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1. The heart of the Gospel is salvation through the grace of God: the loving mercy of the Father who desires the salvation of the world he has created; the all-sufficient self-giving of the incarnate Son, whose death and resurrection has accomplished, once and for all, God's saving purpose for the whole of creation; and the unfailing presence of the Spirit of God, who by the gift of faith incorporates us into Christ, as a community of his brothers and sisters. This communion with God and each other, given to men and women in and through the Church, is a sign of God's will for the healing and recreation of the whole human race.

2. The doctrine of salvation became a cause of sharp contention in the sixteenth century. But already in the previous two centuries disagreements had surfaced concerning the parts played by the individual and the community if 'justification' (acceptance before God) is the gift of God's grace. Most theologians emphasized the grace of God transforming the individual to make him or her righteous, forgiving acts of unrighteousness, setting free for good works. There was in practice much stress on the Christian life as one of continual penitence, requiring of the baptized believer constant acts of discipline and mortification, giving alms for a wide variety of causes and going on pilgrimage to pray at special shrines. Some felt such acts manifested the sincerity of repentance, for God would not be unrighteous to forget such labours of love.

3. Luther, as a result of his reading of the Epistle to the Romans,

proposed a revolution. In his perception medieval penitential piety so stressed the burden of what the believer must do as to obscure the believer's confidence and joy in the divine forgiveness and grace. Luther vehemently proclaimed that the very possibility of the life of faith and righteousness springs from an initial realisation that, before a holy God, the soul is worth nothing.

4. The English Reformation in its religious aspect was initially more concerned with the authority of Scripture and its accessibility in the vernacular, and the question of how one may be justified played a less crucial role in it than on the Continent of Europe. But the importance of justification was well recognized in the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563, finally approved in 1571), where the Church of England adopted some of the consciously moderate and conciliatory language of the Lutheran Confessions of Augsburg and Wurttemberg. The Council of Trent's decree on Justification (1547) was not directed against the Anglican formularies, for they had not yet been compiled; and although the generally reformed sympathy of the Articles dealing with justification is evident, they contained nothing quite outside a Catholic tradition deriving from St. Augustine. Only at one point, where Article 13 declared that good works done before justification and without grace 'have the nature of sin', was there a partial contradiction of Trent's seventh anathema which condemned the opinion that all works done before justification, however virtuous their motive, are merely sins. Subsequent Anglican discussions of justification showed considerable awareness of a wide-ranging area of agreement with Trent's doctrine of grace. They regretted that Trent, as they understood it, had elevated certain medieval opinions into articles of faith, and they did not grasp the degree to which Trent could be taken to accommodate their

concerns. The controversy bequeathed a lasting Protestant impression that Roman Catholics trust for salvation in righteous works done independently of Christ's atoning merit and grace. The popular Catholic impression was that Protestants put their trust in an inward experience of guilt and liberation, ignoring not only the God-given word and sacraments witnessed and mediated through the Church but also the necessity of holiness and works inspired by the mercy and merits of the Redeemer. The residual effect of these impressions has been to leave a most intricate complex of problems in need of clarification.

5. Even in the sixteenth century there was much more that was a matter of agreement on this subject than of disagreement. Above all it was agreed that the act of God in bringing salvation to the human race and summoning individuals into a community to serve him is due solely to the mercy and grace of God himself, mediated and manifested through Jesus Christ in his ministry, atoning death and rising again. This is at the heart of the Gospel. It was also no matter of dispute that God's grace evokes an authentic human response of faith which takes effect not only in the life of the individual but also in the corporate life of the Church. The difficulties arose in explaining how divine grace related to human response, and these difficulties were compounded by a framework of discussion that concentrated too narrowly upon the individual.

6. One difficulty concerned the understanding of the faith through which we are justified. Some Reformation theologians took the individual's confidence in his or her own final salvation as constitutive of this faith in Christ and his merit. Catholics suspected that this Protestant emphasis on assurance,

when linked with an absolute doctrine of divine predestination, encouraged a neglect of the need for justification to issue in holiness. They also thought that this confused faith with a subjective state and would have the effect of undermining hope in God rather than supporting it. Protestants for their part suspected that Catholics, through lack of confidence in Christ work and over-reliance on human efforts, had lapsed either into mere externalism or into scrupulosity and lost Christian hope and assurance.

