

**ROME &
CANTERBURY**
the Final
ARCIC REPORT

A STUDY GUIDE

40p

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1. THE COMMON ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN AND ANGLICAN CHURCHES

THE people of Great Britain are a single nation with a single queen and government. Yet they are spread over four countries (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and have in their veins the blood of different races who have successively ruled over part or the whole of their realm. At the beginning of the Christian era, the country was divided among several tribes of Celts, and much of it was under Roman rule. This was the situation when the Christian gospel was first brought to our southern shores, probably from Gaul (modern France) in the second century. The church in Rome was already becoming the most influential church in the western world, simply because it was located in the capital of the Roman Empire, but it had not yet started claiming the right to govern other churches, and for many centuries the Celtic churches had great independence. It was Celtic missionaries, such as Ninian (died about 432), Patrick (died about 461) and Columba (died 597), who spread the gospel to Scotland and Ireland.

In 449, after the withdrawal of the Romans, the invasion of Britain by the pagan Anglo-Saxons began, as a result of which the Christian Celts were driven to the extremities of the land. The reconversion of the country was partly the work of Celtic missionaries from the north, beginning in 635, and led by Aidan, but partly the work of Roman missionaries from the south, who were sent to Kent from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great as early as 597 under the leadership of Augustine (not to be confused with the great theologian Augustine of Hippo, two centuries before). At the Synod of Whitby in 664, even the Christians of Northumbria adopted Roman customs, but Celtic customs survived much longer in Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Because Augustine's mission had been sent directly from Rome, the English church recognised that it owed a special debt to the church in Rome. Right up to the sixteenth century, despite the increasingly extravagant claims of the popes and the tensions with monarchs in England and other countries which resulted, the relation between the church in Rome and the church in England was a close one. The breach, when it came, was necessary, but it was a sad necessity.

2. THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE NEED FOR REFORM

THE periodic tensions between popes and kings after the Norman Conquest were not, of course, always the fault of the pope. The king was sometimes equally or more to blame, and if the pope had regularly been upholding spiritual values against worldly-minded kings, the history of Europe might have been different. But, regrettably, the later Middle Ages were a time of grave moral and spiritual decline, in which the clergy, the monastic orders and the papacy itself fully shared. In such circumstances, the claim of the pope to have supreme authority over princes, to be entitled to intrude foreigners into bishoprics, and to support bishops against their monarch, was naturally felt to be a crying evil, and fostered the wish to reassert national independence. Whatever the original motives of the papal claims, or the abuses which they sought to remedy, the fact was that they were relatively new, and were now being made by popes of worldly character, who freely sold ecclesiastical posts to the highest bidder.

The condition of the church had indeed become deplorable. The monasteries, which had long set the standard in godliness, were now largely infected by idleness and luxury, the outcome of their great wealth. The bishops, who likewise enjoyed extensive earthly possessions, were often preoccupied with affairs of state. The theologians had overlaid and perverted the gospel with unbiblical speculations. Ignorance, avarice and unchastity were rampant among the clergy, and, when they committed crimes, they were protected by 'privilege of clergy' from being called to account. The laity, who had neither the Bible in English nor services in English, were, for lack of sound instruction and good example, the victims of gross superstition. It would be foolish to suppose that, in a period which continued to produce the wonderful churches, cathedrals and abbeys of which we are the heirs, devotion to God was dead, but it was undoubtedly very sick. New Testament Christianity was now confused with grievous error in the popular mind.

Henry VIII and the Breach with Rome

When the formal breach with Rome finally came, it was precipitated by Henry VIII's desire to be rid of his first wife. It is possible to make excuses for this shameful incident, on the grounds of the insecurity of the Tudor dynasty and its need for a male heir, or on the grounds of the doubt that had been felt about the legality of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon (as being within the prohibited degrees) when it was first contracted. However, Henry's subsequent conduct makes any such excuses unconvincing.

At the same time, the incident is disgraceful not only to Henry but also to the papacy. Not very long before, one of the popes had permitted the King of Castile to take a second wife because his first was childless;

and the main reason why Henry was now refused a divorce was probably that his wife was related to the Emperor Charles V, whom the pope (Clement VII, a man of weak character) was afraid to offend.

