

DRAFT CONTINUATION OF NEXT STEPS by Fr. Edward Yarnold, SJ

## XII. NEXT STEPS

A. Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie, in the Common Declaration which they made at Canterbury in 1982, charged ARCIC II with the task of recommending 'what practical steps will be necessary when, on the basis of our unity in faith, we are able to proceed to the restoration of full communion'. Our examination of the extent of the communion already existing between our two churches has shown that, because of the serious problems which still remain unsolved, our unity in faith, although profound and extensive, does not yet entitle us to proceed to the restoration of full communion. Nevertheless, we believe it essential not to abandon the strategy of seeking 'unity by stages' already identified in 1967 by the Anglican - Roman Catholic Preparatory Commission. We therefore conclude this study of Church and Communion by recommending a number of steps which could be taken in order to inaugurate a new and deeper relationship of incomplete communion between our two churches. Such a new relationship seems not only justified by the extent of the unity in faith and Christian life already existing between us, but demanded if we are to be obedient to Christ's will for the unity of his followers; it is also needed in order to convince the members of our churches that ecumenical progress has not come to a standstill. Each step towards our goal of full communion helps to establish the mutual knowledge and trust which are needed to dispel old fears and suspicions, and so prepares for a further step towards the destination.

B. Some of the measures we propose would involve a change in the legal arrangements in one or other of our churches. We recall Pope Paul

VI's address to the ecumenical observers at Vatican II, in which he promised that the Roman Catholic Church

is prepared to broaden and adapt certain canon laws to help the recomposition of unity between the great Christian communities now separated from us.

We recall too Pope John Paul II's development of this theme when speaking in Constantinople in 1979:

We must not be afraid to reconsider, on both sides, and in consultation with one another, canonical rules established when our awareness of our communion ... was still dimmed, rules which, perhaps, no longer correspond to the results of the dialogue of charity and to possibilities they have opened. It is important in order that the faithful on both sides realise the progress that has been made.

It is in this spirit that we recommend the following practical steps. We understand, however, that the timing and details of their implementation is best left to each province and episcopal conference.

C. Since these words were written the two Churches have officially passed judgment on the Final Report, so that the extent to which they are in agreement concerning Eucharist, ministry and authority can now be established. So far, however, we have no more than the two separate responses to ARCIC I. What is now needed is the formulation of a common response to the Final Report. This would constitute an official and

explicit affirmation of mutual recognition from the highest authorities of each Communion', acknowledging that both Communions are at one in essential faith, for which the Malta Report called as the beginning of 'the second stage in our growing together' (Malta, n.7).

An appropriate moment for this declaration of faith to be made would be the meeting of the Pope and the Archbishop planned for September 1989. This proposal would have the additional merit that it would turn an occasion which many are expecting to be the confrontation of two entrenched positions into a new step forward together.

D. Such a step calls for the re-examination of the other proposals which the Malta Report associates with this new stage in the relationship between the two churches (nn. 8-9). As we have said above (n.41), some of these recommendations have already been implemented in a number of places, while others have not yet been put into practice. We recommend each of the provinces of the Anglican Communion and each episcopal conference of the Roman Catholic Church to institute a joint study of the Malta proposals, with a view to implementing them in a fashion which is appropriate to local needs and opportunities.

E. In the light of the proposals contained in the Malta Report we make the following recommendations:

a) There should be regular joint meetings of the whole or some considerable representation of the hierarchies of the two churches in each country or region. Internationally the occasional meetings between the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury could well be extended sometimes to include the other Anglican primates.

b) There should be regular pastoral consultation at national, regional, diocesan and parochial levels, in which the laity as well as the clergy should be involved.

c) The Malta Report proposed that joint statements should be made on 'human issues', i.e. moral and social questions. The implementation of this proposal has not yet become a general and regular feature of the life of the two churches, though individual bishops have co-operated with one another, and single-issue coalition groups (e.g. for the promotion of human rights or the right to life) have now become common. It would greatly increase mutual understanding if at the regional and national levels each church sought participation from the other in all studies leading to pronouncements on social issues.

d) It should become the norm that special initiatives in mission (e.g. campaigns of visitation in an area) are undertaken on a broad ecumenical front involving our two communions and the other Christian churches, so that each church may come to see the gain of one as the gain of all.

