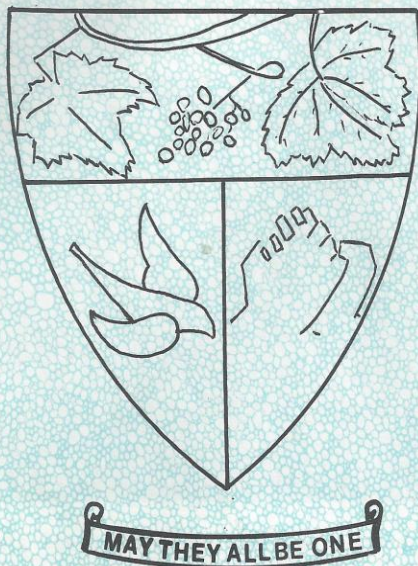


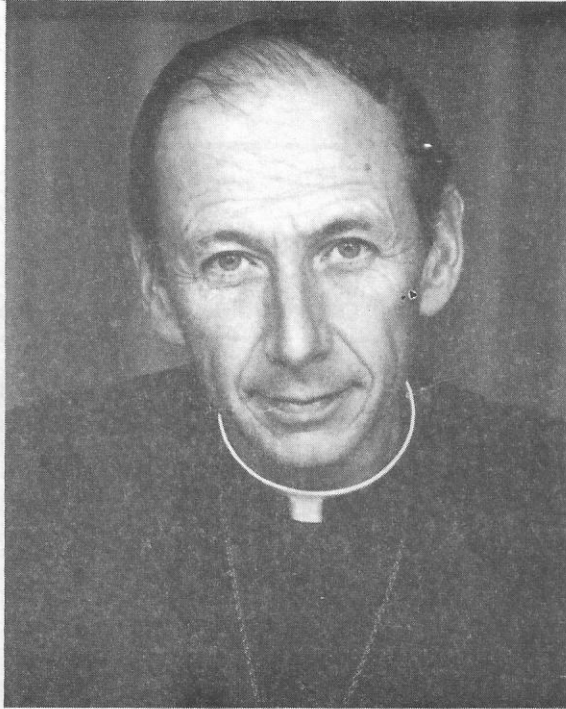
Together in Christ *50p*



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Archbishop Bowen

EDITORIAL

It is a joy to share with you the kind and encouraging letter received from our Archbishop on the occasion of the launching *Together in Christ* as a Diocesan publication. With the formal acceptance and support of His Grace and of our three Area Bishops, it sails confidently forward on its mission for unity.

We welcome on board our new Secretary of the CCU, Fr Michael Jackson with all our other generous contributors, whose writings you can now enjoy to the full.

When you finish your reading, may we urge you to turn back to end of the Archbishop's message, asking yourself: How can spread the message of unity and translate its ideas into practice?" Then Holy Spirit guide you in your response.

Please keep on writing for *Together in Christ*. We depend on you.

God bless you all.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE
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I am delighted to be able to send a message to you in this, the first official diocesan-wide distribution of "Together in Christ". For about four years, the South East Area of the Diocese has benefited from the work for unity carried on through its pages and it is good that it should now reach a wider audience.

The fostering of ecumenism is not an option in the work of the Church, but an essential ingredient of its mission. Our Lord prayed that "they all may be one" and entrusted to us the work of building up the Kingdom of God. By keeping its readers informed of what is happening around the Diocese and by stimulating our thoughts in new directions, "Together in Christ" is playing an important role in the creation of the world-wide family of the children of God.

But it is just a start. It will be up to each one of us to spread the message and to translate ideas into practice. While our Christian witness is divided, it cannot realise its full potential. May this publication help to bring about that day when the unity of Christians is a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Anthony Bowen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of a small cross symbol.

9th June 1987

Archbishop of Southwark

THREE QUESTIONS ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



Fr. Michael Jackson

Introduction

Questions are odd things: some demand straightforward answers; others need more general responses to open up lines of thought. The following three questions on Church membership have been posed to me in the recent past. The first two belong to the first category and so they can be given a fairly straightforward answer. The third question, however, belongs to the second category. The response is, therefore, more an attempt to find sound terms of reference for dealing with the issues. I have grouped the particular questions together here because they are closely related. I present them simply to stimulate thoughts about the issue.

Q. 1: How do I become a member of the Roman Catholic Church?

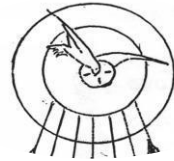
The simple answer to this question is: through a process of initiation. This simple answer, however, conceals a more complex practice. In the Roman Catholic Church we have two basic patterns of Christian initiation.

One pattern begins with infant baptism. After a child has been baptised it is brought up in the faith of the Catholic Church by its parents; it might also go to a Catholic school. At some time around the the age of 7 the child will be prepared for Holy Communion. (This preparation is often accompanied with preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation.) Further growth in the faith will lead the youth to preparation for Confirmation. This completes the process of initiation, but does not (one hopes) signal the end of the young person's Christian formation.