Edward VI and the Doctrinal Reformation

Much more important, however, is the fact that the contemporary reform of doctrine and practice, since known as the Protestant Reformation, took place in many parts of Europe and not simply in the British Isles; and everywhere it took place there was a breach with Rome, because Rome resisted reform. Henry's desire for a divorce was therefore simply the occasion of the English Reformation and not its underlying cause.

Indeed, despite the breach with Rome, reform was not able to make much progress during the reign of Henry, who was a rebellious Roman Catholic rather than a Protestant, and it had to wait for the accession of his son Edward VI. Henry's other main 'reform' was the somewhat ambiguous one of dissolving and plundering the monasteries. He did allow some use to be made of Coverdale's English Bible, but two things had to wait until the next reign. One was the introduction of biblical services, in English not Latin, and the other was the revival of biblical preaching.

3. THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

ONE of the best known sights in Oxford is the Martyrs' Memorial, erected to commemorate the burning of Archbishop Cranmer and of Bishops Ridley and Latimer, which took place in Oxford in 1555 and 1556. It is unfashionable today to describe their deaths at the stake as martyrdoms. In a generation when few church people have strong convictions about anything, a man who went to the stake rather than recant is considered as a victim of his own bigotry quite as much as of the bigotry of those who burned him.

But fashion, as so often, is a poor guide. Cranmer died for the truths of the Reformation. And, without idolizing the sixteenth-century Reformers, it has to be said that the two chief points for which they contended were two of the fundamental truths of Christianity.

Revelation

The first of these truths is the doctrine of revelation. It teaches that God has revealed himself uniquely through Jesus Christ, and through the prophets and apostles who bear witness to Christ, and that the permanent

written form of his revelation is Scripture.

So, if you are concerned to know what God has revealed, you cannot be satisfied simply to know what has been handed down from generation to generation by tradition, or what contemporary bishops and theologians declare. You may and should go on to ask, but is this what the Bible teaches?

The Reformers did go on to ask this, and in many cases it cost them their lives. They discovered that the teaching of Christ and the apostles had become corrupted as it had been handed down. They discovered that much of what contemporary theologians and bishops were teaching - even, much of what the Bishop of Rome was teaching - was different from what the Bible teaches. But when they called for such teaching to be corrected by the Bible, they were not thanked for it but condemned.

Salvation

The second of the great truths of the Reformation is the doctrine of salvation. It teaches that man is not saved by his own efforts but by God. Nor is he saved simply by what God does in him, but by what God has already done for him, through Jesus Christ, in whom we must place our trust. Christ on the cross has paid the just penalty for our sins, so that, by repenting of them and putting our faith in Christ, we may be justified in God's sight and saved. Penances, indulgences and purgatorial pains, even the reception of sacraments and the doing of good works, are no substitute for faith in Christ, our only Saviour.

Here, as the Reformers saw, was the most important matter on which tradition had gone astray - on which the Bible taught one thing and the church leaders of the day taught another. But here again the Reformers were not thanked for pointing the fact out. On the contrary, their own teaching, on justification by faith, was caricatured and condemned.

Heresy and Schism

By sinning against the light on these two great matters, by condemning and burning those who called them back to the Bible and the apostolic gospel, the leaders of the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century revealed themselves as heretics and persecutors, as what St. John would call 'antichrists' (1 Jn. 2:18). For the same reason, their victims can only be regarded as martyrs for the gospel, martyrs of Christ, who is the author and subject of the gospel.

In Rome's view, of course, the Protestant martyrs were the heretics. To be a heretic, so Rome considered, one had to diverge from the authorised leadership of the church, with its majority following. Even today, the advocates and admirers of the Church of Rome are always talking about its numbers, as 'the largest body in Christendom'. God, however, is not impressed with numbers. This is one of the earliest lessons he had to teach his people, and it is repeated throughout the Bible (Jdg. 7:4-7; 1 Sam. 14:6; 1 Chr. 21:1; Matt. 22:14; Lk. 12:32). Yet there

are some who still need to learn that a heretic is not someone who opposes the majority but someone who opposes the truth.

Rome's other charge against the Reformers was that they were 'schismatics', people who had split the church. Since the Reformers' message was rejected, and they themselves were given the choice of silence or death, they had to organise themselves separately, both for their own protection and for the maintenance of their witness to the gospel. But the responsibility for the division lay unambiguously at the door of Rome. Schismatics are those who cause divisions, not those who have no choice but to separate.

