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The Scandal of Division.

Alongside the Christian conviction that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" is the fact of division amongst Christians. It is evident from the letters of John that the New Testament Churches already experienced division and exclusion (3 John 9). For the Johannine author communion with God is undermined when communion among Christians is broken (cf. 1 John 4:19). St: Paul was scandalised by those Corinthian Christians who "despised" the Church of God because they failed to "recognise" the body of the Lord in the celebration of the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11 17 - 33) and condemned the factions whose rivalry was a denial of their baptism; "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1-13a, cf. 1 Cor; 1 10-17).

At the time of our separation in the 16th century not all elements of communion were lost (cf. UR 19) but the common tradition was appropriated and developed in divergent ways by Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Rival theological interpretations of the faith and its conscientious demands led to passionate hostility and mutual persecution. In the course of history these passions lose their force and conflict and competition give way to co-existence, but a true understanding of the faith requires more than acquiescence in our separation. An equally passionate commitment to the restoration of full communion between us is demanded by our common profession of belief in the one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Christ himself in his high priestly prayer intimately associated the unity of the apostolic church with mission to the world (John 17:21). The message of reconciliation is an essential part of that mission, a message gravely compromised by the unreconciled divisions among Christians themselves. Our search for fuller communion is an essential element in our response to the call "be reconciled with God" (2 Cor. 5:10). // It is maintained by some that orthodoxy can be best defended by maintaining a separate identity. In fact being in communion with other Christians is a vital dimension of orthodoxy. Christian division has normally been justified on the pretext of loyalty to the truth, but when particular perceptions of truth become the characteristic badge of separated Christian traditions there is an obvious danger of doctrinal distortion and imbalance. The fullness of Christian orthodoxy is nurtured by Catholic communion.

True catholicity embraces all the gifts of particular traditions in building up the body of Christ, recognising them as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. *Because no one tradition should consider itself self-sufficient in isolation* Communion entails the mutual sharing of all these gifts. The state of partial communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics means that both fall short of the fullness of catholicity. Each church has established its separate identity by a characteristic story and experience. The interior conversion necessary for the restoration of communion must include a generosity of mind and heart which is willing to listen to (and ultimately appropriate) that history. This healing of memories is the prerequisite for complete reconciliation.

There remain differences of ethos between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, which must be expected in view of the centuries of separation since 1570. The separation of the two communions has not only produced mutual incomprehension and uncharitable caricatures of each other's belief and practice. It has also led in some degree to loss of the proportion of faith in its wholeness, to one-sided emphasis and partial visions. This has become clear as Roman Catholic and non Roman Catholic biblical scholars have worked closely together on Scripture with shared methods and without a polemical interest in arguing that proof texts supported one position against rivals; and the impetus of the ecumenical movement has made theologians put the question What is the bedrock of faith underlying competing statements and definitions. The convergence uncovered by ARCIC-I depended on the Commission's method of trying 'to get behind the opposed and entrenched position of past controversies' (Authority I 25, FR p.66).

If our new relationship is to be developed this will require further consideration of a number of issues, differing in kind and importance, which are, or are thought to be, divisive for Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Procedures must be discovered for addressing these issues.

One first such issue relates to the nature and exercise of authority in the Church. Anglicans and Roman Catholics are not in the least in disagreement about the fact that there is authority in the Church in matters of faith, morals and order. They share the threefold ministry and have above all, the episcopal order and many structures in common.

Anglicans find that the primatial authority of the Pope is more than they would be able to accept. They dislike the idea that the exercise of authority in the Roman Catholic Church seems to be more of a monologue than a dialogue. Catholics, on the other hand, are critical of what they see in Anglicanism as an excessive tolerance of doctrinal diversity and the lack of mechanisms for dealing with it. While recognising the Royal Priesthood of all believers, the two communions differ in the part they assign to lay people in decision-making in the Church; although in practice these differences can be exaggerated.

When Anglicans display unease about the exercise of papal authority in defining dogmas such as the Marian dogmas, it is not so much the doctrines they object to as their imposition as universally binding under anathema.

Anglicans and Catholics must come to "mutual" agreement about these matters before full communion can be restored.

An associated difficulty concerns the way in which diversity in moral judgement is handled by the authorities of the two communions. This bears on the relation between faith and morals, on the nature of the Church's authority in matters of morals and on the faith-community's approach to reaching a judgement, forming a common mind and guiding the faithful in forming their consciences.

While the Final Report registers substantial agreement on what the ordained ministry is about, further work needs to be done before there can in fact be mutual reconciliation of ministries, because two major problems remain: the recognition of Anglican orders, (judged to be invalid in 1896), and the recent new fact of the ordination of women in some provinces of the Anglican Communion. There cannot be full communion unless we are agreed about the nature of ministry and are able to recognise each other's ministries.

Despite a common belief in the holiness and life-long nature of Christian marriage our two communions have developed differing solutions to pastoral problems arising in this field. Two problems in particular need attention, those of annulment, divorce and remarriage and those of inter-church marriage. These are different kinds of problem. In the first case we must seek to recognise the compatibility of our approaches to pastoral problems that afflict us equally, in the second case we have an issue between us which, if handled insensitively, can deepen division, but which could, if handled rightly, anticipate and help to consolidate our mutual communion.

Our document on Salvation and the Church (no.22) referred to penitential disciplines and devotional practices. We asserted our conviction that those which are encouraged or dispensed by the Church are not incompatible with our common understanding of the doctrine of salvation - and of the mediatorial role of the Church. Some people still have difficulties about this, so we think it will be necessary to do further work so as to put their minds at ease by demonstrating this compatibility. We find in Salvation and the Church the principle which will give direction to this enquiry: the mediatorial role of the Church, which is the communion of all the faithful living and departed, a communion in prayer and charity. (cf. Rom. 8:26-37; 1 Cor.15:29; see also Lumen Gentium, ch. 7?).

Because in some countries the juridical linking of Church and State at present puts one or other communion at a disadvantage, it is necessary, in view of the future restoration of full communion, to study the situation with a view to making the necessary adjustments.