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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

[*Cheltenham Conference Paper.*]

FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES:

(b) IN THE DOMINIONS.

BY THE REV. J. D. MULLINS, M.A., D.D., Secretary of the
Colonial and Continental Church Society.

I CONCEIVE it to be my function to try to give some idea of the position of the Church of England, and of progress towards Re-union, in the overseas dominions so far as it has come within my knowledge; and this means that I must confine my remarks to Canada and Australia.

British visitors to Canada are usually surprised to find how relatively inconspicuous is the Church of England compared with the Church of Rome and even the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. The Church of Rome, chiefly owing to her overwhelming preponderance in the Province of Quebec, together with her transplanted colonies of French Canadians elsewhere, claims about two-fifths of the entire population of the Dominion. Her great wealth, for she ranks with the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Standard Oil as one of the three great financial powers of Canada, enables her to "get in on the ground floor" in all advances into new regions or new extensions of population. Thus she imposes herself upon the imagination in most places by prominent buildings. Her political influence also penetrates everywhere. The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches are only slightly larger than the Anglican, but speaking generally their buildings are finer and their clergy rank in public estimation at least as highly as, or higher than our own. At a public gathering, for instance, where prayer has to be offered, it is quite likely that the Presbyterian or Methodist parson will be called upon rather than the Anglican. Personality, however, is in all cases the governing factor: position and rank count for nothing, and the Anglican clergy have no prestige as such.

The Anglican community is about one-eighth of the whole population, and in some parts falls as low as one-twelfth. It is weakest (next to Quebec) in some parts of Eastern Canada where the original settlement was chiefly from Scotland and the North of Ireland, and where the Church was late in the field. The complexion of its ritual seldom rises beyond what would here be thought very moderate, and would usually be voted by Englishmen exceedingly low. On the other hand there are churches where the teaching is advanced far beyond what the ritual would lead any one to expect. This disproportion will probably be found wherever the laity have a controlling voice in Church affairs: the lay mind has generally no liking for elaborate ritual, while it does not, unless carefully instructed, trouble itself much about errors of doctrine. It might have been supposed that such a Church would have been ready to assimilate with non-episcopalian bodies. It is unestablished, and enjoys no special social prestige, its views are not predominantly

sacerdotal, its laity—and the laity are as a rule less exclusive than the clergy—have a full share in its affairs. Yet with one exception I have not heard of any official movement in Eastern or Western Canada towards re-union, while projects for re-union between Presbyterians and Methodists have been publicly discussed. Possibly the fact that the Church is the under-dog with the resultant instinct for self-preservation, resentment at overlapping and suspicion of “sheep-stealing” may have something to do with this reserve.

Individually there is a good deal of fraternisation. In country districts, where the Church clergy are not stiff Anglicans, it is not uncommon for Nonconformists to suspend their services when some special preacher or special ceremony is announced in the Anglican church; and the Anglican laity in such cases expect reciprocal courtesies to be extended. At Montreal, under the Rev. Dr. Rexford, Principal of the diocesan theological college, a system of combined lectures for divinity students by professors drawn from the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and other Protestant colleges has been at work for many years, with excellent results. Some co-operation between the Presbyterian college at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and our own Emmanuel College has also been tried, but less extensively.

As for inter-communion—I imagine that it does not take place to any great extent in the larger cities, but in the pioneer districts Nonconformists frequently attend and are welcomed at Holy Communion at Anglican services. Probably the converse is true to a certain extent, but I imagine that when Anglicans, for want of their own services, get into the habit of attending those provided by Nonconformists they end in becoming members of that particular body, and do not readily return to their church even if, later on, its services become accessible. The Church has certainly lost considerably in places by this process.

The important move, already referred to, in the direction of unity, is that which has recently taken place in British Columbia, between the Anglican and Presbyterian Synods of the Province. Certain of the Bishops and a committee of the Presbyterian Synod met last year and in October unanimously agreed upon a series of resolutions which, while not directly touching the crucial questions of faith and order, do involve mutual recognition and co-operation to a remarkable extent. The following is the text of these resolutions:

1. “That before occupying new territory, where there are few settlers, and there is little prospect of rapid growth, or where other special circumstances exist, conference be held between the Bishop of the diocese and the Superintendent of (Presbyterian) missions, so as to prevent overlapping during the pioneer stage.”

“This agreement to be upon the clear and definite understanding that each communion reserves to itself the right to send a clergyman from time to time into such districts to administer the Sacraments to its own people.”

2. “That in cases of sparsely settled districts, when missionaries of both communions are at work, services should be held either on different Sundays, or at different hours on the same Sunday, so as to avoid apparent conflict,

and that the Bishop of the diocese and the Superintendent of missions should use their influence to promote such arrangements."

3. "That in the opinion of this conference the time has arrived when an adequate religious survey of this province should be undertaken, so as to ascertain what portions of the population are destitute of religious ordinances."

4. "That an effort should be made towards instituting a committee for the promotion of inter-Church conferences and the diffusing of information, regarding the presence and mode of life of Orientals in this Province, and also regarding Oriental immigration and the action of Government in relation to such immigration."

5. "That the two communions actively co-operate in the matter of law, enforcement in connection with the illicit sale of liquor, gambling, sexual vice, supervision of places of amusement, the rescue of victims of vice, etc."