The other pattern of initiation is for people over the age of 7. This process begins with entrance into the catechumenate. The person has a sponsor who is usually one of the local community. The sponsor walks with the catechumen on his or her journey of growth in faith. Over a period of time the Scriptures are unfolded to the catechumen, who comes to understand what it means to be called to union with the Father in Christ, and what it means to become a member of the Christian community. This pattern of initiation culminates in the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. The process of initiation does not end here; there follows a time of reflection on what has happened to the new member of the Church during the process of initiation. This is called the period of mystagogia.

All this may seem rather familiar. But it is worth laying it out here because different churches have different understandings of the processes by which people become members of the church. Some consider that a person is a full member only when the process of initiation has been completed, i.e. on reception of Confirmation followed by Holy Communion. This seems an obviously logical position to take. However, if this is the case, we have to ask what is the real effect of the sacrament of Baptism? Are those who have been baptised as infants but are not yet confirmed to be ruled out as Church members? What part can they play in the life of the church community? What responsibilities can they be given in the apostolic life of a local church community?

In the Roman Catholic Church there does not seem to be any doubt about when a person becomes a member of the Church through the catechumenate pattern of initiation. The celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil makes it perfectly clear.



But it may not appear quite so clear with the infant baptism pattern.

Nevertheless it seems to me that in the Roman Catholic Church one really does become a member of the Church (one of "Christ's faithful", as the 1983 Code of Canon Law puts it) through the sacrament of Baptism, even when it is the baptism of an infant. Infant baptism marks a definitive step in the way of salvation. The powers of sin and death are overcome. The child is transferred from darkness to light — all by the gracious gift of God himself. The baptism of the child is a community event. The church community celebrates the power of the death and resurrection of Christ building up the church, the Body of Christ. It is within that community that the child will grow in faith and gradually take on fuller responsibilities in the life of the church.

"Baptism, of itself, is only a beginning, a point of departure, for it is wholly directed towards acquiring the fullness of life in Christ. Baptism is thus ordained toward a complete profession of faith, a complete incorporation into the system of salvation such as Christ himself willed it to be, and finally, toward a complete integration into eucharistic communion" (Decree on Ecumenism, 22)

This vision of the gradual and progressive entry into the full apostolic life of the church is very important. We all grow gradually into full membership of the church even those who were initiated as young people or as adults. We are all called to take a fuller and fuller part in the apostolic mission of the church. For those who enter the church through the adult initiation process the starting point is clear to everybody. But it is equally clear for those who are baptised as infants: start as soon as you can, in whatever way you can. All have the right to support

and promote apostolic activity according to their state and condition (cf. Code of Canon Law, c. 216).

Who gives the lead to the children? The parents and the community. This is one of their first responsibilities as members of the church.

Q. 2: What does it mean to be a member of the church?

You do not have to be old to be a good disciple. You just have to want to listen to the voice of the master and to put his new commandment into practice. Good Christian parents encourage their children from an early age to be holy, teaching them how to pray and encouraging them to do good works. These are the two keys to church membership; put in other words we know them as "discipleship" and "apostolate".

Discipleship means hearing the Word within the community of the Church. The most important occasion for hearing the Word in the Church is at Mass. Here the promise of the Word is juxtaposed with its fulfilment: Christ present among us. But there are many other places in which we can hear the Word, for instance, in prayer groups and at home.

Apostolate follows from discipleship, which is its constant companion. Listening to the Good News draws us out of ourselves. We want to share the life that we have been given. We want to tell others about God's love for us and for all creation. To be a member of a church is to identify with its mission and to actively promote that mission.

Being a member of the church involves constantly returning to the Word and constantly going out to declare the Word of life for all to hear and see.

Q. 3: Can I be a member of more than one church? (The question of multiple membership.)

This question is raised in the rather special circumstances of some Local Ecumenical Projects (LEPs). It is also a question which is of particular importance to Inter-Church Families who often try (in the face of considerable discouragement) to live as full a life as possible in the churches of both parents. These two settings in which the question is raised prompt different responses to it. The responses are, however, related. It may be helpful at this stage to distinguish between two aspects of Church life and membership: the juridical and the spiritual-moral.

First, the juridical dimension of Church membership. Churches express their self-understanding and self-definitions in legal codes. Most churches in their legal codes do not recognise the possibility of a person being simultaneously a member of two or more churches. Their reasons vary. Some do not like to put membership on the sort of individualistic basis that seems to be involved in multiple membership. These churches would prefer to wait until churches recognise one another as Church. Mutual recognition of membership would follow from this

mutual ecclesial recognition. Others fear that multiple membership of individuals and groups would perpetuate the very denominationalism that such a step is trying to overcome.

It seems, then, that at present, joint or multiple membership is possible only between those churches who in their legal codes allow for such a state. It cannot be otherwise, or membership would cease to be the publicly sought and granted state that it is. The alternatives would be privatisation of Christianity or 'groupness', neither of which is acceptable.

The second aspect of membership is its spiritual-moral dimension. There is more to membership than simply being identifiable according to some legal code, or even being listed on a roll. Few Christians would disagree when a Roman Catholic says that being a member of the Church means being united with Christ in mind, heart, will and action.

We become united in mind with Christ as we come to know of the Father's love for his people through the centuries: how he made himself known to his chosen people, how he loved them by saving them, how he promised them the fullness of life, how he fulfilled his promises in Jesus.