It is often said today that there were as many Roman Catholic martyrs in Elizabeth's reign as there were Protestant martyrs in Mary's. Actually there were not so many, though one is sorry that there were any. Of course, how many Mary would have put to death had she reigned more than five years, nobody knows. And there was one essential difference between the executions in the two reigns, which today is usually ignored.

It was this: that most of the Roman Catholics who suffered in Elizabeth's reign suffered not as Roman Catholics but as traitors. There were many plots against Elizabeth, to assassinate or dethrone her and set up a Roman Catholic monarch in her place. Pope Pius V himself had given his blessing to these plots in his bull of excommunication against Elizabeth as a heretic and usurper, Regnans in Excelsis (1570), in which he had professed to release her subjects from their allegiance to her, hoping in this way to promote a successful rebellion. His hopes were disappointed, but even by the attempt he caused his adherents in Britain to come under a general suspicion of treason, whether or not they were guilty of it. It follows that the blame for unjust convictions that took place must at least partly rest upon the shoulders of that pope.

Holy Communion

Of course, the doctrine of revelation and the doctrine of justification by faith were not the only two truths which the Reformers were concerned to reaffirm. On the basis of Holy Scripture, they attempted a comprehensive reform of whatever was amiss in church life. This so far shamed their opponents as to cause moral reform to be introduced into the Church of Rome as well, though doctrinal reform continued to be resisted there, and the Bible and the services remained in Latin.

In England, the debate concentrated in a remarkable way on the sacrament of Holy Communion. The immediate cause of the condemnation of many of the Reformers was their denial of transubstantiation and the mass-sacrifice, and their advocacy of a more spiritual view of Christ's presence in the sacrament, and of the New Testament doctrine that Christ's sacrifice for our sins took place once for all at Calvary, not every time a priest celebrates mass (Rom. 6:10; Heb. 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18).

However, what the Reformers maintained in this connection was far

from being unrelated to the two great truths of the Reformation. The doctrine of revelation was the basis on which they attempted to get back to biblical teaching about the sacrament; and, as to the doctrine of salvation, Cranmer's Communion service (substantially that of the 1662 Prayer Book) has been well described by Gregory Dix as 'the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the doctrine of justification by faith alone'.

4. SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

NEITHER the Anglican church nor the Roman is today just what it was in the sixteenth century. In certain respects they have become more alike, in other respects less so.

The Church of Rome was already, at that stage, an international body, and though it had been out of communion with the Eastern Orthodox Church since the eleventh century, it had been trying to win over some of the eastern churches to its own side (as 'uniate' churches) and to spread its influence world-wide. The Anglican church, on the other hand, was only the church of Great Britain. Since then, however, the colonial expansion of Great Britain and the missionary expansion of Anglicanism has brought to birth over twenty five self-governing daughter-churches throughout the Commonwealth and beyond, forming the 'Anglican Communion'. It is thus natural for the Anglican church today to address the Church of Rome on an international level, as in the ARCIC discussions it has been doing.

Another change which has tended to assimilate Anglicanism to Rome is the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century. This sought to restore in Anglicanism much of the practice and belief of the pre-Reformation church, and in the process exaggerated the differences between the Anglican Reformation and that on the Continent. Despite its excesses, however, the movement has taught Anglicans to regard Rome in a fairer and more sympathetic way than before.

A change which, for a time at least, had the opposite effect was the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment'. This has popularized in Anglicanism, and in the other reformed church families, a historical approach to the biblical literature, but one that is strongly imbued with rationalism and scepticism. The movement was long resisted by the Church of Rome, but in our own day, for better or worse, has found an entrance there.

A final change, and one that has greatly increased the differences between Rome and the rest of Christendom, has been brought about by the three new dogmas promulgated as necessary to salvation by Popes Pius IX and XII in 1854, 1870 and 1950. These affirm the Immaculate Conception (i. e. sinlessness) of our Lord's Mother, her bodily Assumption into Heaven and the Infallibility of the Pope. Needless to say, such arbitrary additions to the Christian faith create serious new difficulties in the way of Christian unity.

