



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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ARC VII STATEMENT

A. Background

Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the United States have been meeting officially since June of 1965. The group of representatives named by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Joint Commission on Ecumenical Relations of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America has subsequently been known as the Joint Commission on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations in the United States (usually informally abbreviated to ARC).

Seven meetings have been held to date. These were ARC I, in June of 1965, in Washington, D.C.; ARC II, in February of 1966, at Kansas City, Missouri; ARC III, in October of 1966, at Providence, Rhode Island; ARC IV, in May of 1967, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin; ARC V, in January of 1968, at Jackson, Mississippi; ARC VI, in December of 1968, at Liberty, Missouri; ARC VII, in December of 1969, at Boynton Beach, Florida.

From the beginning, members of ARC have sensed the creative theological and ecumenical possibilities in the situation of their two churches in the United States. At their first meeting, they came to a speedy agreement on several questions relating to the sacraments of Christian initiation. In particular, they were agreed that the instances of conditional baptism of Episcopalians upon admission to the Roman Catholic Church or of confirmation of Roman Catholics by Episcopalians were abuses. With their common sacramental emphasis, the group chose at the same time the topic of the ensuing conversations to be: "The Eucharist, Sign and Cause of Unity; the Church as a Eucharistic Fellowship." ARC studied this theme continuously in meetings II through V.

At ARC II, the question was immediately raised, as the conclusion to one of the several papers presented it: "Could not we, in the controlled situation which is ours, celebrate together the Eucharist? If not, why not? What precisely are the barriers?"

It became clear that some of both Roman Catholic and Anglican members felt it possible, on the basis of principle, to propose that discriminate Eucharistic communion be celebrated, now or in the near future, by the group as a legitimate ecclesial action. In all of the ARC meetings, on successive days, Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgies have been celebrated with all of the members attending. In every instance, only Anglicans have received communion at the Anglican liturgy and only Roman Catholics have received at the Roman Catholic liturgy.

ARC II considered a number of barriers which have existed to the full communion and organic unity of our Churches. Many of these appeared no longer to be obstacles to the participation of Anglicans and Roman Catholics together in the Eucharist in one another's churches. Some important difficulties remained, barring such an action insofar as could be seen at that time. Still some expressed the sentiment that perhaps such communion was not so far away, especially when the urgency of the Churches' united presence to the world was sufficiently realized. In the press conference which followed, it was this optimism which overshadowed the report on the specifics of the conference and, consequently, several newspapers had headlines suggesting imminent intercommunion or a new joint rite. While such suggestions did not become actualities in succeeding meetings, nevertheless, a certain expectation, which cannot be ignored, was created among our people and, indeed, among certain members of the commission

itself.

ARC III advanced agreements by clarifying language, the meaning of liturgical practices and the general theological nature of holy orders and of the priestly ministry. Both churches hold firmly for the necessity of an ordained ministry in which are included the three orders of bishops, priests (presbyters) and deacons. Problems and practices of intercommunion were again discussed and not entirely resolved.

ARC IV took up the study of Eucharistic sacrifice, studying the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Lambeth Conference Report of 1958, the 1948 Statement of Faith and Order of the Episcopal Church, and other statements of the contemporary position of both our Churches. It concluded that while, since the time of the Reformation, the doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice had been considered a major obstacle to the reconciliation of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church, this was no longer true. It based its conclusion on the findings of the modern biblical, liturgical and theological studies which, ARC members believed, had transcended the polemical formulations of an earlier period.

This same consultation considered it to be of the utmost importance for the clergy and laity of the two Churches to acknowledge their substantial agreement in this area of Eucharistic doctrine and to build upon it as they go forward in dialogue. In elucidation, ARC IV published a statement as a kind of brief summary of such consensus (see appendix I).

The next consultation again studied official documentation and theological papers, this time on the necessity and role of the ordained priesthood and the relationship of this ministry to the common priesthood and to the role of the laity in the church. It concluded that there was no basic difference of understanding on these topics and that whatever minor differences of understanding did exist, they did not in themselves constitute the barrier to the two Churches celebrating and receiving communion together.