We become united in heart with Christ as we come to be one with him in his love for the Father and for all creation. We can see in Christ one who accepts people, whoever they are, whether rich or poor, well-dressed or shabby, well-educated or not, respectable or not. To each he speaks the truth. To some the truth will be hard to hear, but to all it will offer hope. Such hopeful words accompanied by loving kindness are the hallmarks of Christians.

We become united with Christ in will as we become obedient to his will, as he was obedient to his Father. In other words, he put his Father's will first - even when it meant giving his life. Christ's death on the cross was the culmination of a life in obedience; it was the last of a daily series of acts of Will. Daily he joined his own will to that of his Father. "Thy Will be done" is the daily prayer of a member of Christ's Church. The degree to which we put ourselves out to follow that will is the degree to which we are prepared to take up our Cross.

We become united in action with Christ in the Mass as we offer our life-sacrifice through him, with him and in him. (Not all churches hold this.) We also become united with Christ in his continuing work on earth through the Holy Spirit: in our apostolate in which we exercise those gifts which are made so powerful through the Holy Spirit.

The two dimensions of church life, the juridical and the spiritual-moral, are complementary. If one looks at the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law (1983) one finds that the juridical provisions for membership of the Church serve to encourage full active participation in the Church's life (i.e. the spiritual-moral dimension). It is a sad fact that there are some people who are juridically "members" but who are spiritually and morally "lapsed". However, there are

certainly people who, although they are not fully "members" of the Church in a juridical sense, are very active "members" in the spiritual-moral sense.

What does all this mean for our question? : Can I be a member of more than one church? We have seen that because membership is something that is publicly accorded by a church community (the juridical dimension) multiple membership can only be granted by those churches which recognise such a state. LEPs whose growth patterns have led them to the point where they have to consider the possibility of multiple membership find some real pastoral problems emerge, especially when people move away from the project.

We have also seen that people can enjoy quite a full apostolic life (the spiritual-moral dimension) in church communities of which they are not legally recognised members. This may offer a helping hand to those Inter-Church families who feel that everything is stacked against them.

It is highly desirable that those in Inter-Church families be allowed to feel welcome to share as widely as possible in the life of the church communities to which the parents belong. How far this participation is practicable should be the subject of dialogue between the families concerned and the ministers of the congregations in whose lives the families share.

The word "belong" seems to provide the clue to tackling this difficult question. We would be better approaching the matter from the point of view of "belonging". "Belonging" is a wider term than "membership". It does not carry the great juridical and formal publicity that is involved in "membership". It thus releases us to consider sharing in the life of other church communities in their spiritual and moral dimension. This would allow pastors and Inter-Church families to arrive together at genuine pastoral resolutions of some of the problems they face. It also encourages a dynamic view (concerned with real participation in the life of the community) rather than a static view (concerned with the state of "being a member") of church life and membership.



It is quite difficult to strike a healthy balance here. How fully can one share in the life of another church community while fully participating in the life of the church within which we were initiated into the Christian life? After all we only have so much time and energy.

The obvious focus for such sharing in another church's life is worship, and the Eucharist in particular. On the one hand this is good, because it recognises the centrality of worship in the Christian life. On the other hand it can easily bring one to the brink of ritualism. The brink has been crossed when the only act of participation is in its Eucharist. This is obviously an extreme case, and I only mention it here to signal what can happen when, with the best of intentions, the question "Can I be a member of more than one church?" becomes a cover for "Can I receive Holy Communion in more than one church?" (The questions are related, but they are very different.)

One should not underestimate the danger of ritualism. These days it is common for ecumenical discussions to focus on the Eucharist. This is perfectly understandable. Few would deny that the Eucharist is the essential act of the Church. However, to concentrate attention on the nature and the importance of the exclusion of the apostolic life of the Church to be in danger of making the best the enemy of the good. (The imbalance usually results from a misunderstanding of the relation between the Eucharist and the apostolic life.)

To step over the brink on the other side, of course, to fall into the sort of pastorally insensitive legalism which would not allow a person who is not juridically recognised as a member any real share the community's life.

The path between ritualism and legalism is broad and can be trodden with confidence provided two things are kept in mind. First, the place of the Eucharist in the life-sacrifice of the Church (the community's apostolate). Second, a positive understanding of church laws which exist to preserve good order and growth. However, they need constantly to be revised to serve the changing relations between the churches. Church leaders should be encouraged to consider what this means in rapidly developing ecumenical relations. LEPs and Inter-Church families merit a lot of careful guidance. Their growth should not be restricted by unreformed laws.

Obviously, I have not included all the questions that have been raised about church membership. Behind all these considerations lies the problem of the nature of the Church which we confess to be One but which we know to be divided. What is the relation between these two questions: "What does it mean to be the member of A church?" and "What does it mean to be a member of THE Church"?

Michael Jackson

OUR PILGRIMAGE TO CANTERBURY

On Sunday, 15th march 1987, the Tenterden Council of Churches arranged an Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral to honour the martyrs. The response was very good and two coaches left the town in the afternoon. En route there were readings from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and hymns sung in between, under the direction of the Rev. Andrew Norman.

We assembled in the Chapter House and then went into the Cathedral for Evensong where it was announced that there was an Ecumenical Pilgrimage from Tenterden. Oh how delightful was the singing of the choir!