7. A second difficulty concerned the strict use of the word that is variously translated as 'righteousness', 'justice' or 'justification'.<sup>(1)</sup> In their fear that justification might seem to depend upon entitlement arising from good works, Reformation theologians laid great emphasis on the imputation to human beings of the righteousness of Christ. By this they meant that God declared the unrighteous to be accepted before him on account of the obedience of Christ and the merits of his passion. Catholics on the other hand took them to be saying that imputed righteousness was a legal fiction, that is, a merely nominal righteousness that remained only extrinsic to the believer. This, they complained, left the essential sinfulness of the individual unchanged, and excluded the habitual and actual righteousness forged in the inner being of the regenerate person by the indwelling Spirit.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. The three terms represent various aspects of the Greek noun dikaiosune and its cognates. The root verb, dikaion in Scripture predominantly means 'to pronounce righteous'. In patristic and subsequent usage, the Latin equivalent 'justificare' had the wider meaning 'to make righteous'. While Reformation theologians tended to use the term 'justification' in the narrow sense, Catholic theologians, and notably the Council of Trent, retained the broader usage - which does not mean that the content of what they said is unscriptural.
  2. In the debate whether righteousness is imputed or imparted, the Anglican theologians of the Reformation age understood 'by faith alone'

8. A third difficulty concerned the bearing of good works on salvation. Reformation theologians understood the Catholic emphasis on the value of good works and religious practices and ceremonies to imply that justification in some degree depended upon them in a way that compromised the sovereignty of God's grace. Catholics, on the other hand, saw the Reformation's understanding of justification as implying that human actions are worthless in the sight of God. This, in their judgement, led to the negation of human freedom and responsibility, and to the denial that works, even when supernaturally inspired, deserved any reward.

9. Although the sixteenth century disagreements centred mainly on the relationship of faith, righteousness and good works to the salvation of the individual, the doctrine of the Church was also at issue. Protestants believed that Catholics did not acknowledge the true authority of Scripture over the Church. They also felt that Catholic teaching and practice had interpreted the mediatorial role of the Church in such a way as to derogate from the place of Christ as 'sole mediator between God and man' (1 Tim. 2:5). Catholics believed that Protestants were abandoning or at least devaluing the Church's ministry and sacraments, the divinely appointed means of grace; also that they were rejecting its divinely given authority as guardian and interpreter of the revealed word of God.

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2 (cont'd)

to mean 'only for the merit of Christ': that is, our 'good works' are insufficient but not irrelevant to Salvation (so Cranmer's Homily on Salvation). To the Anglicans, imputed and imparted righteousness are distinct to the mind, indissoluble in worship and life. They believed that if we are made truly good, that is because we have been, and continue to be forgiven.

10. It must be borne in mind that the break in communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics encouraged each side to produce caricatures of the other's beliefs. There were also extremists on both sides whose words and actions seemed to confirm the anxieties of their opponents. But today we believe the four areas of difficulty outlined above need no longer be matters of dispute between us. We shall deal with each in turn and attempt to show this.

SALVATION AND FAITH

11. When we confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, we proclaim that God's purpose for creation and salvation is realised in the one whom the Father sent, who redeemed us by his blood and who gives us the Holy Spirit. This wholly unmerited love of God for his creatures is expressed in the language of grace. Grace does not speak only of the once-for-all death and resurrection of Christ, but also of God's continuing work on our behalf, when he gives us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and calls us to respond to his love, forgiving our sins and conforming us to the image of his Son. This ability to respond to God's initiative is itself a gift of grace, and is at the same time a truly human, personal response. It is through grace that God's new creation is realised. Salvation is the gift of grace; it is by faith that it is appropriated. The content of this saving faith may be summed up in the conviction of the whole Christian tradition: solus Christus, Christ alone.

12. The gracious action of God in Christ is revealed to us in the gospel. The gospel's proclamation of the finality of Christ's atoning work, <sup>of</sup> the certainty of God's promise of eternal life, and of the gift and pledge of the Holy Spirit to every believer, brings to Christians faith in the mercy of God and assurance of salvation. God's gracious will for us includes the joyful confidence that, as those who are called by God through the gospel and granted participation in the means of grace, we have the gift of eternal life as children of God (Romans 8: 15,16; 1 John 5:13). Our response to this gift must come from our whole being. Faith includes an assent to the truth of the Gospel. It also involves

commitment of our will to God in repentance and obedience to his call; otherwise faith remains dead (James 2:17). Living faith is inseparable from love and issues in good works. Christian assurance does not in any way remove the responsibility of Christians to work out their salvation in fear and trembling. Because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts, this is not a presumptuous confidence. It is always founded upon God's unfailing faithfulness and not upon the measure of our response.

