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Resolutions and Report of the Lambeth Conference 1968 on Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations

A. RESOLUTIONS

52. The Conference welcomes the proposals made in the report of Section III which concern Anglican relations with the Roman Catholic Church.
53. The Conference recommends the setting up of a Permanent Joint Commission, for which the Anglican delegation should be chosen by the Lambeth Consultative Body (or its successor) and be representative of the Anglican Communion as a whole.
54. In view of the urgent pastoral questions raised by mixed marriages the Conference welcomes the work of the Joint Commission on the Theology of Marriage and its Application to Mixed Marriages, and urges its speedy continuance.

B. REPORT OF SECTION III:

The Renewal of the Church in Unity

RELATIONS WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the 'Common Declaration', signed in Rome on 24 March 1966, the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury gave thanks to Almighty God for the new atmosphere of Christian fellowship now existing between the two Churches, and declared their intention of inaugurating 'a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed'. This dialogue, they declared, was to include 'not only theological

matters such as Scripture, Tradition and Liturgy, but also matters of practical difficulty felt on either side'.

It was as a result of this Declaration that a Joint Preparatory Commission was set up; and the Section received with gratitude the report issued as a result of the three meetings of that Commission.

Essential to such meetings is the spirit in which they are undertaken. For our part we recognize in penitence that many of our past attitudes and actions have contributed to our unhappy divisions and that there are still many things in us for which we must ask the forgiveness of God and of our fellow Christians. Yet we are thankful for the many signs of renewal of the spirit of unity in ourselves and in others.

Together with the Roman Catholic Church we confess our faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as witnessed by the holy Scriptures, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and by the teaching of the Fathers of the early Church. We have one baptism and recognize many common features in our heritage. At the same time substantial divergences exist, many of which have arisen since the sixteenth century, in such matters as the unity and indefectibility of the Church and its teaching authority, the Petrine primacy, infallibility, and Mariological definitions, as well as in some moral problems. These matters will require serious study so that they may be carefully identified and, under the guidance of the Spirit, resolved. This task must be undertaken in the light of the challenge to the whole Church of God presented by the modern world, and in the context of the mission of the Church throughout the world and to all sorts and conditions of men.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS

Relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics are progressing in various ways and to varying degrees in many places. Examples include common services of prayer and thanksgiving, the joint use of churches, the exchange of preachers, co-operation in theological education, and meetings of official commissions and informal groups. With due regard to individual consciences, we endorse and encourage these developments where local circumstances permit the avoidance of misunderstanding.

We rejoice that the new attitude towards Scripture, expressed in the Constitution on Divine Revelation, has led to co-operation in biblical studies and in the work of the United Bible Societies.

Liturgical renewal and reform represent a field where co-operation is urgent. Unilateral action in regard to the liturgical year and the vernacular forms used by our people is to be avoided.

The Christian witness being given by our clergy and laity in many urgent human issues, in many cases in close association with Roman Catholics, claims our support and our prayers. Where such witness may be strengthened by joint or parallel statements by church leaders these should be issued.

We welcome the increasing signs of mutual recognition, not least in practical acts on both sides, of the reality of Anglican and Roman Catholic ministry in the whole Body of Christ on earth.

A PERMANENT JOINT COMMISSION

We recommend the setting up of a Permanent Joint Commission, our delegation to be chosen by the Lambeth Consultative Body or its successor and to be representative of the Anglican Communion as a whole. This commission or its sub-commissions should consider the question of intercommunion in the context of a true sharing in faith and the mutual recognition of ministry, and should also consider in the light of the new biblical scholarship the orders of both Churches and the theology of ministry which forms part of the theology of the Church and can only be considered as such. The hope for the future lies in a fresh and broader approach to the understanding of apostolic succession and of the priestly office. On this line we look for a new joint appraisal of church orders.

Conversations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics should be conducted with due regard to the multiplicity of conversations also in progress with other Churches. In them all we propose to hold fast the principles of Catholic truth as we have been given to understand them, though we realize that, in renewed obedience to the Holy Spirit, we must at all times be willing to go forward adventurously.