After the service we went into the crypt to listen to an account of the life and martyrdom of St Thomas Becket and then to the Chapel of the modern martyrs where the Rev. Patrick Evans gave a summary of the martyrdom of seven of our modern day martyrs: Maximilian Kolbe, Martin Luther King, Janane Luwum, Oscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Maria Skobtsova and Edith Stein.

We then went back to the Chapter House to have the refreshments which we had brought with us.

Following this we went to the Martyrdom Chapel where the Rev John Hagreeen read the last sermon delivered by the saint just before he was martyred during Mass in his own Cathedral, as recorded by T S Eliot in his play *Murder in the Cathedral*.

This was a truly memorable occasion and one which it is hoped will be repeated. Congratulations to the organisers and many thanks to Warren's Coaches for transporting us, and also to the Readers for an excellent performance, well done.

Mary E Golding

PRAYER

(Address during Eucharist; given at Arundel Parish Conference)

When the vicar asked me to share some thoughts on prayer with you, I felt there could be no more appropriate time at which to begin - for are here this morning at this celebration of the Eucharist, the heart of our faith.

As a Catholic I cannot at this time receive Communion with you, but I can indeed be united in faith, and it is in this faith, it seems to me, that all prayer has its source.

It is the most precious gift we have, for it leads us to a supernatural form of life. To increase this supernatural life, we pray. Prayer could be described as the fertiliser, so to speak, the phostrogen that brings the plant on. We NEED to pray to grow.

And the point of the whole thing is to unite oneself to God's will for us, to be open as a flower to the sun, to the extent that we begin to realize our place in creation. For God created us, knows us, holds us in being, and loves us.

I think this matter of His loving us is something we tend to forget. To help become aware of it we need to be still a moment - "be still and know that I am God" the psalmist wrote - and we need to silence the tumult of our thoughts and impulses and so on, in order to become aware of His presence. This also becomes an acknowledgement of our "smallness" our "createdness" and it puts the thing in the right perspective.

So that we can say that prayer makes us more aware and gives us confidence. "we ourselves can do nothing but" — as St Paul went on to say: "I can do all things THROUGH CHRIST which strengtheneth me." The more we pray, the better it goes — and the Benedictine abbot who wrote those words also used to say: "Pray as you can, and not as you can't."

Usually when we at first come to pray we are conscious only of the ninety-nine important matters slicing through our minds or, if we manage to remain composed, we drop off to sleep! But what really matters is that we have actually

set aside even the smallest amount of time, regularly, and that we stay put even when we continue the laundry list with the surface of our minds or drop off. We have given the time to God, IN OUR WILL, which is what matters. If we persevere, sooner or later, we shall more easily remain still, our thoughts quietened, and in the silence we shall more readily hear His word.

I don't mean we shall necessarily hear it like Samuel, who kept getting up because he thought old Eli was calling, but in the way we find ourselves saying "Speak Lord, for thy servant is listening". And as we become adapted to this way of listening, I think that we shall begin to realise the sense of His presence. It is there, with us always - but we tend to make so much noise that we let it go.

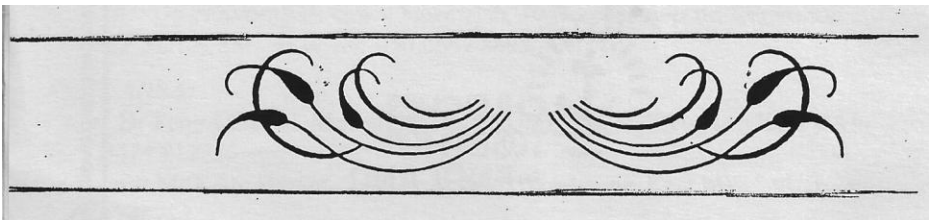
The more we pray and are conscious of this, the more precious the knowledge of that presence becomes. You remember the lay brother, Brother Lawrence, working in his monastery kitchen; he became so practiced in this awareness that his interior conversation with our Lord was continual in all the seemingly unimportant little things of the day. So it can be with us - and a source of continual joy. Whatever the circumstances of our lives, nothing need separate us from God.

This morning, gathered here, His love for each of us is accentuated at this service. Who but St Paul could write so succinctly when he wrote to the Romans: "Then what can separate us from the love of Christ?.....For I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realms of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord."

Sr Giles Dover

North Stoke Nr Arundel

"He (Caiaphas) did not speak in his own person, it was as high priest that he made this prophecy that Jesus was to die for the nation - and not for the nation only, but to gather together in unity the scattered children of God"
(John 11:51)





REFLECTIONS on the ecclesiology of Nottingham

The Nottingham ecumenical conference, which represented, for England, the climax of the "Not Strangers but Pilgrims" process ecumenical discovery was an immensely enriching experience for all who were privileged to participate in it. It has, I think, permanently influenced our ecumenical vision.

The conference produced a significant report with important implications for ecclesiology and ecumenism. In this article I want to examine just a few of the implications that I detect in it.

In only the second paragraph of the main report we find this striking statement:

"Universality comes alive in the local neighbourhood
when barriers are broken down and we begin to live in
one another's traditions."

