

The Ecclesiology of Reconciliation

## 2) STEPS TOWARDS FULL COMMUNION: GROUP C

Introduction

The group endorses the view that the last lines of paragraph 8 of the Introduction to the Final Report offer an overall framework for our work. They link the work of ARCIC-II to that of ARCIC-I and provide for building upon the ecclesiology of koinonia. They point to both a discussion of the Church as agent and instrument in salvation and justification and to a study of reconciliation of Churches and ministries, not as an end in itself but in order that the world may believe.

The dialogues of ARCIC-I and ARCIC-II take place within a context of developing relations in life between our two Churches. The stage of theological dialogue is one stage in that developing relationship, a second stage will be reached when the Churches have completed their responses. A further stage may be that of partial communion on the way to the establishment of full communion.

Towards full Communion

As part of our work on steps towards full communion we suggest one need to investigate the following:

1. In what ways the responsibility and ministry of the Bishop of Rome for the unity of the koinonia would be expressed in relation to the Anglican Communion in a relationship of sister Churches in full communion. And also whether there would be implications of that ministry for sister Churches in partial communion. This in its turn would involve:
  - (a) further attention to models of authority in the Anglican Church and an investigation of how such models might be respected within a relationship of full communion.

(b) work on the role of the laity and a theological investigation of the laity sharing in synodical authority and in the responsibility for teaching the word of God.

(c) Further explication of the papacy as a sign of unity and the upholder of legitimate theological diversity (cf. Authority-II para 21, p.90).

2. What would such a development in understanding of the theology and exercise of authority have to suggest about models of relationship e.g.:

- sister Churches in different regions
- sister Churches in the same region
- 'united and uniting Churches'

3. What implications would the ordination of women in one Church have upon the recognition and reconciliation of ministries ?

"Some Churches ordain both men and women, others ordain only men. Differences on this issue raise obstacles to the mutual recognition of ministries. But those obstacles must not be regarded as substantive hindrance for further efforts towards mutual recognition. Openness to each other holds the possibility that the Spirit may well speak to one church through the insights of another. Ecumenical consideration, therefore, should encourage, not restrain, the facing of this question".

We should need to consider the following

(I) Is it a matter of legitimate diversity to have different practises in relation to the Ordination of Women either at a stage of recognition of ministries or reconciliation of ministries, or is this a matter that admits of no diversity ? Anglican practice and experience would need to be examined carefully. if

(II) What difference does it make/i) ordination of women is to the episcopate and not only to the priesthood, at the level of the theology of ministry and to the exercise of shared episcopate ? (ii) Would differences of practice in this matter allow partial communion even if it were to preclude full communion?

4. One immediate task should be to investigate how the relationship between our two churches at the various stages on the way to reconciliation might be appropriately reflected in regard to mixed marriages. Any discussion of this should draw on the considerable work already done on this matter by national ARCs e.g. Canadian and English ARC.