecumenical, have an air of unreality. Today's world, says Miller, "provides us with no resonance, no rapport with nature; it is a non-nature world, a technique world, a world in which we have a technique for everything, for cattle-raising, for raising money, for getting results in prayer, for sex, for courtship, for making friends. Everything revolves round the technique that will gain your ends. Technique is a way of getting results without involving the self" (7).

He concludes that writers like Camus and Sartre, putting the responsibility back on man to find the meaning in the world, are doing something essentially Christian".

The Church should certainly be putting this responsibility back on man; but it is useless to saddle a man with a responsibility he is unequipped to carry. How can the Church help to equip him? No longer through the traditional admonitory role of the pastor. As growing specialization restricts everybody's competence, the traditional "diffuseness" of the clerical role makes him particularly vulnerable to the consequent isolation. The scientist, for example, is much less dependent on a climate of response. This is a problem whose root cannot (as Brian Wilson has pointed out) be reached merely by such devices as re-deployment of the clergy. Yet the need to arouse the sense of this responsibility, which means creating a critical mind and opinion not afraid of intractable situations and "irrestible tides", is both wide and urgent.

19. Let us examine the terms of the problem a little more closely. It is part of a problem of "connecting" as E. M. Forster put it. We have never had so many "communications media" (the Vatican Council thought it worth while to devote a rather gingerly decree to them) nor so little satisfactory communication.

Perhaps the examination ought to begin for Christians with the reflection that, as Hoggart says, there are mass media but no masses. The

language of "masses" and "classes" is not Christian pastoral language. The problem does not merely affect "them". S. Johnson said he could appeal with confidence to the judgement of the common people. Today the common people is something much vaster than the literate elite Johnson had in mind. It includes all of us once we get outside our narrow specialization. Yet no one in his senses will appeal with confidence to its judgement. The difference between highbrow and lowbrow audiences is blurring, and the new type does not want sharp definitions in what is communicated. Mass media put a premium on the "interesting", "stimulating", which, geared to newspaper columns or twenty minute programmes, is indecisive, not worked out, not judged, though it may be slanted. A fragmentary curiosity and a sipping attitude to creative work is promoted, and the tendency is to create a nice, bland, harmless, bloodless, spiritless range of attitudes for the consumer of more and more goods. Even the highbrow Sundays and the Third programme are designed to reflect prevailing attitudes and only secondarily to offer constructive criticism of them. Hence it is evident that mass media at present perform no cohesive function.

The dominance of the "profite motive" makes popular expansion of information and ideas the monopoly of an oligarchy which neither the Church nor other conscientious educators seriously threaten. Cecil King has his answer to S. Miller's agonising assertion: "hungering in loneliness and alienation for something better than the prosperity of the twentieth century"; he justifies his sheets with a terse "that's all they want". But an educationist like J. L. Longland for example, claims that children's aspirations to good are stifled when they achieve the "freedom" of exposure to mass media.

The "profit motive" however, should not be seen as a straightforward "sinister force". The real trouble with mass media governed by finance is that they are weighted against experiment, exploration and the critical mind which should go with these. They are not a setting for showing off to advantage the pilgrim church. The recent immense widening of communications media is not the origin and not the inevitable ally of that "indulgence of sloth and hatred of vacancy" which Eliot powerfully conveys in a well-known passage of East Coker; the words are originally Coleridge's. Communications clearly could help to spread healthy disturbance of complacency, divine discontent; but on the rare occasions they do so they are liable to be switched off.

20. Wilson points out that the Church uses the media only marginally. Only a little of its communication is made this way, and this represents an even smaller proportion of the total mass communication. It does so on the whole less professionally than others. It lends some respectability to the media without deriving much in return - rather tending to reduce the Christian message to the general level and thus deface the Church's own image. Again, the interest of this lies in how we strike an enquiring outsider. Would anyone ever gather from religious television, e. g., the possibility of confident appeal to a common Christian judgement, something independent of ecclesiastical pronouncements?

21. Whoever is prepared to expose himself to both can hardly question that great works of art and literature disturb and break through the insulation against reality more surely than cosy epilogues or neatly-tailored discussions. The more the former can be taken out of the antiseptic isolation of "culture" (and the Church should be on the side of all those who are trying to do so) the more hope there is that they will do something about the squalor of glossy living in the technological paradise. To this extent they will be the allies of those who witness to the gospel of Him who came to send fire upon earth. But how activate the alliance?