In the past universality has tended to be seen in terms of certain fixed doctrines or structures or order; thus the Roman Catholic Church has seen communion with the Pope as universal primate as essential to full participation in the universality of the Church; Orthodox have seen acceptance of the Tradition as they understand it in a similar light. Now, at Nottingham, the major British churches (and some smaller ones too!) are talking in terms of an experience of sharing in a totality of the gifts that God has given to us in our different paths of development. We are talking in these terms rather than in terms of an experience of conformity, though that is not to deny that the fullness of future communion will inevitably involve certain common elements of belief and order. We are talking about what the New Testament calls *koinonia*, sharing participation, mutual indwelling and Fellowship in a common stream of the life of the Spirit, which binds us together in God himself. We are talking about affirming the good things that God has given to each other, about celebrating them, the experience Wesley refers to when he writes:

"The gift which he on one bestows, we all delight to prove."

It is more than a matter of mutual recognition or tolerance, it is a vital expansion of our experience of God's grace as we share in the witness and experience of each other. It will mean a real wrestling with each other's traditions, including those in them that are not instantly easily understandable or even very immediately

attractive, until we come to share out brother's vision. This is not to say of course, that diversity will not have an important continuing role to play in the Church; Nottingham is insistent that it will, but that we will be caught up in a process of constant growth through learning from each other,

The concept of "living in one another's traditions" has two important implications: first, that we recognise the authentic nature of each others' traditions and secondly that we see the Church as a dynamic institution whose growth is towards the "maturity of the full manhood of Christ" (Eph: 4.13). Tradition, as the Orthodox rightly remind us, is the life of the Holy Spirit within the Church. It is he who according to the promise of Christ "guides us into all truth". It is he who teaches us through the Fathers and still guides the mind of the Church. Nottingham seems to be saying that he still teaches us through the diverse traditions which are all part of his work. Great emphasis is placed on the rightness of this diversity as corresponding with the diversity of the human race and creation, and, therefore, presumably part of God's purpose for us. To pledge ourselves to discover universality through living in one another's traditions is a profound recognition of the way in which he works. But it will not be an easy thing to do. As human beings we share in the natural tendency to be afraid of the strange and unfamiliar within the history of the Church, we have been suspicious of those Christians who express the one faith in such different ways. We need a positive recognition of the way in which the grace of God is always at work, despite past and continued division. Disunity is wrong, but not everything that has developed within it is wrong. A subtle temptation, to which perhaps scholars, and certain types of Anglicans seem to be especially prone, is the idea that we can somehow go back to the pure faith of the undivided Church. This is impossible. God has not put us in the fifth but the late twentieth century, and it would be wrong to ignore what he has wrought since then. As a Methodist, I would find the R C Church much poorer if the heritage of the Counter Reformation were ditched altogether rather than being critically adapted to our present age.

However, the reconciliation of traditions does pose serious problems. How, for example, does one reconcile the claims and consciousness of a church that claims, as do the R C and Orthodox Churches that in them alone the fullness of unity subsists, and those of a church such as my own, which claims that it is part, but only part, of the true Catholic Church? We have, I think, to begin with an evaluation of the tradition of our churches, and I will use Methodism and Catholicism as examples here.

The Methodist Church claims that it was "raised up in the providence of God to spread Scriptural holiness throughout this land". It developed forms of ministry and worship which were designed to achieve this purpose, and we would expect our teaching and our tradition in these matters to be taken seriously by Catholics, though we have always recognised that God can and does work through other traditions and structures. We cannot deny, and Nottingham says we are not to

deny, "our treasures" but at the same time our tradition calls us to evaluate the traditions of others and see how entry into them can be made to serve an authentically Methodist purpose. This is implied in the prayer in our Covenant service where, amongst other things we ask God's forgiveness, "if we have made no ventures in fellowship". It is in this light that Methodists will evaluate the traditions of the Catholic Church which are not part of our present experience. We would want to ask how the acceptance of a strong Marian piety, of the Papal primacy etc. would aid people in the search for "full perfection" and if we discover that they really do, then I hope we would wish to "live in those traditions".

Nottingham, however, goes on to emphasise that "unity is not a denial of our treasures - it is a sharing of them, in the belief that God has the greater life and truth to give to us all" and, a little later : "unity is not a static structure." This surely is an understanding on which Methodists and Catholics agree. It accords, as I understand it, with the Catholic understanding of Tradition, in which the Church's understanding of the apostolic deposit of faith is ever more refined from age to age; it accords too, with our Methodist understanding of the Church as a fellowship which is on a constant pilgrimage to greater understanding. The Church is one, the Church is Christ's, but it is not a static organism. Growth is implicit in the promise of Christ that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, and in Paul's statement that our destiny as Christians is to grow up into the fullness of "the mature humanity of Christ" (Eph: 4.13)

There is scope too in Nottingham's ecclesiology, for the reconciliation of our differences on orders, validity of sacraments etc.. The Churches are at one in seeing their life and worship as sacramental (para 3). The interesting statement is made that even those churches that have no specifically sacramental life, the Friends and the Salvation Army, acknowledge this, and accept that their worship has qualities that are sacramental, even if not focussed in the specific sacraments. It seems that whatever our precise understanding of ministry and sacraments, we can all acknowledge the eucharistic orientation and intention of our different forms of worship. Catholics may still face problems in evaluating the exact status of a Methodist or Anglican eucharist, but they can recognise the specifically eucharistic nature and orientation Of Methodist worship and fellowship (whether centred on the Eucharist or other acts of worship) in such words of Charles Wesley as these:

"Come and let us sweetly join	Hands and hearts and voices raise.
Christ to praise in hymns divine,	Sing as in the ancient days
Give we all with one accord	Antedate the joys above
Glory to our common Lord.	Celebrate the feast of love.