The sixth consultation heard papers exploring the problem of unity from the viewpoint of a layman's experience and of a bishop's experience as a guardian and representative of church unity. However, most of the dialogue was devoted to consideration of the future of such bilateral consultations as ARC and to the procedures for the issuance of releases, interim statements and the occasional publishing of the proceedings of such sessions.

Most of the meeting was spent clarifying such procedures. An Executive Committee was set up to expedite internal housekeeping matters in the future. A careful statement of the competence of ARC and of its relation to the news media was drawn up and is appended to this report (see appendix II).

B. Pastoral Situation

ARC members, as they work toward Christian reconciliation, feel the demands of urgency pushing them ahead. The religious situation in the United States today is challenging and, we believe, pressing. Its salient characteristics are these:

1. American cultural patterns have changed. During the past two generations the mobility of people -- in residence, in social interaction, and in income level -- has weakened the sense of dependence upon cultural and national traditions linking people to their background in the Old World. Present tensions of race and region are uniquely American problems existing within an emerging American culture. Attachments to religious affiliations embedded in other national traditions increasingly are no longer dominant influences. In this emerging socio-cultural context, a fragmented Christianity finds it difficult to contribute the healing and cohering influences so clearly needed.
2. The Second Vatican Council spoke to the hearts of all people. In the American setting it was heard as the promise of a renewed Christianity and raised hopes for a united Christendom. A variety of influences have combined in the United States to bring about a pattern of consultations, involving both Roman Catholics

and Episcopalians, in separate exploratory discussions with other Christian groups. Especially noteworthy is the Consultation on Church Union, an effort at shaping a united church in which nine Churches, including the Episcopal Church, are engaged. Renewal and the rediscovery of the Christian commitment influence the American religious scene. The Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission understands itself as part of this movement.

3. Because the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communion in the U. S. share a greatly treasured Christian tradition, they are deeply aware of their common commitment to preserve these inheritances and to carry them forward into the emerging fabric of American religious life. At the same time, both are sensitive to the larger worldwide scope of their communions, and they are resolved through ARC both to contribute to the Permanent Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission the fruits of their efforts in the American context and also to utilize the accomplishments realized by the International consultation.
4. The members of ARC feel strongly the urgency to move soundly and positively toward a position of organic unity of their communions. Concerned Christians are already finding ways for the expression of their shared commitment. Often these are beyond the bounds of the formal church structures.

C. Projections

We, the members of the Joint Commission on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, now declare that we see the goal as to realize full communion of the Roman Catholic Church with the Episcopal Church and the other Churches of the Anglican Communion. For the past four and one half years we have given our energies to the task of this consultation. Nothing in the course of this serious enterprise has emerged which would cause us to think for a moment that this goal, given the guidance and support of the Spirit of Christ, is unattainable. To the contrary, the progress which we hope we have achieved in the Holy Spirit has deeply encouraged us to press forward with a sense of earnest responsibility toward this achievement, insofar as this lies within our strength and capacity. This we want to do, not only with a sense of the seriousness of our undertaking, but with a profound sense of responsibility to the now separate churches to which we belong. We wish to submit all our findings, and the proposals which we offer, to the serious, searching scrutiny and judgment of our Churches. We shall be most attentive to their response.

At the same time, we hasten to add that we cannot conceive our efforts in this bilateral consultation as divorced from the other significant efforts which in our times we are privileged to witness being made to achieve the goal of further reconciliation and full ecclesial unity among all Christians. We would never wish our own specific efforts and our own specific goal to be regarded as prejudicial to the many different efforts that are being made by our Churches toward this end. Specifically, we wish to mention in this regard the Consultation on Church Union, in which the Episcopal Church is engaged, and the other bilateral consultations in which both our Churches are honored to participate. All of these endeavors have been a source of gratification to the members of the ARC and we, in turn, hope that our endeavor may be seen as a source of encouragement to them.