13. God gives the faithful all that is needed for their salvation. This is to believers a matter of absolute certitude. The word of Christ and his sacraments give us this assurance. However grave our sins may be, we are sure that God is always ready to forgive and has already provided the way. Yet although the Christian tradition is dominated by the certainty of the infinite mercy of God, who gave his Son for us, there is also in the Gospel itself a warning note: "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Christians may never presume on the gift of final perseverance, yet should live their lives with a sure confidence in God. Because of what God has revealed of his ultimate purpose in Christ Jesus, faith and hope are inseparable.

#### SALVATION AND JUSTIFICATION

14. Faith in Jesus Christ is intimately linked with the sacrament of baptism. (Or: The gift of faith is sealed in the sacrament of baptism.) It is here that, confessing Christ together with the whole Church, we enter into communion with him in his death and resurrection. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are delivered from the sinfulness of our previous existence and raised to new life. This salvation includes our sharing in the efficacy of Christ's once-for-all atoning death and

resurrection, our sharing now in the new life of the Spirit and our future sharing in the transforming vision of God the Father. Thus Scripture speaks of God's eternal will realised in Christ's sacrifice on the cross, of God's decisive act in reconciling each sinner who believes, and of our initial response to the Gospel. It also speaks of the abiding presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, of his present gifts of grace, of our continuing life and growth in this grace as we are transformed into the likeness of Christ. Furthermore it speaks of our entry with all the saints into our final inheritance, of our vision of God face to face, of our participation in the joy of the final resurrection.

15. In order to describe this transcendent richness of salvation, the

New Testament employs a wide variety of language. Though some terms employed are of more fundamental importance than others, there is no single all-embracing term or concept; they complement one another. The concept of salvation, probably the most comprehensive, has the all-embracing meaning of the deliverance of human beings from all evil and their establishment in that fullness of life which is God's will for them (e.g. Luke 1:77; John 3:17). The idea of reconciliation and forgiveness stresses the restoration of broken relationships (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:18f; Eph. 2: 13-18; 4:32). The language of expiation or propitiation is drawn from the context of sacrifice and denotes the putting away of sin (e.g. Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). To speak of redemption or liberation is to speak of rescue from bondage so as to become God's own possession, and of freedom bought for a price (e.g. Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18f; Mk. 10:45). The notion of adoption speaks of our restoration

as children of God (e.g. Rom. 8:15-17, 23, 29). Terms like regeneration, rebirth and new creation speak of a work of re-creation and the beginning of new life (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:17; Jn 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:23). The theme 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; 1 Pet. 1:16). The concept of justification relates to the removal of condemnation and to a new standing in the eyes of God (e.g. Rom. 3:24; 4:5; 5:1f). Salvation in all these aspects comes to individual people through their incorporation into the believing community.

16. At the time of the Reformation it became clear that, while there was agreement concerning the meaning and significance of most of the language of salvation, the relation between justification and sanctification was not understood in the same way by Catholics and Protestants. Catholics were felt by Protestants to be emphasising sanctification in such a way that the absolute gratuitousness of salvation was threatened. On the other side, Protestants were accused by Catholics of so stressing the justifying action of God that sanctification and human responsibility were gravely depreciated. However Anglican theologians and Roman Catholic interpreters of Trent alike insisted that sanctification and justification are acts of God which are neither wholly distinct from, nor unrelated to one another.

17. Sanctification and justification are two aspects of the same fundamental reality. This does not mean that when God pronounces the removal of our condemnation and gives us a new standing before him, this is a reward for

faith or works; rather it is indissolubly linked with his transforming re-creation of us in grace. God's grace effects what he declares; his creative word imparts what it imputes. He imparts a righteousness which is his and becomes ours.

18. We are not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1).

Because God himself is righteous, his gift to us of communion with himself makes us righteous also. This communion is the goal of salvation.

God's declaration that we are accepted because of Christ has at its heart his gift of continual renewal by the indwelling Spirit. Both declaration and gift are the pledge and first instalment of the final consummation and the ground of the believer's hope. In the life of the Church, the finality of God's declaration and this continuing movement towards the ultimate goal are reflected in the relation between baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism is the unrepeatable sacrament of justification and incorporation into Christ (cf. Augustine, Sermon 152.3; 1 Cor.6:11; 12:12f; Gal. 3:27). The Eucharist is the repeated sacrament by which the life of Christ's body is constituted and renewed, when the death of Christ is proclaimed until he comes again.