To begin with, instead of concerning ourselves about whether non-theological literature, and art, have suffered from lack of a theological dimension (which is not easy to establish) we should be sure whether the absence of it is real or apparent. Our failure to perceive it may be due to a churchiness of our own. Theological interest, or at least the kind of seriousness which ought to interest the theologian, is not to be discerned only by the presence of theological jargon. He would be an obtuse man who found more of it in the Parson's Tale than in the Nun's Priest's Tale: a rash man who found more of it in Graham Greene than in Henry James. Much recent Shakespeare criticism has performed a great service by revealing in the complexities of the poet's imagery the pressures of a "theological" sensibility which for various reasons (some connected with the follies of politicians and theologians) was submerged. A fine example of a great artist finding his own way towards a fusion of sense and spirit can be seen by comparing the speeches of Othello and Iago, who embody two different forms of the tension



between sense and spirit, and those of Antony and Cleopatra which embody a resolution of it. In Marlowe's Faustus the great love speech addressed to Helen of Troy's ghost is splendidly sensuous, but balanced and properly placed by the dramatic irony of its context. An even finer example of this balancing is the "To His Coy Mistress" of the nominal puritan Marvell:

"The grave's a fine and private place  
But none, I think, do there embrace".

A search for similar examples in the art and literature of today with its very different sensibilities and concerns is likely to be more difficult but no less rewarding.

22. "It is our first task as a Church",

says Miller,

"to drive through the superficial appearances of the pragmatic necessities of life - including social re-ordering, increasing the food supply, achieving more prestige and many other things. All these things, good and important as they are, are secondary to the ultimate demand of man, that he find reality and find it unmistakably, undeniably... In knowing it, man knows himself as a man and not as a number".

He asks, can the Church provide an imaginative framework, a vision of the world, a set of images large enough to pull and hold together the inner world of man and the outer world of the technological age? If the meaning is "provide out of her own theological and ecclesiastical resources", for most people the question will answer itself. She might do it in alliance with the artist, that is with the man who is most sharply aware, most keenly (perhaps intolerably) sensitive to the human condition, most relentless in the search for reality.

23. One form of loss of nerve is the temptation to be so bowled over by technological novelty that the past no longer reverberates in our minds. It is no use proclaiming "we cannot escape the witness of our history" (M.R., 17) if we cannot somehow vitalise the past, make it show that "fecisti nos tibi..." is permanently valid, perhaps to be discerned in the capers of the drop-outs, and that God can fill the emptiness and meet the alienation now as he has before. We shall need also the nerve to ask boldly "Is it possible for men to create a society in which they cannot live

the good life?" Perhaps there is no cultural situation intolerant of the gospel, but ought not the gospel to be intolerant of a cultural situation in which even full human living is impossible? This should direct our consideration not only of racialism and poverty and war, but also of contempt for nature, air and water pollution, noise, vandalism and of all the expensively base and ugly things which are offered to the voiceless. If the artist sees our interests running here, he will soon be interested to talk to us. On the other hand, if we offer the undeveloped nations, for instance, only the stage props with which to create their own Waste Land, we shall not turn the Global Village into a Utopia; or as Bishop Butler put it more bluntly at Wood Hall, "if we offer them bread alone they will say, 'thankyou for nothing'".

24. What alliance is possible with the artist? Mere patronage, even if it avoids patronising, is not enough: it is likely to end with the payment of the cheque. The best thing we can do for him is to provide him with an audience, something which will protect him equally from neglect and from adulation. It is an environment in which he can breath and work, not just sell and wax fat. It is not just church-organised music and drama festivals, art exhibitions, bookstalls or even the expansion of our inadequate presence in the communications media (§ 20), though all these may be valuable. It is people who have a beginning of his own awareness, so that what he offers them is answering to a need, furthering a process. Whoever asked this question, it is a good one: "If we do not ask the artist to do anything in particular, what right have we to complain if his work appears obscure and aimless?" Unfortunately, intelligent criticism and sensitive response are not attained easily, least of all in an age when tradition and habit offer poor support, and snobbery breeds nervousness. By tradition, the habit of the schools ingrained in the clergy, we (RCs) incline if anything to over-intellectualism which sometimes goes with imaginative and emotional obtuseness and a readiness to think that the arts are always somebody else's business. If the aim sketched here is a valid one, it should begin in the seminaries (not as an extra item on the curriculum) and perhaps should involve joint further education programmes, university and technical college experiments and so on (see also § 29 below).