Jesu, dear expected guest
Thou art bidden to the feast.

For thyself our hearts prepare
Come and rest and banquet there."

After I started writing this article I chanced upon an extremely significant article In '*One in Christ*' by George A Tavad, in which he states that the key problem for the Roman Catholic and other Churches is, not so much the recognition of ministries as that of mutual recognition as churches. He argues that if the churches can recognise each others' churchly existence, then surely they will be able to recognise each others' ministries. However, he makes two comments, one of which I feel we Methodists can fully endorse, the second of which I feel does need modification. The first is: "The closer a Christian communion is to the Eucharist in doctrine, liturgy and piety, the more it is the Church!" This, I think, we can all agree with. However, he goes on to say: "The more exclusively another communion wishes to be a community of the word rather than the sacrament, the less church and the more ecclesial community it will be. This is, I think, to import a false dichotomy; to Methodists, and, I think, most Christians of the Reformation Churches, the presence of Christ in word and sacrament are alike vital, and of the same living reality of the Risen Lord. Cardinal Manning once said that he loved the Methodist Local Preachers because they pleaded the sacrifice of Christ as effectively from their pulpits as he did from his altar. Manning recognised in this statement the two major ways in which the presence and activity of the one Risen Lord are celebrated and made effective and active in our midst. Clearly, more theological reflection is needed on this theme and on the role of word and sacraments within the total economy of salvation, but I am totally one with Fr Tavad when he says of his reflections: "This bares the ground for an ecclesiology, not yet fully elaborated, that will see the universal Church as a communion of communions" and when he goes on to say of the churches: "Each Of the communions making up the broader communion may indeed experience itself as being the Church; each may believe and teach theologically that the Church of Christ subsists in its order and polity; yet each also acknowledges that the Church of Christ is more fully in the universal communion than in its discrete communions."

I have quoted Fr Tavad at length because, although of course he was not at Nottingham, he seems to me so well to articulate the insights to which we are all groping. Let us hope that as we respond to the Nottingham challenge to live in one another's traditions, we all will come to recognise in each others' different traditions the presence of the authentic mystery of Christ, living, active and present in this fullness with his people. However, this will demand more of all of us than we have yet given; it will demand a real effort of prayer, time and study, and above all, love, to join each other in our journey through our separate traditions to the great reality of communion that is God's gift for us at the end of our journey.

David Carter

"A HAPPENING"- An Ecumenical Experiment

There is no doubt about the deep desire for Unity among Christians. Steady progress has been made since the lead given by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1982. Sharing in worship and good works has increased, but there is still room for experiment if progress is to be maintained.

One of the areas which might well be 'looked at, is a better understanding of the ways in which Christians worship. Ecumenical services tend to follow a set pattern: the well-worn "Sandwich" variety: hymn, Bible reading, hymn, address, hymn, prayers, hymn, blessing. Some members of Councils of Churches are bolder and from time to time attend one another's services, but more could be done along these lines, if it was allowed to happen!

Some time ago the Clevedon Council of Churches (of which I was then Chairman) agreed to my suggestion that on the last Sunday of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we should move away from the usual "sandwich" service and have a "Happening" instead in the Friary Church.

There were two main objects: (1) That each member Church should occupy about half-an-hour in praying for Christian Unity in their own form of prayer. (2) that people should be free to come and go as they wished during the three hours (7.30-10.30 p.m.) of the Happening, and that there should be no directive announcements but that the prayer "slots" should just happen!

Of course each minister was briefed beforehand and came with their "programme" carefully prepared, but the people were not to know this! Between each "slot" there was a coffee-break in the adjacent hall accessible from the church. The stewards were also briefed that if they noticed anyone obviously wondering what was to happen next at the end of a "slot" they were to suggest that they might like a cup of coffee in the hall. At the end of the coffee-break the process was reversed and the people gently shepherded back into the church. In the event the stewards only had to tell one or two what was happening and the rest followed!

What happened during the evening was that 400 people turned up. This put rather a strain on the ecumenical group of ladies providing the coffee! A maximum of 80-100 had been expected - the average for former occasions. However, they coped magnificently and no one was disappointed.

The first "slot" was devoted to a demonstration of the four purposes or ends of prayer (Adoration, Thanksgiving, Contrition and Supplication). I began with a short talk on the primacy of adoration with a suitable hymn and prayers. Then the Methodist Minister stressed the need to be thankful to God and a group of young people from his church offered songs and prayers of thanksgiving in which the whole congregation joined, as they did during the entire "happening". This was followed by the Salvation Army. The young Captain had brought twelve Songsters and an harmonium with him. In an excellent little address he exhorted us to seek forgiveness through the cleansing Blood of Jesus. Finally the "slot"

ended with a group of young people from the "Low" C of E church playing their guitars and singing appropriate "Pop" hymns, concluding with individual bidding prayers for the needs of the world. Then the people who happened to hear from the stewards about the coffee-break gradually moved into the hall, followed soon after by the rest of the congregation - all 400!