e) Special ministries addressed to particular pastoral needs and community services in a locality should be shared where at all possible. The training of lay people for lay ministry (e.g. hospital visitors, marriage counsellors, study group leaders) needs to be undertaken in common.

f) study of the Bible in joint groups should be encouraged, especially by the production of common study material, including material based on a common lectionary.

g) shared retreats and retreat-resources should be developed as part of a strategy of fostering joint prayer at every level.

h) the policy of admission to church schools needs to be examined to ensure that we are assisting each other to bring up our children as Christians in a non-Christian world. In many places joint Roman Catholic and Anglican church schools may be the appropriate means of achieving this end. The establishment of a joint syllabus for religious education is also to be commended.

i) Other co-operative ventures recommended in the Malta Report n.9 should be developed and extended. These include agreements for the joint use of churches and other buildings, shared facilities for theological training and scholarship, and an arrangement that all future clergy of one communion should have attended a course taught by a member of the other communion.

F. Beyond doubt the change which would be most widely felt to mark a new relationship between the two churches would be the reconciliation of ministries and the consequent possibility of eucharistic sharing in particular circumstances. However this reconciliation of ministries, which was envisaged by the present Pope and Archbishop in their Common Declaration made at Canterbury in 1982, has been, in the words of Pope John Paul, effectively blocked by the sacerdotal and episcopal ordination of women in some provinces of the Anglican Communion (letter

of 8 Dec. 1988). In order to maintain the members of our two churches in their desires and efforts for reunion, it is important that this judgment should not seem to destroy all further hope of progress towards the reconciliation of ministries.

G. Three possibilities present themselves. The first is that the present impasse could be taken as a suitable opportunity for inaugurating a dialogue on the issue of the ordained and non-ordained ministry of women not only between our two churches but among as many Christian churches as are willing to participate. The September meeting of the two leaders would again provide a suitable platform for launching this initiative.

H. The second possibility, which is independent of the first, is that the two churches should seek for a partial reconciliation of ministries. There are two forms which this could take, neither of which is free from grave objections. The first would be a service of reconciliation as outlined in n. 66, by which the ministries of the two churches would be received into communion with one another, though with the proviso that in the present circumstances this reconciliation would apply only to ordained men. This solution would leave a lack of communion between the ministries of men and women; but this a fact which already to some extent exists. The second solution would be to seek a reconciliation of ministries at provincial level between the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church and that of those provinces who have not ordained women priests and do not intend to do so. If this second solution leaves a defect of communion between the Anglican participants in such a reconciliation and those provinces which would be unable to participate, once more the answer is that the division already exists.

I. The third possibility would be the more modest step of a reconciliation not of ministries but of ordination rites, on the lines suggested in Cardinal Willebrands's letter to the Co-chairmen of ARCIC II. This would involve the examination of the ordination rites currently in use in each of the two churches, to see if they express the understanding of Eucharist and ministry which the two churches have confessed through their acceptance of the agreements of ARCIC I. Although the problems connected with the apostolic succession and the ordination of women would remain as yet unsolved, the mutual acceptance of ordination rites would go a long way towards removing the objections raised in Apostolicae Curae, and would indicate the determination of both churches to seek a resolution. The completion of this process might be signalled by the celebration by the Pope and the Archbishop of what has been called a 'Eucharist of hope' - a rite which was not itself sacramental, but which expressed the churches' longing to celebrate the Eucharist together (cf. Lk 22.15).<sup>1</sup>

J. Unless the second suggestion proposed in para. H. is adopted, it is clear that reciprocal eucharistic hospitality cannot be officially sanctioned. Nevertheless it would be an appropriate expression of our declared unity in essential eucharistic doctrine as well as of the elements of communion already existing between us if the Roman Catholic Church could admit Anglicans to communion on the same basis as members

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<sup>1</sup>. [For information of ARCIC, not as part of the statement] The celebration of such a Eucharist of hope was suggested by Cardinal J. Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, p. 304.

of the eastern Churches not in communion with the Holy See.<sup>2</sup> Though the lack of reciprocity makes the proposal imperfect, it does once more correspond with the unsymmetrical nature of the communion actually existing between our two churches.