Section IV.

25. We turn finally to certain shrewd socratic questions posed by Prof. Root, and addressed perhaps more to the commission than to his opposite number; what follows often merely expands the question rather than offering an answer. But it may offer occasion for some recapitulation of what has been said and some practical suggestions.

26. "What of the 'special relationship' of our two communions within Christianity in general? There is no need to be apologetic about it. It is a brute fact. It needs analysis and clarification".

The solid core of it would surely be that stated with such clarity and force by the Bishop of Pretoria and Fr. Hill. From the point of view adopted in this paper, we would want to add

- a) a considerable spiritual common inheritance, liturgical and extra-liturgical;
- b) a common conviction that religion is "reasonable";\*)
- c) a common concern (though perhaps less manifest, for historically accidental reasons, among Anglo-Saxon RCs) to maintain human and aesthetic values - not to concede the term humanist to the unbeliever. This goes with a rich history of fruitful relationship with creative art and letters, though the long diminished Anglo-European relation with Europe consequent on our separation had limiting effects both ways.
- d) The two traditions are securely incarnational, though not unaffected by Puritan legacies.

All this is objective, and certainly no matter for apology. When we come to the apprehension of it, the picture is varied and the need for action evident. At the recent plenary meeting of the SPCU, 12 people including 8 bishops from the five continents were asked about the relationship, not one questioned the brute fact; but not all found it easy to articulate. (It might surprise some to know that the English bishop did it best and with most conviction.) When, as Anglo-Saxons will, they expressed it in terms of personal relations and cooperation, the picture was decidedly more scrappy than one might have hoped three years after the Gazzada proposals. The commission should tackle this with vigour.

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\*) This would include though not <sup>be</sup> exhausted in a belief in the usefulness of the natural-theological enterprise.

The only direct evidence made use of here is the responses to an amateurish questionnaire addressed to English university chaplains and a few others. It seems to suggest

- i. that the university environment favours general relations rather than this special one, but in spite of this the special relationship is to be marked in many universities;
- ii. that Anglicans are more interested in the special relationship than Roman Catholics;
- iii. that a great majority (nearly 4 to 1) of believing and practising members of both churches would see real content in the MR phrases "growing together" and "rediscovering a common inheritance";
- iv. that the instructed outsider would be much more likely to see this content than the lukewarm or the "anti-institutional" Anglican or RC;
- v. that, if the special relationship is rightly described above, there is considerable ignorance about it. The RC chaplain of a large university even wrote "Anglicans are always amazed at how similar the Mass is to their own service". We may be sure the amazement is generally reciprocal.

This would seem to reinforce the suggestions made in § 7 .

27. "How will our growing together matter to the post-Christian? Might it make a difference to somebody, and hence do something for Christian faith in the twentieth century?"

If per impossibile we "merged" at this moment, it might well be a nine-days'-wonder and little more. Wilson's anatomy of current "ecumenicalism" though perhaps chiefly interesting as a symptom, is notably disenchanted, but on the subject of Anglican/RC relations it is (significantly perhaps) relatively reticent. The question allows only of a speculative answer, but it is reasonable to hope that a union which both derived from and manifested a renewed understanding and a new impulse of Christian mission would make a difference. It would involve elements both of recovery and of discovery. Samuel Miller argued that we need a new kind of saint. Presumably he was not thinking of more canonizations (he would find his models in the work of Malraux and Silone); but it is pleasant to think that this gold might come of some Anglican-Roman alchemy.

28. "Who are we thinking about when we talk of growing together?

Conforming majorities? Rebellious minorities? The fringe and lukewarm?"

- i. A conforming majority is not homogeneous. Some of them conform out of inertia or a variety of more positive but no more creditable motives. But some conform out of loyalty, though they are deeply concerned about many questions, including perhaps those raised in this paper. We need to mobilise them, to listen to their questions and ask our own.
- ii. Rebellious minorities are hardly more homogeneous. It is unhelpful either to write them off or to sentimentalise them. The wheat might be sorted from the chaff, or supposed chaff be seen as wheat, if we show that divine discontent, not only with the Churches but with the world the Churches seem to them to accept, is really coming alive within the Churches. We might then recruit strong allies among them.
- iii. The fringe and lukewarm are a harder problem. But again they are not homogeneous. They may be rather muddled mixtures of inertia, loyalty and dissatisfaction.