Moreover, we cannot see the task that is set before us as unrelated to the agonizing and critically important quest of the men of our times, amid the deeply painful experiences of our century, to achieve a fuller unity among all the members of the human family. Our faith impels us to look to the Church of Christ as a visible sign of the possible unity of mankind. We are, therefore, keenly distressed that the one Church, of which all baptized Christians are members, is seen to be divided more than it is perceived to be one Church. We understand all too well how this state of affairs has come to be and how it persists. But we wish to encourage all faithful Christians who, with us, regard this present condition of the Church as a source of suffering to her members and of scandal to others.

We offer our efforts to be joined with those of all others who seek to alleviate this suffering and remove this scandalous state both from the Church and from the whole human family as well. If the full significance of the Anglican and Roman Catholic ecumenical quest for unity cannot be perceived apart from the quest of all Christians for their fullest unity, neither will our furthest hopes be fulfilled apart from the need of all men for a much greater realization of the fitting unity of all mankind.

This we regard as an important imperative of the Church of Christ among men in human history, there both serving and rejoicing over the possibilities that God has bestowed upon us. We see our communities as intimately linked with mankind and its history. "The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, these too are the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.1.)

In the recommendations of the Preparatory Commission for Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, we are able to discern three possible stages in the restoration of full communion between our churches.

(I) Re-encounter through personal exchange and dialogue.

After four centuries of estrangement, we have witnessed the beginning of reconciliation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Pope Paul VI marked in a visible way the success, not only of the program for ecumenical effort proposed by the II Vatican Council, but also of many earlier, courageous initiatives on the part of Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

This meeting of our leaders and especially their participation in a Service of Prayer, gave proof of their personal commitment to the quest for full organic unity. This meeting led happily to the establishment of an international Preparatory Commission and to its results, namely, the Malta Report and the creation of an international Permanent Commission for Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations.

It is now our purpose in ARC to pursue, as far as possible, in the United States of America, the recommendations of the international Preparatory Commission as they have been approved by the Holy See and Canterbury.

ARC already has a history and has laid a foundation upon which we can build. Our earlier statements stand as our testimony. Still we await expectantly further response and criticism of these efforts from our Churches.

Around the world and across our nation there are many signs of a developing rapport between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. There is need at this time, however, to signalize in new ways our commitment to the cause of unity. Among the recommendations of the Malta Report is one which calls for fraternal meetings between Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops. Given our common belief in the role of bishops as bearers of an apostolic office and as "the visible principle and foundation of unity" in their particular churches (Vd. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, n.23), we look forward to such exchanges in the U.S.A.

At some appropriate time in the not too distant future, we also hope for an event which, following the example set by Pope Paul and Archbishop Michael, will manifest anew the character of the close relations between our churches. At the national level, some public service, both a solemn celebration of our given unity and a humble prayer for full unity, should take place under the leadership of representative bishops of both Churches and with participation by representatives of the clergy and laity of both Churches. This event would be intended as a common pledge of our resolve to seek full communion and organic unity.

(II) Growing together: Interim Steps

We in ARC feel the necessity for a common declaration of faith between Catholics and Anglicans, but we feel that this project would be more appropriately undertaken by the newly formed international Permanent Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission than by ARC. As we now see it, such a statement would affirm, in the description of the Preparatory Commission, "our common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit; our common baptism in the one Church of God; our sharing of the Holy Scriptures, of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, the Chalcedonian definition, and the teaching of the Fathers; our common Christian inheritance for many centuries with

its living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality, Church order, and mission." (Paragraph 3 of the Malta Report.)

Having achieved agreement in our past meetings of ARC on the Church as a Eucharistic fellowship, on the theology of the celebrant, and on the nature of Eucharistic sacrifice, we now feel our next step in ARC should be to move on toward mutual recognition of ministry in a statement that we can forward to our respective church authorities for action.