K. There are other measures which would be justified by the growth in communion already achieved. Nowadays in Britain it is only a relatively small minority of Roman Catholics who marry a partner from their own church. Consequently, a step which would affect the lives of many, and which would vividly indicate that a new relationship between the churches was being inaugurated, would be a change in the arrangements affecting mixed marriages. Since the teaching of the two churches concerning the theology and ethics of marriage differs in a number of ways, the Malta Report indicated the need for joint study of 'the doctrine of marriage in its sacramental dimension, its ethical demands, its canonical status, and its pastoral implications' (n.16). The Report also pointed to the need for 'acceptable changes in Church regulations' to 'alleviate some of the difficulties caused by mixed marriages'. Although it did not suggest what these changes might be, experience in the last twenty years has shown that the partners in mixed marriages often suffer great pain from their inability, by Roman Catholic canon law, to receive communion regularly together; moreover, further pain can be caused by the promise which has to be made by the Catholic partner to do his or her best to bring the children up in the Roman Catholic church. A change in Roman Catholic law in these two areas could not be made lightly and would presuppose a large measure of

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<sup>2</sup>. Cf CIC 844.3, which states that the permission granted to Orthodox may be extended 'to the members of other churches which in the judgment of the Apostolic See, as far as the sacraments are concerned, are in the same situation as the aforementioned oriental churches'.



mutual trust and acceptance, but it seems to be justified by the depth of communion now existing between the two churches. Again it would be appropriate to remove the requirement of dispensation for the Roman Catholic partner from the impediment of mixta religio, and for the marriage to be conducted in an Anglican church. We accordingly urge the setting up of a joint subcommission for the revision of the canonical arrangements governing marriages between an Anglican and a Roman Catholic. Even before this process is completed we recommend local hierarchies to produce common guidelines for the joint pastoral care of inter-church marriages (i.e. marriages between a practising Anglican and a practising Roman Catholic); such guidelines might give a more generous interpretation of existing canon law governing occasional eucharistic hospitality, so as to allow these families to worship together sacramentally at key moments in a child's spiritual growth.

L. It is important that the members of our two churches should regularly join in common worship in order to express and experience the communion in faith already attained. This sharing in worship would be most significant if it took the form, not of participation in specially composed ecumenical services, but in the ordinary Sunday worship of each church. Accordingly we recommend that at regular intervals, say once every six months, Roman Catholics should be encouraged to perform their Sunday worship in the neighbouring Anglican church, and vice versa on another Sunday. The existing encouragement to the Roman Catholic faithful (Ecumenical Directory 1976, n.47) occasionally to attend Sunday worship at Orthodox churches without the obligation of attending Roman Catholic Mass, and to worship at Orthodox churches if Roman Catholic Mass is not available, should be extended to include Anglican worship. A corresponding recommendation should be made to Anglicans.

M. The measures which we have so far recommended will require some modification of Roman Catholic canon law. We now come to two recommendations which would involve changes on the Anglican side. The first is that the further study of universal primacy, which the 1988 Lambeth Conference urged ARCIC to undertake, should be urgently undertaken also by the Anglican communion itself.

N. The second recommendation affects directly only our two churches in Great Britain. By virtue of the Act of Settlement (1700) the sovereign may not 'be reconciled to or ... hold communion with the see or church of Rome or ... profess the popish religion or ... marry a papist'. This act, which relegates Roman Catholics to a uniquely unfavourable status among all citizens of their country as well as placing a constitutional block to the restoration of full communion between the two churches, can cause distress and resentment, and is inappropriate to the needs of the present day. Unofficial and discreet studies have been made of the possibilities for the amendment of this legislation, at least in that aspect of it which forbids a sovereign or heir to the throne from marrying a Roman Catholic. It would confirm Roman Catholics throughout the world in their hope that serious endeavours towards unity were being made if these studies could be put publicly on an official basis.

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O. The Final Report of ARCIC I concluded with a call that the doctrinal agreement which it had identified should be followed by appropriate practical steps:

The convergence reflected in our Final Report would appear to call for the establishing of a new relationship between our Churches as a next stage in the journey towards Christian unity.

... There are high expectations that significant initiatives will be boldly undertaken to deepen our reconciliation and lead us forward in the quest for the full communion to which we have been committed, in obedience to God, from the beginning of our dialogue (pp. 99-100).

Since those words were written in 1981 further progress has been made, but new difficulties have arisen. There is accordingly all the more need eight years later for a 'new relationship' and 'significant initiatives' which will both reflect this progress and show that the difficulties have not put an end to our hopes.