29. "How do we evoke interest where ecumenical clichés provoke dyspepsia?

Are the received means, from theological discussions to tea-parties, any longer effective"?

We are all fully entitled to a little of this dyspepsia, but evidently those who framed the Gazzada proposals retained some faith in the received means. But around the world we do not seem to have done enough thinking or thought flexibly enough about how the proposals might be put into practice. Let us think, modestly, of a joint meeting, perhaps of clergy and laity as in proposal 3. How correct the bias of such a meeting, suggested in § 3 ? It should have a specific purpose, a specific focus of attention. It should not be remote from their ordinary lives, - they should not feel any need to put on a mental or moral best bib and tucker for the occasion, but they should feel a sense of precise purpose.

Supposing they met to view the same TV programme or read the same book, or even the same Sunday newspaper, together? There need be no sense of incongruity between this and, say, common bible study: to read the negative utopias of our time, *Brave New World*, 1984, in conscious relation to the bible might strengthen the impact of both. But mainly the sense of occasion, the rubbing against each other, the knowledge that some explicit reaction was called for afterwards, would stimulate the critical

attention which mass communications stifle by their weight. Something might emerge - appreciation of the strength of common values, of the Christian challenge to the world and the world's challenge to the Church, might be felt instead of orated about. There might be a better grasp by each of his own weaknesses and the other's strength. Hitherto we have seen too much of our own strength and the other's weaknesses - except for the inveterate nest-fouler who can see nothing but ill at home and nothing but roses abroad. We should not encourage each other's nest-foulers - it is no way of growing together.

Together in this way we might begin in modest and concrete fashion to reflect how the gospel might meet the needs of today, without the rigidity which makes no contact but also without the obliging contortions which make it unrecognisable; without abdicating the function of criticising the assumptions, the purposes, above all the quality of thought and emotion of our time. The biblical writers did this freely enough, as did the geniuses who adorn our history, who make us feel at once small and consoled. But mostly they did it not by railing, but by being true to their own rare selves.

30. If our Christian history, whatever its deviations, means anything, it means that our customs, our instincts, our art and literature, above all our language at its best, embody standards against which we can measure what is fed to us however pre-packaged it might be, and so remain free men and not slightly longer-lived battery chickens. Too, often in the past we have used this freedom too negatively - merely to reject the bad, which in any case was unsubtly if not downright wrongly classified. Our more important function is to encourage and support and find home for the good. A weighty and valuable book could be written on the de-christianizing, the isolating effect of Grundyism, in truth an abdication of human critical responsibility - from Adrian VI having aprons painted on the Sistine chapel figures down to Victorians cleaning up Chaucer and Shakespeare. How much this obtuseness has weakened our powers of witnessing against real evil and our powers of identifying God where it needs imagination, antennae rather than syllogisms and ready bible-texts, to discern him!

We can only cure the obtuseness by learning to use our eyes and ears - preferably learning together.

31. To end with, here is a passage of Miller's essay in which he brings together two modern quotations in a way that makes several points for this paper.

"In Kafka's The Castle there is a scene in which "K" stands in the street looking at the village church, pondering the strangeness of what he sees. The church has no steeple. He goes nostalgically back in memory to his childhood and to the church he attended as a boy. That church had a steeple that pointed unmistakably upward to reality. Thinking about this, he looks around him, and there on the hill is the castle. From one end of it rises a crazy, twisted steeple that looks as if a lunatic had framed it merely for the purpose of pointing in all directions at the same time. Somehow or other we need in the Church a steeple unmistakable in its direction. It may be multiple in its purposes, but it must be unmistakably directed towards the reality that is itself unmistakable.

There is another scene, this one in Lawrence's The Rainbow, where the author describes the Brangwens: 'When one of them in the field lifted his head from his work, he saw the church tower of Ilkeston in the empty sky. So that as he turned again to the horizontal land, he was aware of something standing above him and beyond in the distance'. Somehow, in the contemporary world, the spire has been lost among the skyscrapers. It needs to be found. It will not be found merely by social service, merely by changing the shape of society. It will be found only as we are able to declare that there is a shape to reality, that man has a meaning within it, and that his consciousness is transformed by it. Until then our hearts will ache, and the world will be a lonely place for all men, however crowded together they may be".