What happened next was an interesting address by the minister of the United Reformed Church on the responsibility of the individual Christian to seek unity with their brothers and sisters of other "persuasions". This was followed by a somewhat lengthy extempore prayer on the same theme.

After the second coffee-break the Baptist Minister, with a group of his young people, preached and offered prayers concluding with a selection of Bible songs sung by the group.

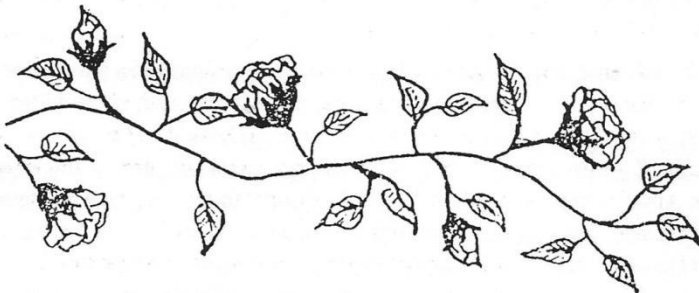
It happened that by the third coffee-break the congregation was beginning to thin out. But many remained for an excellent meditation on the Blessed Eucharist led by the "High" C of E Minister of a neighbouring church. There were periods for silent prayer ending with intercessions for Christian Unity.

During the final coffee-break the altar was prepared for Benediction. By then there happened to be 80-100 stalwarts left to complete the three hours. By this time too it happened to have become dark outside! Then all the lights in the church were put out and, fully vested, I processed into the church carrying the lighted Paschal Candle behind the thurifer, cross-bearer and acolytes. There followed the ceremony of the Renewal of Baptismal Vows from the Easter Vigil Liturgy.

Finally the people left the church carrying their lighted candles and singing "Forth in Thy Name, O LORD, I go..." The whole evening was a very moving and rewarding experience of the unifying power of prayer and community worship. Happen others may be inspired to try something of the same sort!

Lucian Hunt OFM

Franciscan Friary, Chilworth Guildford

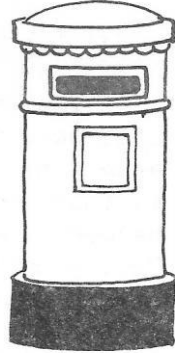


TO THE EDITOR . . .

Dear Editor,

"Redemptoris mater" - A Candid Reaction

In the Church Times, April 3 1987, Canon Christopher Hill, Anglican Secretary of ARCIC and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs, is reported as viewing the recent encyclical letter *"Redemptoris mater"* favourably. It "makes any examination of the theology of the role of Mary that much easier", he is quoted as saying, and adds: "It states very strongly that Mary's role is not one which in any sense infringes on the mediatorial role of Christ."



This reaction by a leading Anglican is very welcome, this new encyclical is no more explicit on the uniqueness of Christ's mediatorial role than *"Marialis Cultus"* of Pope Paul VI. (1974) Good news travels slowly, it seems! Now, in approving the ARCIC authority, the Church of England General Synod in November 1986, called for a more adequate treatment by ARCIC of Marian dogmas among other issues). I should like to make the following point as a minor contribution to ecumenical discussion of Our Lady.

I believe it is timely and important for Catholics who are not "Marian" in their devotional life to have the candour to say so, and (I hope) be spared any obloquy for their frankness. But if obloquy cannot be avoided, honesty still demands a declaration of one's position.

My position, and that of quite a few other Catholics - I know many personally - is in no way "anti-Mary". One can no more be "anti-Mt. Everest" than "anti-Mary"; both are objectively there. Even less am I in any way antagonistic to Mary, and I do not believe that other Catholics with a similar stance are antagonistic to her, either. Why, indeed, how could one be? No one is antagonistic to St Francis of Assisi, or to mother Teresa; I am grateful for their lives and example too.

But the crucial point is one of devotional practice. I find my own prayers are meaningful when addressed to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. And I know there are other Catholics who have found the same. This is not the place to enlarge on the matter. I am not trying to defend my practice; in any case, it is valid for me, and hence needs no defence. Equally, I am not seeking to attack: I humbly accept that many find it helpful and meaningful to address some at least of their prayers to or through Mary. I have absolutely no wish to alter that. What is appropriate here is the spirit behind Romans 14:1-13, and with no consideration of Whose faith is strong enough: no! - a generous acceptance that " each must be left free to hold his own opinion".

I am not, speaking here of the Marian Dogma at all. Even so, I believe that recognition of the fact that Catholic practice over Marian devotion is by no means

monolithic could be very helpful in creating a due sense of proportion in discussions of the Dogmas themselves.

The recent encyclical does not throw new theological light on Marian belief at least, not any that I could discern. If one wants to see a way forward, one could do worse than begin with a short article by Yarnold in *The Month* for June 1971. Entitled "*Marian Dogmas and Reunion*" it is a creative attempt to show the Christological meaning of the Marian Dogmas. Sixteen years on it still repays reading.