Vatican II

It may seem churlish to repeat all that is said in chapter three and in the previous paragraph after the Second Vatican Council, when Protestants were re-named, not as heretics or schismatics but as 'separated brethren', and the principle of Religious Freedom was formally accepted by the Church of Rome. Today the successor of Pope Pius V likes to send an ambassador to the successor of the 'deposed' queen Elizabeth I. Yet one needs to get the record straight, if only to show what change there actually has been, and on these matters at least there certainly has been change. (For a sympathetic account of what has been happening, see Latimer Study 12: Rome and Reformation Today, by James Atkinson).

Vatican II also endorsed the efforts that have been made since the beginning of the century by the pioneers of the Roman Catholic Liturgical Movement. As a result, the practical reforms in worship that were introduced by Protestants in the sixteenth century, so as to make services intelligible and congregational, have now, after centuries of opposition, been introduced in many parts of the Church of Rome. Ceremonial has been simplified and the vernacular language has replaced Latin, so that everyone can now understand and join in.

Of course, the Reformers were also concerned to make services biblical, so what was understood would be edifying, and Rome has made less progress here. But the encouragement recently given to the reading of the Bible, and the widespread introduction of 'Bible services' on Sunday evenings or weekdays, means that change is under way on this point too.

That 'change is under way', rather than actually achieved, would probably be the best assessment of the Church of Rome today. One can still be a traditional Roman Catholic if one wishes. No Roman Catholic doctrine has been withdrawn: indeed, at Vatican II they were all reaffirmed. The great truths of the Reformation have not been officially accepted. The present pope is himself very traditional in his views. Yet no one can say what will happen in a church where the reading of the Bible is encouraged.

There are, of course, other new forces at work in the Church of Rome as well, philosophical and political forces, non-biblical and sometimes anti-biblical in character. The church could split, or it could turn away from the Bible, for no church which will not accept the whole truth can be

sure of retaining any of it. However, we should pray that it will rather embrace the Bible and be wholly reformed.

Modern Protestantism

'Be reformed?' some may scornfully ask. 'If this was ever going to happen, why has it not happened yet?' It is at least worth considering whether the answer to this question may not lie in the chequered history of the Protestant churches and their truly appalling state today.

What encouragement is there for the Church of Rome to follow in the footsteps of the Reformers, if what she then has to look forward to is the scholasticism of the seventeenth century, the rationalism of the eighteenth century, the antiquarianism of the nineteenth century and the radicalism of the twentieth century? No encouragement at all.

If Cranmer could have foreseen that the persecution which engulfed him would be followed by the Elizabethan settlement, when Mary's sister Elizabeth I restored the Protestant faith enshrined in the English Prayer Book and the 39 Articles, he would indeed have rejoiced. But if he could also have foreseen what would follow the Elizabethan settlement, he would have been tempted to wonder whether his sacrifice had been worthwhile.

The Church of Rome has (so far at least) retained the faith of the creeds. What the Church of England has retained is an open question. The Protestant Reformation Society called for the pope's visit to Britain to be made an occasion of repentance by Anglicans. With or without his visit, it was a timely call.

5. ARCIC AND ITS REPORT

ARCIC (the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission) was formed as the result of a joint decision by Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey in 1966, and worked from 1970 to 1981. Its twenty members (ten Anglican, ten Roman Catholic) were drawn from various countries and were intended to represent various schools of thought. One of the Anglicans was a conservative evangelical.

From the outset, ARCIC selected the three themes of Authority, the Eucharist and the Ministry as the controversial issues which it needed to resolve. As early as February 1971 it published first drafts of agreements on these three topics, inviting outside comment. In revising

its drafts, it left Authority till last, as being the most intractable, and published the revisions in 1971, 1973 and 1976. In response to further criticisms, it did not alter these texts any more but published Elucidations of its three statements. The Elucidations on the Authority statement were reserved until its Final Report, which also contains a second Authority statement (this time without Elucidations, of course), dealing with difficult issues deferred in its first Authority statement. The Final Report (CTS and SPCK, 1982, £1.95) also reprints the earlier statements and their Elucidations, and adds a general Introduction on the church and koinonia (communion).

Having issued its Final Report, ARCIC has resigned. As long ago as the fourth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (Canada 1979, page 8), it was anticipated that this would happen, and negotiations were authorised 'preparatory to the establishment of a new Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission'. From the Roman side, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, at the Vatican, has just recommended (March 1982) 'that the dialogue be continued, since there are sufficient grounds for thinking its continuation will be fruitful'.