32. As this paper was being finished off, The Times reported that Lord Richie Calder launched the seventies by speaking eloquently to 1200 sixth-formers, British and continental, against the crimes of brainwashing, starvation, extravagant space-programmes, uncontrolled broadcasting reducing everything to a monochrome culture, a world wrapped in plastic and doomed to perish in non-disposable and non-returnable containers. Predictably, he found no incongruity in condemning in the same breath "adherence to outworn creeds". The phrase is hardly sprung fully-armed from the womb of the seventies, but that it can be so solemnly repeated is the measure of our failure to erect straight enough spires. It is too late to erect them for Lord Calder's generation, but what becomes of us if we abandon hope of erecting them for the young people with whom, in the same speech, he so gamely identified himself?

"Golden lads and girls all must  
like chimney-sweepers come to dust."

but let it not be that our failure to cooperate more widely and deeply will deprive them of seeing, first, "something above them, and beyond".

GROWING TOGETHER - An assessment of the opportunities for collaboration between the two Churches:

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Can we adequately study an agreement on authority without considering what the sociologist, the psychologist, the anthropologist, even the plain historian have to say about power, its exercise and effects? "The Conference, profoundly aware of the effect on human life of the responsible and irresponsible use of power at all levels of human society, considers the Church should address itself energetically to the range of problems arising in this area." (Lambeth Conference, 1968. Resolution 17.) It is perhaps a Roman Catholic weakness to suppose that numinous or hieratic authority is somehow exempt from such collateral considerations. Certainly the method and intellectual status of any science may be questioned by appropriate tests (as Toulmin and others for example have done with psychoanalytical theory) but the religious man should not question them when they are applied to his own sacred cows simply in a spirit of noli me tangere.
- (2) The Lambeth Conference made related resolutions: Resolution 44b "We believe the prior attention in ecumenical life and action should be given to the local level, and point to local ecumenical action as the most direct way of bringing together the whole Christian community in any area" - taken in conjunction with the last sentence of Resolution 44a "(taking seriously the Lund principle) involves also the exploration of responsible experiment so that ecumenical work beyond the present limit of constitutional provision is encouraged to keep in touch with the common mind of the Church and not tempted to break away." (The underlining is mine.) Perhaps the crux lies here: our problem is rather like that of the diver - how to keep in touch while going down deep enough - where the treasure is. A forthcoming further section of the Directorium Ecumenicum should have something to say on this.
- (3) "Preoccupation with the morality of nation-states has largely replaced individual morality as a dominant concern of the intellectuals in modern society. Moral suppositions which are now applied to international affairs are dismissed at the individual level of behaviour." Bryan Wilson, "Religion in Secular Society", P. 58.
- (4) Examples: The "Decree on Ecumenism" says that ecumenical co-operation should "contribute to the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit". We shall be concerned later with what meaning, if any, can be given to this, but the sentence does not suggest any deep understanding or concern - rather that it was put in because someone thought it should be there, and perhaps offered a 'modus' to that effect.

The Lambeth '68 report on "Renewal in Faith" has a no less revealing, or unrevealing, passage. "Sport is occupying more and more time in people's lives, and should be a unifying force in society in face of the divisive forces of race, class and wealth, though even sport may provoke violent and sectional partisanship. Even more important, greater interest in the arts is now possible, with advantage to the Church as well as to society. Such uses of leisure as these can open men's eyes to unexpected meanings in life." The words "even more important" have an amusing history; they were put in after the Bishop of Sodor and Man in a pleasant speech had pointed out that otherwise the paragraph might suggest a somewhat muscular-Christian scale of priorities.

see 4a  
[leaf]

- (5) cf. Butterfield, "The Origins of Modern Science", especially Chapter
- (6) cf. "Soundings", Chapter 2.
- (7) cf. Anglican Theological Review, January 1968, Pp. 78-9.



FOOTNOTES (contd.)

- (4a) The Malta Report's phrase "rediscovering our common inheritance" suggests (in isolation) to some people backward-looking rather than facing the world or the future together. But the two things should, of course, be complementary. Compare, for example, T. S. Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent".
- (8) One university chaplain wrote - "Perhaps what we have to rediscover is our common betrayal of humanism."