A final reaction to the encyclical - but not one with any ecumenical aspect - is to be reminded of the remark attributed to Pascal - "I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had the time to make it, shorter " . Yes, at 22,000 words or more the encyclical is long. longer than the Gospel according to Mark (or John), and, sadly, nothing like such a good read. Perhaps it is also timely and important for the faithful to say that they do indeed wish to be taught, but would prefer the teaching to be clear. As Shakespeare showed time and time again, it **is** possible to be profound without being prolix! This not an impertinence; indeed, it is highly pertinent to ask to be told plainly and simply what the heart of the Faith is.

Yours sincerely
Michael Edser

Carshalton, Surrey

CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Until 1984, when the Bishops' Conference was reorganized, the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice was an agency of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; it was staffed by a full time secretary, field workers and administrator and financed by the Conference. After reorganization, when riots in inner city areas Brixton, Toxteth, St Paul 's - had forced to the attention of society that all was not well in race relations in this country, concerned people decided to establish a positive Catholic presence in racial matters, and to provide a channel through which Catholics could work with each other and with non-Catholics in this field. The Conference of Bishops' gave its approval to the Association, though it had to raise its own funds.

Aims and Objectives. CARJ is a membership organisation of Catholic and other Christians; its objective is to work to combat racism and to create a just, multi-racial society. It offers support, speakers and resource materials to schools, colleges, seminaries and other training programmes to develop multi-cultural education policies and practices; it invites parishes and individuals to join, and offers parishes help- speakers, publications, suggestions for action to develop

open and welcoming communities and effective action plans; it is developing strong links with Britain's black-led churches; and it initiates and follows through action on immigration issues, e.g. on matters concerned with policing.

In the first two years of its existence, CARJ advised and took part in The National Consultation of Education in a multi-Cultural, multi-Racial Society, Which was get up by the Bishops' Committee for Family and School Education, which was attended by representatives of 19 dioceses religious education offices in June 1986.

Co-operated with the Bishops' Committee for Community Relations in a consultation entitled "*Religious Education in a Diverse Society*" in Birmingham, October 1986.

1. Organized the conference on "Cooperative Policing", in the Archdiocese of Southwark, following the publication of the Gifford Report on the Broadwater Farm Estate, also in October 1986.
2. Held a conference for head teachers and students at Digby Stuart College on "*Learning from Diversity*" November 1986.
3. Provided speakers for various pariah and other local meetings in various parts of the country.
4. Organized a Sunday service and Conference in Birmingham in June 1986 where the main speaker was Jim Wallis, the well-known American preacher.

In the coming year CARJ has plans to:

1. Run a major weekend bridge building consultation involving Catholics and black-led churches at Hengrave Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
2. Initiate a pilot scheme in the dioceses of Salford and Nottingham for a national survey of Black Catholics.
3. Produce Videos entitled "*The History of Black Settlers in Britain*" and for this £2,000 has been provided from the National Catholic Fund.

Why do we need CARJ?

Firstly to allow the voice of Catholics from the ethnic minorities of Caribbean, African or Asian origin to be heard in the Church and to encourage them to play a full and responsible part wherever possible, e.g. in the priesthood, the religious life, parish, school, parish council, as readers, ministers of Holy Communion, music or other ministries.

Secondly to further the process of education and consciousness raising of the Church as a whole. For example, nationally, since the Swann report, great efforts are being made by many educational authorities to consider the implication for curriculum and school life of the multi-cultural society that Britain now is.

Despite the publication of *Learning from Diversity* in 1984, * Catholic schools have been slower and less certain how to go about this task. As mentioned above, CARJ provided the input for the National Consultation on Education in a Multi-Cultural, multi-Racial Society which was run by the Bishops' Committee for Family and School in June 1986. This was attended by representatives from

diocesan offices and schools in most (but not all) dioceses in England & Wales, and set in motion a year long programme of analysis of local needs. For many of those attending this, and the similar consultation in Birmingham later in the year, being brought face to face with how British Catholics of the ethnic minority feel and the manner in which the Church treats them was a real eye-opener, and is leading to a radical reappraisal of working methods and decision making processes.

Thirdly to speak (however unofficially) in the name of Catholics on wider issues in society, e.g. in cases of terrorism or discrimination. For all our sakes - for the sake of the integrity of the Church in our society- we must be seen to be aware of and to care about the conditions in which many of the ethnic community live, bring up their families, and work (or not, as the case may be).

Fourthly as a point of contact between the Catholic Church and the black-led churches in this country. The black-led churches are thriving and growing, meeting the needs of their members vigorously and independently - Christian unity is about contact, Friendship and sharing with all Christian churches. CARJ is uniquely able to make this contact with nthe Pentecostal and other black-led churches.

What does CARJ need?

Members - Individual and corporate who will assist in the tasks CARJ has set itself and help it to grow, by bringing new vision, energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the work.

Invitations - to visit groups in parish, school, college, religious communities.

Financial support - CARJ is managing on a shoestring; a little help from friends would be a great encouragement.

If you would like further information, please contact:

The Catholic Association for Racial Justice Brixton, London SW2 IAS

A F Lobo

* Report of the working party on Catholic Education in a multicultural multiracial Society.

AS OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR, WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF WISHING EVERYONE ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THE COMING CHRISTMAS SEASON

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