19. Sanctification is the actualizing in the believer of this righteousness and holiness without which no one may see the Lord. It involves the restoring and perfecting in humanity of the likeness of God marred by sin. Thus we are being conformed to Christ, the perfect image of God, until he appears and we shall be like him. The law of Christ has now become the pattern of our life, so that we are enabled to produce works which are

the fruit of the Holy Spirit. God's final judgement is invariably presented to us in Scripture as resting on those works, inspired by love, which spring from our justification through faith (2 Cor. 5:10; Mt. 25:31-46). So the righteousness of God our Saviour is not only declared in a judgement made by God in favour of sinners, but is also bestowed as a gift to make them righteous. Just as God's word is fulfilled even as it is uttered, effecting what it declares, so the declaration of the righteousness of the believer is spoken of as already accomplished. "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

Nevertheless we continue to be subject to time with the daily temptations of earthly life.

20. It is impossible for us to perceive how Christians may be righteous without due regard to what the New Testament understands by justification. The term 'justification' speaks of a divine declaration of acquittal, of the love of God manifested to an alienated and lost humanity prior to any movement on our part (Romans 5:8). God declares that we are forgiven, accepted and reconciled to him through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, the supreme sign of divine love and mercy, and through his resurrection (Rom. 4:25). Christ's perfect righteousness is reckoned to our account instead of our own striving to make ourselves acceptable to God. This declaration is expressed in the New Testament by using the language of law, as a verdict of acquittal of the sinner. At the same time, the divine court is the court of the judge who is also Father and Saviour of those whom he judges. While in a human law court an acquittal is an external, even impersonal act, God's declaration of forgiveness and reconciliation does not leave the repentant believer unchanged. This is why the remission of sins brings a present renewal, the rebirth to newness of life. Accordingly justification, when considered under its juridical aspect, which expresses an important facet of the truth, is not the exclusive notion within which all other biblical ideas and images must be contained. For the New Testament stresses that our whole salvation stems from the grace of God. God gave his beloved Son to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. It was through his self-oblation and sacrifice on the cross that God was able both to be just and the justifier of those who put their faith in his Son and so are able through the Holy Spirit to say, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 3:26, 8:15; Gal.4.6).

21. The final judgement will be the full manifestation of the victory of grace over all that is evil. The glory of the elect will be the fruit of their acceptance of God's will through faith. In the meantime we are called to fulfil the law of love, and so express our faith in works of righteousness:-

"Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder" (James 2:18, 19).

#### SALVATION AND GOOD WORKS

22. The arena of salvation is human freedom. God has created us as responsible beings. Our actions and choices not only express our character but also contribute to the making of it. The effect of our sinfulness is to limit our capacity to make the right choices, especially in the primary issues of life. A response of faith to the proclamation of Christ is impossible without the grace of God. Nevertheless human beings remain responsible in God's eyes for the fundamental choices that they make. Once we accept God's offer we are given in Christ the freedom of the children of God. It is a freedom from the bondage of fear, sin and death and from slavery to self (2 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 8:2-4). We are given the possibility of becoming what God intends us to be. While it is God who effects this change within us to make us righteous, we are enabled by the Spirit of Christ to work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12,13). So it is that God wishes to see us producing good works, and what he sees is his own work within us.

23. In speaking of the 'good works' of the righteous, we must not restrict the meaning to particular deeds. Our main

consideration should be the authenticity of the whole life in its relation to God. Because the Christian life is a continuous communion with the God of grace, our relationship is one of love rather than duty. God's loving response is the ground of what is called Christian 'merit'. The works of the righteous performed in this God-given freedom receive God's commendation and his reward (Mt. 25:14-40; Mt. 6:4; Heb. 11:6). Yet the reward promised to the righteous is itself a gift which depends wholly on God's grace. It is in this perspective that the language of 'merit' must be understood, so that we can say with St. Augustine: 'When God crowns our merits it is his own gifts that he crowns' (Ep. 194.5).

24. Certain beliefs and practices in the Roman Catholic Church have been understood as implying a false view of merit (namely that the part of Christ is incomplete and needs human supplementation), as well as a false view of the mediatorial office of the Church.<sup>(1)</sup> We are agreed, however, that belief in the possibility of a purification for the elect before they see God and in the power of the Church to mitigate penitential discipline does not in any way invalidate or qualify our agreement concerning salvation.

#### THE CHURCH AND SALVATION

25. The doctrine of the Church is intimately associated with the doctrine of Salvation. In the first place the good news of God's justification in Christ Jesus is proclaimed by the Church. Secondly, those who respond to the Gospel come to the way of

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(1) Cf. Art. XXII of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Of Purgatory.

salvation through incorporation by baptism into the Church. In turn, every Christian is called to witness to the Gospel as a member of the Church, "the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace".

