

26/8/84 5:00 p.m.

GROUP 1

INTRODUCTION

1. In the Introduction to its FINAL REPORT, ARCIC I stated that  
The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace. It is also the reconciling community, because it has been called to bring to all mankind, through the preaching of the Gospel, God's gracious offer of redemption.
  
2. We affirm this statement. It also furnishes a basic orientation for further work because it touches on issues which some have suggested need additional elaboration. For example it mentions the Church as reconciled and reconciling; it speaks of persons being justified by God's grace; and it refers to redemption within the church, the community of believers, for the salvation of all humankind.
  
3. This fundamental and concise affirmation additionally points to issues thought by some to divide Anglicans and Roman Catholics. From the perspective of some Anglicans, a concern is expressed whether, in Roman Catholic teaching and practice, the total gratuity of God's saving action (grace) is sufficiently safeguarded; from the perspective of some Roman Catholics, a concern is expressed that the sacramental nature of the church, as an effective instrument in God's saving action, be adequately maintained in Anglican teaching and practice.
  
4. These concerns, although existing in the present, originate in past controversies, themselves rooted in the Reformation. At that time one side placed the emphasis on the total inability of human beings to

contribute to their salvation and the saving action of God alone in Jesus Christ, while the other side emphasized good works performed by believers and the mediating role of the church in their salvation. These controversies found their focus in the biblical concept of "justification by faith."

5. We are aware of the fact that the biblical image of justification is only one way to express the mystery of God's relationship to humankind in Christ Jesus. The mystery of God and his work transcends all human means of expression; thus we find in the Bible a number of images and metaphors witnessing to God's saving action in the world through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  
6. Among such images and metaphors the language of reconciliation, forgiveness, and expiation stresses the restoration of broken relationships (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:13-18; 4:32; Romans 3:25); that of adoption, our restoration as children of God, made and renewed in his image (e.g. Rom. 8: 15-17, 23, 29); that of regeneration or rebirth, a work of recreation and the beginning of new life (e.g. 1 Pet. 1:23). The language of new creation speaks of radical renewal (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:17); that of redemption or liberation, of rescue from bondage and freedom bought for a price (e.g. Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18f); that of justification, of a new standing in the eyes of God (e.g. Rom.5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11). The language of sanctification underlines the fact that God has made us his own and calls us to holiness of life (e.g. John 17:17; 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:11); while passages which speak of the giving of the Spirit tell us that God, in claiming us for his own, has given us a share in his own life (e.g. Rom. 5:5; 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:14).
  
7. Turning to concerns about the church's role in salvation, the point

to be made is that the church is not merely associated with Christ, but is his body; thus it is both called and enabled through the Spirit to fulfil its task of proclaiming the good news as well as making available the means of salvation. By God's grace the church has the ability to offer to the faithful what is necessary to be the pilgrim people of God.

8. We are aware that the issues raised by the relationship between salvation, the Christian, and the church have to be seen in the wider context of the history of God's gracious dealings with humankind, beginning with his first good creation and finding its fulfilment in a new heaven and a new earth. We will, however, concentrate only on those aspects of the theme which are especially relevant for the agreement in faith necessary for Anglican/Roman Catholic reconciliation.