

BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF SOME NATIONAL ARCS NOT REPRESENTED ON ARCIC-II

BELGIUM

Belgian ARC has been in existence for many years and continues to be active with two main meetings annually. In May 1985 the speaker was Professor Luc de Fleurquin on "The function of the Papacy".

BRAZIL

The Anglican Co-Secretary has been able to send some ARCIC-I papers to Bishop Sumio Takatsu, Chairman of Ecumenical Relations of the General Synod of the Diocese of South Central Brazil, to assist in their assessment of the Final Report and response before Lambeth '88.

CENTRAL AFRICA - DIOCESE OF BULAWAYO

Bishop Robert Mercer, CR, Anglican Bishop of Matabeland, visited Rome in January 1985 to explore the possibility of some kind of closer relationship between the Diocese of Matabeland and the Roman Catholic Church. The Bishop was received in audience by the Pope and had longer discussions with Cardinal Ratzinger and with Mgr. Stewart. Discussions were wide ranging, but there were no negotiations. The Bishop made his visit with the approval of the Archbishop of the Province, Archbishop Walter Makhulu of Central Africa.

This visit followed four meetings in 1984 between the Joint Committee on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations in Bulawayo.

FRENCH ARC

The French Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference commissioned three members of French ARC to work with another theologian, Fr. Bernard Sesboue, SJ, a member of the International Commission on Theology, to prepare an answer to the questions put by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity asking for a "reasoned judgement of the work submitted". (Final Report of ARCIC-I.) The document was presented to the French Episcopal Commission for Unity in November 1984, and was approved. Copies of the document were then sent to the French bishops for criticism and as no adverse comments were received it was forwarded to the Secretariat in Rome. From the acknowledgement received it was clear that the Secretariat regarded it as an important contribution to the discussion of the Final Report.

NETHERLANDS ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

The group was initiated in the spring of 1981. Topics that have been discussed are the mutual recognition of baptism, the place of the laity in the Church and aspects of intercommunion. The Anglican-Reformed Churches document has been considered for study, with a view to studying this with the ARCIC Reports and the Anglican-Lutheran document. The possibility of a joint observance of the 350th anniversary of the martyrdom of Tyndale is also being considered.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Bishop Bevan Meredith, Anglican Bishop of the New Guinea Islands, wrote to Canon Christopher Hill on 28th February 1985 that relations with the Roman Catholics in the New Guinea Islands were very good indeed. They were fortunate now in having a very co-operative Roman Catholic Archbishop from Belgium who had spent some time in the Vatican and so knew the inner workings better than most. The Bishop in New Ireland, with whom Bishop Meredith stays on his pastoral visits, has made an open invitation to Anglicans to communicate at their Masses when there is no Anglican priest available. Teachers are shared in the schools and there are Roman Catholics heads in some Anglican schools and vice versa. The people are saying that the questions that are raised in the Western world are not being asked in Papua New Guinea.

SRI LANKA

A three-week meeting took place in June 1984 between delegates nominated by the Roman Catholic Archbishop and the Anglican Bishop of Colombo. Although there had been a few earlier joint meetings, this was felt to mark the beginning of a new relationship between the two Churches.

Discussions were based on the Final Report of ARCIC-I and the meeting found itself in agreement with the convergence of belief claimed by the Commission in the Eucharist and Ministry Statements. On Authority they recognised the difference of approach of the two Churches, the need for freedom and diversity and the role of the Bishop of Rome as a focus of unity.

At the end of the meeting, recommendations for co-operation and sharing were made on a wide-ranging series of local practical church matters.

A further joint meeting took place from 21st-23rd January 1985 and again the Final Report was studied. At the conclusion of this meeting the requests and recommendations included:

(a) On the basis of the Report on the Eucharist and Ministry, the Catholic delegates would like the Hierarchy to press Rome for intercommunion with Anglicans in Sri Lanka in terms of Can.844, s 2-4 and Can. 861, s 2.