26. The community itself is also a sign of the Gospel for its vocation is to reveal and embody the redemptive power contained within the Gospel. What Christ achieved through his cross and resurrection is communicated by the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church (Rom. 8:1-4). In this way the Church signifies God's gracious purpose for his creation and his power to realize this purpose for sinful humanity. The Church is thus a sign and foretaste of God's Kingdom. Yet it is called to follow the way of Jesus, at the same time the divine image and the suffering servant, who had to be made perfect by suffering and so entered into glory. When, for Christ's sake, the Church encounters opposition and persecution, it is truly a sign that in his compassion God chose the way of the Cross to save the world.

27. This once-for-all atoning work of Christ and its continuing actualization in the life of the Church together constitute the free gift of God which is proclaimed in the Gospel. In, serving this double reality the Church is entrusted with a responsibility of stewardship. Included in this stewardship is the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel as well as the ordering of its sacramental and pastoral life. Faithfulness to this stewardship requires the Church to proclaim the Gospel to the world in such a way that it may indeed be heard as good news in differing ages and cultures, while at the same time seeking neither to alter its content nor minimize its demands. For the Church

is servant and not master of what it has received. Indeed, the Church's power to affect the hearer comes not from itself but from the Holy Spirit, who enables it to be truly the steward of God's design.

28. The Church is also an instrument for the realization of his eternal design, the salvation of humankind. For it is within the Church that the Holy Spirit gives and nurtures the new life of the Kingdom so that the Gospel becomes a manifest reality. As this instrument, the Church is called to be a living expression of the Gospel, evangelized and evangelizing, reconciled and reconciling, gathered together and gathering others. In its ministry to the world the Church seeks to share with all people the grace by which its own life is created and sustained.

29. The Church is therefore called to be, and by the power of the Spirit, actually is a sign, steward and instrument of God's design. It can thus be called the 'Sacrament' of God's saving work. But this by no means implies that the Church as a human institution is without failure in the fulfilment of its vocation. In its struggles with sin the Church is threatened by weakness and the credibility of what it proclaims is undermined. It is in constant need of repentance and renewal. Nevertheless, the Gospel contains the promise that despite all failures the Church will be used by God in the achievement of his purpose: to draw the whole of humanity into communion with himself and with one another, so as to share his life, the life of the Holy Trinity.

30. The Church is therefore called to be, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, actually is, God's sign, steward and instrument in the fulfilment of his saving design. This means that the community of believers, although always in need of renewal and purification, because of their sinfulness, is already here and now a foretaste of God's Kingdom: a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. Thus Paul speaks of a fellowship where the seemingly insuperable divisions of the world are and must be transcended; where all, because equally accepted by the Lord, must be equally accepted by one another (cf. Rom. 15:7); where "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28). It is in the constantly renewed hearing of the word and celebration of the eucharist that the Church is called and empowered to be what she is. For those who are justified by grace, and who share in the life of Christ through participation in the sacraments of baptism and of the body and blood of Christ, there can be no place for injustice or racism, or for domination or exploitation by the one or the other (cf. BEM, Eucharist, 11.D). Those who are forgiven by God forgive and accept one another (Eph. 4:32). The Church must embody the good news that forgiveness is a gift to be received from God and shared with each other. This is at the heart of the Lord's own teaching (Matt. 6:14f). Only a reconciled community, in which human divisions are overcome, where all are equally accepted, will speak with integrity to a world beset by alienation and division and be a credible witness to the work of God's saving action in Christ.

31. The Church is called to participate in mission to the world in the proclamation of the gospel of salvation in its words and deeds. This means addressing both individuals and the

structures of society. In witnessing to the gift of reconciliation it will encourage society's attempts to achieve reconciliation and just settlements, while never failing to judge those attempts for their inadequacy in the light of God's final reconciliation. The Church's mission will involve the direct proclamation of the message of Christ; prayer for the world; speaking specifically to issues that confront society; and engagement in programmes of social service. The gospel entails an affirmation of the positive value and dignity not only of the individual human being, but also of communities and of the human race as a whole. The source of the Church's hope for the world lies in the fact that God has never let go of the world, has never ceased to work within it, and never given up his saving purpose for the whole created order.

32. We began our study by examining the differences of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and can now say they do not divide us. We have tried to reclaim in our discussions the indispensable insights into God's work of salvation which those debates enshrined. We believe that our two Churches are agreed on all essential aspects of the Christian doctrine of salvation. This is not an area where any continuing differences of theological interpretation either within or between our Churches can contribute a continuing reason for break of communion. We offer our agreement to our two Churches both as a contribution to the process of reconciliation between us and also in service of the Gospel of reconciliation entrusted to us.

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