We endorse the following statement from the international Anglican-Roman Catholic Preparatory Commission:

"We are agreed that among the conditions required for intercommunion are both a true sharing in faith and the mutual recognition of ministry. The latter presents a particular difficulty in regard to Anglican Orders according to the traditional judgment of the Roman Church. We believe that the present growing together of our two communions and the needs of the future require of us a very serious consideration of this question in the light of modern theology. The theology of the ministry forms part of the theology of the Church and must be considered as such. It is only when sufficient agreement has been reached as to the nature of the priesthood and the meaning to be attached in this context to the word 'validity' that we could proceed, working always jointly, to the application of this doctrine to the Anglican ministry of today. We would wish to reexamine historical events and past documents only to the extent that they can throw light upon the facts of the present situation." (Paragraph 19 of the Malta Report.)

We feel that ARC should immediately study the question of orders together with the related topics of episcopal collegiality, the papacy, and the authority and teaching office in the whole church. Our next meeting will examine these subjects also in the context of developments in other bilateral conversations, such as the Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, and the findings of the Consultation on Church Union.

Further agreements on the topics already listed may give us more light on possible stages or steps of partial Eucharistic communion on the way to full communion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion. Without attempting to predict the shape of such stages because of our limited perspective at this point and the new developments in polity and theology, we feel we should examine the following relationships as offering, not static nor fully satisfactory models, but some possible points of departure for new developments between our churches :

1. The Concordat establishing communion between the Old Catholic and Anglican Churches.
2. The nature of uniatism within the Roman Catholic Church.
3. The proposals of the Second Vatican Council about relationships between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches.
4. The Services of Reconciliation in the many proposed church unions involving Anglicans, such as the Consultation on Church Union, the North India/Pakistan Plan (now officially approved by the constituting churches), and the Plans in England, Ceylon, Nigeria, Ghana, Canada and New Zealand.

If we can achieve a mutually acceptable statement concerning episcopacy and priesthood, we hope to recommend the reconciliation of the ordained ministries of the two churches without "reordination" or "conditional ordination."

(III) Toward Full Communion and Organic Unity

Following the completion of the above-mentioned tasks, we can hope for the restoration of full communion and organic unity. The terms "full communion" and "organic unity" need further definition, but both of them signify an intention to arrive at the oneness for which Christ prayed in his high priestly prayer: a unity which shows forth the relationship between the Father and the Son in the Spirit, so that the world may see the glory of God revealed in the relationship of his disciples with one another.

Full communion must not be interpreted as an agreement to disagree while sharing in the Eucharistic gifts, nor may organic unity be understood as a juridical concept implying a particular form of Church government. Such a unity is hard to visualize, but would include a common profession of faith and would mean a sufficient compatibility of polity to make possible a united mission to the human family. Whatever structural forms

emerge, it is hoped that cultural and liturgical variety will remain so that the values of both the Roman and the Anglican ethos will survive and develop.

We hope also to further the reconciliation of our respective Churches in such a way as to promote the still wider reconciliation with other Christian Churches.

D. Diffusion

Since the goal of ARC is full communion and organic union between our two Churches, we recognize the need for making this goal, and our progress toward it, widely known among the bishops, priests, religious and laity of the two Churches. Accordingly, we would like to see the following programs set in motion.