(b) The Group felt that both Hierarchies could see in the Reports on the Eucharist and Ministry a firm basis for further studies and continued search for full communion of our two Churches.

(c) The Report on Authority would call for further studies, but the Anglican delegates did not see the reservations expressed by them as an obstacle to the full communion of the two Churches.

(d) In view of their agreement, they urged the Hierarchies of both Churches to move towards a shared pastorate in areas where Roman Catholics or Anglicans formed a small minority.

(e) The Anglican delegates would like the Catholic hierarchy to make a declaration accepting the validity of their orders in terms of the Final Report, Elucidation No.6, and the particular situation prevailing in Sri Lanka. The Roman Catholic delegate fully endorsed this request.

(f) The practical suggestions made at the June 1984 meeting were also endorsed.

UGANDA

The Uganda Joint Christian Council is in process of being reformed, the Executive has had its first meeting, and appointed interim officers. It is hoped that next year the two Houses of Bishops will meet together for prayer and discussion (possibly with representation from the SPCU and Lambeth) and that Cardinal Nsubuga and Archbishop Okoth will make a joint pilgrimage to Rome and Canterbury.

WEST EUROPEAN WORKING GROUP

The Group continues with its role as an information-gatherer on Anglican-Roman Catholic relations at the local level throughout Europe, without in any way wishing to be an intermediary between ARCIC-II and National ARCs in Western Europe. The Group feels that it has a continuing role to play, but also believes that restructuring is needed, and it has been agreed to defer future meetings till this has taken place.

SOUTH TANZANIA (Roman Catholic Dioceses of Mtwara and Nachingwea and Anglican Diocese of Masasi)

In a recent letter to Christopher Hill, Richard Norgate, now Bishop of Masasi, wrote that his own ordination had been a great ecumenical occasion. Present were the Abbot of Ndouda, OSB the new Bishop of Nachingwea, the Superior of the Salvatorian Fathers and the Vicar General of the Diocese of Mtwara, together with many priests and sisters and brothers. In Unity Week last January he had been visited by both Bishops and the Abbot, and also by the Pro-Nuncio on his first visit to the South.

The local ARC had not met for four years after meeting thirty eight times over previous years. During this time a great deal had been accomplished, but Bishop Norgate's predecessor had felt that Anglicans had been left to do too much of the promoting. Now, as a result of his meeting with the Pro-Nuncio and the Bishop of Mtwara, a meeting should be arranged for the clergy. (There is no National Commission in Tanzania.)

In conclusion the Bishop extended a warm invitation to any Anglican or Roman Catholic member of ARCIC-II who could visit them.

ADDITION TO PAPER ALREADY CIRCULATEDANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCUSSIONS IN AUSTRALIA

THIS INFORMATION is compiled from Anglican sources. One would need to comment that there is, at the present moment, no national dialogue, but emphasis is given to meetings at a State or local level. Distances and expense tend to make national meetings more infrequent than they might be in other places.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Annual Meeting of Anglican/Roman Catholic Bishops. ARCIC forms part of the agenda.

VICTORIA

Regular meetings of Anglican/Roman Catholic Bishops. Much informal interaction.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Meetings held between Heads of Churches once a quarter. Joint theological teaching takes place in the Adelaide College of Divinity. There is a regular meeting of Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the Adelaide Theological Circle (ATC). There is a "Fellowship of St. Gregory and St. Augustine". The Ecumenical Affairs Committees of the two Metropolitan Dioceses have met to discuss ARCIC.

WEST AUSTRALIA

Regular meetings of Ecumenical Affairs Committees of both Dioceses.

TASMANIA

Close connections in a small State. In Tasmania, the Roman Catholic Church is a full member of the Council of Churches.

JOINT STUDY PROGRAMMES

The ARCIC Study Booklet, "Travelling Together", is in the process of study in most parts of Australia, although some places, e.g., Tasmania, have not yet taken it up. This is providing fresh dialogue at a local level. It would not be easy to say how many joint study groups are engaged in this work.

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July, 1985