

BOARD FOR MISSION AND UNITYDEVELOPMENTS IN ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC RELATIONS

Any report on Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations in England must be viewed in the light of the Papal visit after which the Archbishop of Canterbury declared that the way back had been blocked.

1. Structural Relationships

- a) English ARC (under the current Chairmanship of Bishops Trillo and Henderson) evolved from the gradual disappearance of local Committees for Roman Catholic Relations. It has acted as an agency for monitoring ecumenical developments and as a forum for discussing theological matters of mutual concern but recently has also seen a role in taking up practical matters which affect Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations.
- b) It is anticipated that there will be a joint meeting of members of French ARC and English ARC in Canterbury in May.
- c) Relations through the B.C.C. Developments since 1972 report on Roman Catholic membership of B.C.C. B.C.C. observers on E.C.E.W.

2. Relations Between Hierarchies

Recent years have seen a closer and more conspicuous co-operation between the hierarchies at both local and national levels.

At the national level this has been witnessed in the now invariable participation of Roman Catholic dignitaries in State Services which were previously exclusively Anglican and it is recognized in many joint statements on matters of mutual concern (e.g. joint statements and action on social issues by the Archbishop Warlock and Bishop Sheppard of Liverpool).

At local levels it is illustrated by the regular meetings on matters of mutual concern between the Anglican Bishops in London and the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Westminster Area.

3. Local Ecumenical Relations

Roman Catholics are actively participating in 50 out of a total of 318 Local Ecumenical Projects. Current revision of booklet 'Local Covenants' now to be published jointly by E.C.E.W. and B.C.C. Based on the belief that inspite of failure of national covenants covenanting has a major part to play in the expression of the unity that already is enjoyed. Less formal relations expressed in joint study groups, a feature of many parishes - especially in Lent and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

4. Education

- a) Closer co-operation between Anglican and Roman Catholic seminaries has been thwarted by the problems of geographical separation. Opportunities have been taken to exchange students where this has been practical (e.g. between Chichester Theological College and Womersley Seminary) and for some years two Anglican theological

students have had the opportunity to study for two terms at the Venerable English College in Rome. Next academical year two seminarians from the Venerable English College will reciprocate this facility for studying for two terms within the Theological College Federation at Cambridge.

- b) The Anglican body responsible for the selection and training of men and women for the ministry - A.C.C.M., was recently approached by the Roman Catholic Commission for Priestly Formation with a view to investigating further opportunities for joint training and it is hoped that the CPF's successor body, the Department for Christian Doctrine and Formation will continue this endeavour.
- c) A beginning has been made in the establishment of Joint Schools of which at the moment there are five. English ARC is monitoring the developments.

5. Spirituality

The rediscovery of a common Spiritual heritage has led to many joint acts of devotion, for instance joint diocesan pilgrimages to Lourdes by the Dioceses of Chichester and Arundel and Brighton and between Llandaff and Cardiff.

6. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (The Lima Text) and ARCIC

New opportunities provided by the appearance of ecumenical texts. Consensus process. York General Synod of the Church of England, July 1983. Archbishop's speech and debate. Regional and diocesan meetings are frequently held jointly. Publication of joint study guide of ARCIC produced by English ARC recommending joint study. So far all the reports received by the Church of England come from joint groups. Roman Catholic guidelines on BEM and BCC Study Guide both recommend joint study.

7. Inter-personal Relationships

Mixed marriages, association of inter-church families; new growth in student movements raising ecumenical questions more sharply, SCM etc...; peace movements; Christian feminists; Ecumenical Order of Teachers; National Pastoral Congress 1980.

Many signs of growing together but impossible to generalise about the situation in England. Relations vary from diocese to diocese, and across the 'spectrum' of Anglicanism as was seen in the speeches at the York Synod. The sharp divisions of the past remain for many often at an irrational level and are confirmed by non-theological factors as much as theological divisions. The "reconciliation of memories" still remains a vital part of growth into unity. How in all this are we to keep unity and mission together? What can we learn from the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism and what role will the new Standing Committee on Evangelism have to play?

Mary Tanner  
August, 1983.