It must be realised that the members of ARCIC, and of any similar commission, are not plenipotentiaries. They simply make recommendations, which the authorities in their churches accept, modify or reject. The Church of Rome, which is centrally governed from Rome itself, will make its decision about the ARCIC report (and any future report) there, though the report has first been sent to the episcopal councils throughout the world for comment, with a very strong recommendation from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (or Holy Office) on how to assess it. On the Anglican side, since the Anglican Communion consists of some twenty seven national or regional churches, each of them self-governing, separate decisions will need to be made by the General Synod of each, which can then perhaps be summed up by the 1985 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council or by the 1988 Lambeth Conference.

6. THE ROMAN REACTION TO THE REPORT

THE Observations on the Final Report of ARCIC by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated 29 March 1982 and just referred to, is a formidable document which it would not be an exaggeration to describe as extremely reactionary. (Since it is being published by the Catholic Truth Society, anyone can verify this description for himself.) It has provoked from the Anglican co-chairman and secretary of ARCIC

press-releases in which they say that 'it appears to be on a quite different wavelength from that of the final report... This approach has the effect of making the doctrinal position of one church and its formulation of that position to be the criterion', whereas what Pope Paul VI had envisaged for this dialogue, when it was decided upon by himself and Archbishop Ramsey, was simply that it should be 'founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions'. It is difficult not to regard this as perfectly fair comment.

The model on which the Sacred Congregation seems to have worked in its assessment of ARCIC is that of the 'Eastern Catholic Churches' (the uniate churches). In such a relationship, the church in question is allowed to retain its liturgy, its married clergy and its disciplinary customs, provided it accepts the supremacy of the pope and defined Roman doctrine as it stands. But since defined Roman doctrine includes the decrees and canons of the Council of Trent (Rome's reply to the Reformation), it would be totally unrealistic to expect agreement with the Anglican church or any of the other Reformation churches on such a basis. The most that one could hope would be that, if the language of Trent was re-phrased and explained in the way that Hans Kung attempted to do in his book on Justification, it might prove to be less alien to Reformation thought than it appears at first sight. In the Observations, however, the language of Trent is simply quoted as it stands, as if it was the last word on the subjects with which it deals. The First Vatican Council, with its decree on papal infallibility, is treated in exactly the same way.

Three possible explanations of this approach suggest themselves. The first possibility is that the heirs of the Oxford Movement have completely misled the Vatican into thinking that modern Anglicanism is crypto-Roman Catholicism. The second possibility is that the approach of the Sacred Congregation is a deliberate wrecking-tactic. The third possibility (though hardly a likely one, in a document signed by Cardinal Ratzinger) is that it is the result of nothing more or less than stupidity. Whatever the explanation, however, a document like this is the despair of well-disposed Roman Catholics, no less than of well-disposed Anglicans.

Apart from calling for the teaching of ARCIC to be brought into total agreement with the defined Roman position on the mass-sacrifice, transubstantiation, the adoration of the reserved sacrament, priesthood, the seven sacraments, the dogmas about Mary, the universal jurisdiction of the pope, his infallibility and the infallibility of general councils, the Observations call for more serious attention to be devoted to the question of the ordination of women (as being contrary to the 'ancient common traditions') and to the 'apostolic succession' of the ministry, and for moral teaching to be included in the dialogue between the two churches. These last seem to be more reasonable requests. The Observations also suggest that those engaged in the dialogue ought to declare their attitude to the Anglican Prayer Book and 39 Articles. This is true; but they ought likewise to declare their attitude to the pronouncements of the Council of

Trent and the First Vatican Council, so that Roman Catholics, no less than Anglicans, can see how much change would be required on their own part before agreement would be possible.

7. AN ANGLICAN APPRAISAL OF THE REPORT

AS we saw in chapter three, the division between the Church of Rome and the reformed churches (including the Anglican) was principally due to differences on the doctrine of revelation and the doctrine of salvation. Differences about the sacraments and the ministry, though important in their own way, were only subsidiary aspects of the doctrine of salvation.

The Doctrine of Salvation

According to the biblical teaching on salvation, man is not saved by his own efforts but by God. Nor is he saved simply by what God does in him but by what God has already done for him, through Jesus Christ, in whom he must place his faith. Christ on the cross has paid for our sins, so that, by repenting of them and putting our faith in Christ, we may be justified in God's sight.