1. In the press and the television news, with the assistance of our press officers, we should arrange for an announcement of our joint acceptance of this goal, accompanied by interviews with our two chairmen and two other members of the consultation.
2. Promotion of spiritual ecumenism is necessary to make us all realize that the varieties of spirituality within our two communions can be a source of mutual enrichment, and that loyalty to our relationships with God will be strengthened, not eroded, by participation in each other's spiritual activity and resources (*communicatio in spiritualibus*).
3. The projected meeting of bishops, combining a day of recollection with a day of discussion of pastoral concerns and problems, should serve several purposes besides the direct goals of the meeting itself: (a) making our efforts toward union visible to the world; (b) establishing continuing collaboration between bishops with overlapping jurisdictions; (c) providing a model for further conferences, perhaps on a regional basis, to strengthen relationships between our two hierarchies throughout the nation.
4. Joint clergy conferences should be encouraged, and our ecumenical officers and diocesan ecumenical contacts should become resources for subjects and speakers (perhaps as "traveling teams") to assure successful programs that would move our two Churches toward the common goal.
5. The movement toward sharing in theological training should be systematically encouraged with the aim of raising up a new generation of priests who know and understand their common spiritual heritage.
6. Cooperation should be fostered between our program resource persons, especially in the areas of adult education, professional leadership development, and missions. Steps should be taken toward unifying our basic approaches toward religious education of the young.
7. The religious orders should be made aware of the desirability of closer relationships between orders of similar inspiration as recommended in the Malta Report and approved by authority.
8. Participation of the laity in joint retreats and conferences, in living room dialogues, and in the week of prayer for Christian unity, should be systematically encouraged.
9. Our Christian brotherhood should issue in theologically based joint action for the whole family of man. Together we must bear witness to Christ's love for persons of all races and identify with them in their struggle for justice. Together we must work to build or preserve a natural environment fit for the dignity of each human person and help to create a community in which every man can live in peace, free from fear, hunger and poverty. In doing these things our mutual love will grow to include all men.

10. The special relationship springing from our many areas of common life and tradition should not only be a source of mutual enrichment for our two Churches, but should also serve the purpose of moving toward the greater goal of unity of the whole Christian fellowship. There should be continuing consultation, in particular, on the subject of Anglican union discussions with other Churches to help assure that they will fulfill their declared purpose of being steps toward the unity of the whole body of Christ.
11. The Ecumenical Commissions of our two Churches, through their staffs, should assume responsibility for these and other means of diffusing ecumenical knowledge and understanding through our Churches at all levels.

Conclusion

The participants in the ARC present this statement, prepared and reviewed by us at our seventh session, as one which records our substantial agreement. As a group we also recognize the fact that we must continuously seek more and more adequate ways to express the insights that come to us and the hopes that we share. It is in this spirit and with this clear understanding that we submit this statement to the judgment of the authorities of our Churches and offer it for the consideration of our fellow workers in the ecumenical undertaking.

December 8-11, 1969

Appendix I

The Church is the Body of Christ and is built up by the Word through the Eucharist.

Baptism is the entrance into the Eucharistic community. In the Holy Eucharist Christians are united with Christ as the fulfillment and perfection of their baptismal union with him.

In the Lord's Supper we participate at the same time in Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension; the Christian community is thus transformed in grace and the pledge of future glory is given to us.

Our communion with Christ in the Holy Eucharist is also communion with one another. Such union is achieved through the Holy Spirit.

Christian people participating in Christ's priesthood through baptism and confirmation are meant to be a living sacrifice to God. That sacrifice finds its fullest expression in the Eucharistic offering of the priesthood of the people of God. Such sacramental offering of the whole people is made possible through the special action of the ministerial priest, who is empowered by his ordination to make present Christ's sacrifice for his people.

The Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist is not just the sacrifice of the cross but the sacrifice of Christ's whole life of obedience to the Father which culminated in his death on the cross and his glorious resurrection. We offer nothing we have not first received; because of our incorporation into Christ at baptism, he offers us in himself to the Father.

Appendix II

The Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission recognizes that it can make only recommendations, not decisions, concerning closer relations and doctrinal agreements between our two Churches. Such decisions must be arrived at by the appropriate authorities of each Church after consideration and recommendation by our parent bodies, the Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Joint Commission on Ecumenical Relations.

However, the work in which we are engaged is not secret by nature and from time to time may be of interest and concern to the people of God in general. They too are part of the process whereby the Church makes its decisions and their reactions, whether favorable or unfavorable, are significant to the authoritative decision-making bodies.

The mass media are, with all their limitations, a major means of informing the people of God as to the ideas and opportunities being proposed to the two parent bodies. We

believe that a policy of openness, in spite of occasional confusion or mistakes, will result in the long run in more positive achievements than a policy of close control of the dissemination of information. The group itself must, of course, be sensitive to its responsibilities not to misrepresent either its own status or the actual state of ecumenical agreement between our two Communion.

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