Evangelicals have always urged that justification by faith ought to be on the ARCIC agenda (Christ's Presence and Sacrifice 1972, Open Letter 1977, Across the Divide 1977, Nottingham Statement 1977, Justification Today 1979). Two of the official Anglican responses to ARCIC's earlier statements, those from South America and South Africa (an unlikely combination!), urged the same thing. The fourth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (Canada 1979, page 7) was told that these requests would be heeded:

The Council ... also understands that the [final] report will say something ... of the doctrine of justification.

In the event, nothing has been done, and no explanation is given. The report states that

controversy between our two communions has centred on the eucharist, on the meaning and function of ordained ministry, and on the nature and exercise of authority in the church' (p.5),

i. e. on the three subjects on which ARCIC has previously issued statements. This is only a half-truth, and leaves half the controversy between the two churches undiscussed. The first failure of ARCIC, therefore, is

in the scope of its agenda.

The Doctrine of Revelation

The other great point of disagreement between the Church of Rome and the Anglican churches is the doctrine of revelation. According to Anglican teaching, the permanent written form of God's revelation is Scripture, by which tradition and the contemporary teaching church must be tested and if necessary corrected.

The earlier ARCIC statement on Authority said some positive things about the authority of Scripture, which encouraged Anglican readers to ask for a clear declaration that what is outside Scripture cannot have the same authority, and that what is contrary to Scripture must be rejected. Something of this kind does now appear on p. 70:

No endeavour of the Church to express the truth can add to the revelation already given. Moreover, since the Scriptures are the uniquely inspired witness to divine revelation, the Church's expression of that revelation must be tested by its consonance with Scripture

However, one's joy is shortlived, for on the next page the commission tells us that the task of tradition is not necessarily just 'to unfold the riches of the original revelation' in Scripture:

Another approach, while different, does not necessarily contradict the former. In the conviction that the Holy Spirit is seeking to guide the Church into the fullness of truth, it draws upon everything in human experience and thought which will give to the content of the revelation its fullest expression and widest application. It is primarily concerned with the growth of the seed of God's word from age to age.

This appears to be an expression of Newman's hypothesis in his Development of Doctrine, according to which anything which the contemporary church authoritatively teaches must be a legitimate development of the original revelation, even though no clear connection can be traced, simply because the contemporary church authoritatively teaches it. But this is to make the contemporary church your authority and not Scripture, and it explains how the Roman Catholic members of ARCIC are able to maintain as part of revelation the dogmas that our Lord's Mother was sinless, that she ascended bodily into heaven and that the pope is infallible, despite the fact that there is no hint of these things in the New Testament.

To give the Anglican members of ARCIC their due, they did at least draw the line at these three dogmas (Final Report, pp. 94-96). But the Roman Catholic members did not. So where is the agreement?

Papal Primacy

The report deals not only with papal infallibility (very uneasily) but with

papal jurisdiction (much more confidently). It affirms that the church 'requires visible expression' and that primacy is 'a focus within' it (p. 7). 'Full visible communion between our two Churches cannot be achieved without ... the common acceptance of a universal primacy' (p. 8). 'The unity in truth of the Christian community demands visible expression. We agree that such visible expression is the will of God and that the maintenance of visible unity at the universal level includes the episcopate of a universal primate. This is a doctrinal statement' (p. 76) 'A universal primacy will be needed in a reunited Church and should appropriately be the primacy of the bishop of Rome' (p. 85).

A distinction is drawn between the need for a universal primacy, which is 'a doctrinal statement', and the need for it to be located at Rome, which is only 'appropriate'. Yet the doctrine, no less than the propriety, is open to question.

In the New Testament, the visible unity of the worldwide church consists in a common baptism, a common communion table, a common confession of the faith, and a common allegiance to the apostles, as the preachers of that faith and the founders of the churches. The only head of the Church is the ascended Christ, and if, on earth, Peter is the apostle of the circumcision, Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles. Where, then, is the basis for ARCIC's 'doctrinal statement'?

Holy Communion

The report includes not only certain new documents but a reprint of the older ones. Among the latter is the material on the Ministry and the Eucharist. The material on the Ministry is vague, except that it calls for the Roman rejection of Anglican ordinations to be reconsidered (p. 44f.). In the statement on Eucharistic Doctrine, and the Elucidation of it in answer to criticisms, it is insisted that the presence of Christ's body and blood at Holy Communion is not just in the reception of the sacrament but also in the consecration of the elements (pp. 15f., 21). This excludes the historic teaching of the Church of England, expressed in the Prayer Book and Articles, that the presence of Christ's body and blood is only in the reception of them. Despite this, no biblical grounds are provided to show why our teaching should be excluded.

The ARCIC report is written in an irenic way and says many good things. But its silence on the doctrine of salvation, its failure to agree on the doctrine of revelation, and its adoption of unacceptable Roman Catholic teaching on papal primacy and the Holy Communion, mean that it fails to provide a doctrinal basis for closer relations between the two churches.

To this extent at least one can agree with the Sacred Congregation at Rome, that when the new commission is appointed to continue ARCIC's work, it must not be given a merely practical brief. The doctrinal task is far from being finished, and (joined perhaps with moral questions) should take precedence over everything else.

8. LOOKING AHEAD

IT will be clear from the last two chapters that conservatively minded Roman Catholics and conservatively minded Anglicans are both bound to have considerable reservations about ARCIC's Final Report. Is there any way through this impasse, which the commission appointed to succeed ARCIC might be able to find? It seems possible that there is.

As the Sacred Congregation in its Observations quite reasonably complained, ARCIC never really made up its mind how to treat the historic formularies, containing the official teaching of the two churches (see chapter six). It wanted 'to discover each other's faith as it is today and to appeal to history only for enlightenment, not as a way of perpetuating past controversy' (p.1f). The separation, though 'involving serious doctrinal differences, has been aggravated by theological polemics and mutual intolerance' (p.5). The commission never repudiated the post-Reformation heritage, but it aimed to produce only what is 'consonant with biblical teaching and the tradition(s) of our common inheritance' (pp. 12, 30), i. e. consonant with biblical teaching and such elements of pre-Reformation tradition as both churches have preserved.

If it had carried out this policy consistently, the result would certainly have been better. It would have been stated frankly, for example, that the three Roman dogmas defined in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not something which the pre-Reformation church agreed upon or which the Anglican church had ever accepted, nor do they have a clear basis in Scripture, so they must be treated as secondary not primary. Indeed, Vatican II itself seemed to treat them as secondary, by sanctioning a measure of intercommunion with the Eastern Orthodox, though they reject these dogmas (Eastern Catholic Churches 26-29).

The distinction between primary and secondary matters is, in fact, made by the commission itself, and its aim is only 'substantial agreement', 'unanimous agreement on essential matters where it considers that doctrine admits of no divergence', for 'differences of theology and practice may well co-exist with a real consensus on the essentials' (pp. 16f., 24, 28). But it looks as if the Roman Catholic members felt bound to include among the 'essentials' not just what is found in 'biblical teaching and the tradition of our common inheritance' but also all dogmas defined by the pope. This is clearly a crucial matter of principle which the new commission, if it is to make headway, must put at the top of its agenda.

The Sacred Congregation, in its Observations, questioned ARCIC's application of the idea of substantial agreement, and claimed that eucharistic adoration, papal primacy and the dogmas about Mary must be classed among primary matters, not among secondary. This is something which the new commission will have to discuss. Indeed, it will have

to discuss its whole approach to questions which (like the three Roman dogmas) are not simply part of the 'common inheritance' of the two churches. The Reformation doctrine of revelation, for example (that Scripture is the criterion for testing the teaching of tradition and the contemporary church), and the Reformation doctrine of salvation (that men are justified in God's sight only by faith in Christ), are not simply beliefs which both churches inherited from the Middle Ages, but which the reformed churches alone recovered by their study of the Bible and the early Fathers.

However, to apply more consistently, and to extend, the principles of ARCIC, would not be an alien task for the new commission to undertake, and it might bring success where at present there seems to have been failure.

Closer Relations

Speaking as one who has had, and still has, close Roman Catholic friends, the writer of this study guide knows what it means to speak of the pain of our separation. ARCIC has urged that we should 'avoid theological polemics' in speaking of our 'serious doctrinal differences' (p.5). But if the differences really are serious, as on the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of revelation they do appear to be, a sharply focussed statement of them is a good deal more illuminating than a vague one, provided it is made in love and without exaggeration.

To achieve a proper balance, it is indeed necessary also to remind oneself of the things we have in common, as Vatican II did (Decree on Ecumenism 4, etc.); but to emphasise these and to play down important differences, though tempting, is contrary to the way of the ancient councils and to the way of the apostles and the Lord himself. It is doubtful, therefore, whether it was ever right for spokesmen of the Anglican church to succumb to this temptation and call for intercommunion without delay.

Co-operation in good works and in public witness on moral principles is, of course, often possible and desirable. And since mixed marriages do so frequently occur, especially in countries like Eire, it is urgent that an equitable and agreed policy should be reached on these, and a more adequate one than the joint-commission on the matter has so far achieved. Marriage is a very personal matter, and the religious beliefs and principles of individual Christians from the two churches can easily be much closer than the official position of the churches to which they respectively belong. They ought not, therefore, to have their consciences violated by church regulations.

Above all, let us make the priorities of faith, hope and love our first concern: faith, to trust in God and not in our own efforts, hope, to carry us through temporary failure, and love, not just at times when it seems natural, but at times when indifference, resentment or hatred are the easy course to follow.

9. QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

WE suggest that groups which study the ARCIC Final Report should have one or more copies of it to read and consult (CTS and SPCK, £1.95), and should also have the use of Bibles and copies of the Book of Common Prayer (in which they will need especially to refer to the 39 Articles). There are probably sufficient questions here for five weeks of discussion, each weekly seminar lasting about an hour.

Page numbers below refer to the Final Report, chapter numbers refer to this Study Guide.

1. What weight do you think the church should attach to this report? How important is the 'new atmosphere of Christian fellowship' (p.117)? How representative was the membership of ARCIC (p.106f. and chapter 5)?
2. What changes have you heard of in the Roman Catholic church through friends, newspaper articles etc. over the past 15 years? Why not ask a Roman Catholic to visit your group and explain the impact of the Second Vatican Council? (See also chapter 4).
3. Do you think ARCIC chose the wisest order in which to deal with its three main topics? What are the advantages and drawbacks of dealing with Authority last, rather than first, as originally intended (see chapter 5)?
4. Where do you find the official teaching of the Church of England? How often do you read the 39 Articles? Should they be more easily available?
5. What is the official Anglican teaching on the relationship between Scripture and tradition? (See Articles 6, 20 and 34, and compare chapter 3, under the heading 'Revelation').
6. If the touchstone of authentic Christianity is Holy Scripture, we can rejoice at what is said about 'The Place of Scripture' on p.69f. But what do you make of the two approaches to tradition distinguished in the paragraph beginning at the foot of p.70? Does not history suggest that there is a fundamental cleavage here? (See chapters 3 and 7, under the heading 'Revelation').
7. Do you share the difficulties of the Anglican members of ARCIC with the three recent Roman Catholic dogmas of the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption and Papal Infallibility (see pp.94-96 and chapter 4)?

8. What is the official Anglican teaching on Justification (see Article 11)? How important do you think it is that the Report is silent on the disagreement between the churches about this matter? (See chapters 3 and 7, under the heading 'Salvation').
9. What does the Church of England teach about the relationship between the monarch and the Bishop of Rome (see Article 37)? Do you think that this teaching is still relevant?
10. Consider in their context the statements of the report about Papal Primacy quoted in chapter 7. Do you consider that the case for its necessity or appropriateness has been made out?
11. Were you in favour of the present pope visiting Britain or not? Give your reasons.
12. What is the official Anglican teaching about Ministry? (See Article 23 and the preface to the Prayer Book ordination services). Does this teaching justify the caution shown in the report (foot of p.43) about the necessity of having bishops?
13. What do you make of the different kinds of priesthood distinguished on pp. 40-42? (See also paragraph 13 on p.35f.). Did you know that in 1896 Rome pronounced Anglican ordinations null and void, and do you understand the grounds on which she is being asked to think again (p.44f.)?
14. What does the Church of England teach about the manner in which Christ's body and blood are present and are partaken in the sacrament of Holy Communion (see Articles 28 and 29)? In what points does the report agree with this teaching and in what points does it disagree (see pp.14-16, paragraphs 6-11; pp.20-22, paragraphs 6-7)?
15. Do you think that ARCIC is, on the whole, justified in claiming that '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' (p.99), or should we be content with friendly relations and await further developments?