6. "That the two communions continue to act together in regard to religious teaching in public schools, and that they co-operate in the work of religious education generally and in the effort to link up the young life of the people with the life and work of the Church."

7. "That the conference recommends the most complete co-operation possible in the matter of preparing and distributing popular literature, elucidating and advancing Christian principles of faith and conduct, and combating widely diffused errors in social and religious matters."

These resolutions were reported to the Anglican Synod on January 29 last, and were approved, the discussion showing that members regarded them as small beginnings from which they hoped great results might follow. On the following day the Bishops, now as a committee of the Synod, continued their conferences with the Presbyterian delegates, and began on the deeper questions which had hitherto been deferred. Bishop Doull of Kootenay, in an article in the *Canadian Churchman* of March 25 last, considers that the whole proceedings were so cordial as to lead them to look forward to more public discussions "in the confident expectation of arriving at a solution which can be honourably accepted by both communions." He points out that the proceedings are fully official on both sides and emphasises their significance as follows:

"The Province of British Columbia is in some degree the very last province in which such action might have been expected. It is the most English of all Canadian provinces. In the Anglican Church the strength of the High Church School of thought is probably as great or greater than in any other part of Canada. Of the four Bishops forming the Anglican committee, only one can be fairly described as an out-and-out pronounced Evangelical.¹

"The Lambeth Quadrilateral, as interpreted and elucidated by the action of the Church in Southern India in its negotiations with the United Church of Southern India, is forming the bases of our discussions.

"There seems to be every prospect of agreement upon matters of real importance, it having been frankly recognized on both sides that rigid uniformity is impossible, and that a united Church must be more comprehensive, not less comprehensive, than the Anglican communion at the present moment."

Bishop Doull adds an interesting personal expression of opinion—that the Presbyterian influence "will, in the main, be found exerted in the direction of maintaining high and exalted views of the Church, the ministry and the Sacraments. All they ask is that

¹ The Bishop here refers to Archbishop Du Vernet of Caledonia.

they should not be called to deny their past or to take any step which would involve or imply any doubt regarding their status as part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church."

Our own attitude towards such a movement can only be one of surprised gladness and a hopeful anticipation that discussions conducted in such a spirit will affect the whole question of re-union at large. I regret however to hear that Churchmen in other parts of Canada are disposed to look unfavourably upon the British Columbian proceedings.

The position of the Church in Australia is wholly different from that in Canada. It claims the nominal adherence of about 40 per cent. of the inhabitants, though the proportion is not uniformly distributed over the Commonwealth. The peculiarity of Australia is the concentration of population in a few great cities while the rest of the continent is most sparsely inhabited. In the older parts of the cities there are cathedrals and stone churches which would grace any town in England, and here and there even an endowed church is to be found. The newer parts of the cities have churches of a more provisional character, and the spiritual care of the vast stretches of the bush is an anxious problem, too great for the unaided efforts of the colonial Church.

The prevailing type of Churchmanship in Australia is rather high. Of the twenty-four bishops not more than five can be called Evangelicals, and in only Sydney, Bendigo and Gippsland is there a preponderance of Evangelical clergy. Formerly it was otherwise. Evangelical bishops have been succeeded in diocese after diocese by men of varying degrees of High-Churchism, and they have gradually moulded their dioceses to their views.

In Australia, as in Canada, the Roman Church is self-assertive, though without the initial advantages it possesses in the Dominion. Of the Protestant Churches, the Presbyterian seems to me the most prominent. Certainly in its splendidly equipped Ormonde College in Melbourne, its vigorous efforts to secure higher education throughout Victoria, and its energetic Australia Inland Mission, it is showing exceptional signs of life and vigour.

In contrast with Canada, the subject of re-union has long been mooted in Australia, and, contrary to expectation, the chief movers have not been on the Evangelical side. One of the leaders is the Bishop Gilbert White of Willochra, formerly of Carpentaria, a tolerant High-Churchman. He has been chosen to represent the Australian Church at the forthcoming Conference on Faith and Order.

Two important Conferences were held last year, one in Queensland, the other in South Australia, at which the two Interim Reports of the Archbishops' Committee on Faith and Order were considered. The South Australian Conference met on January 22 and 23, 1919, when all the Churches were represented except the Roman Catholics, Lutherans and the Salvation Army, who refused, namely, the Church of England, the Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregational-

ists, Baptists and Church of Christ. After two days' full discussion each clause of the Interim Reports was put separately and passed *nem. con.* On one or two points only one or two representatives did not vote: there was no adverse vote on any point.

The similarly constituted Queensland Conference met at Brisbane on May 30, 1919, and on following days. The same six Churches were represented. Here the proceedings were not unanimous, the non-episcopal brethren objecting to the view that our Lord established a visible Church. With regard to the continuity of the Historic Episcopate, a rider was passed showing the hesitation with which the majority accepted this condition in any form. Whilst thinking the clause premature, they state :

"The majority were prepared to approve the clause with the proviso that it does not necessarily imply any acceptance of the position that ministerial authority cannot be otherwise obtained or that Episcopacy is the only channel of Divine Grace, nor as implying that the form of government in the re-united Church would necessarily be episcopal. But the establishment of such a continuity would give the minister of the re-united Church an authority which all its members would recognize."

Leaving out some other conferences between the Churches, I would refer lastly to the negotiations between the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches in 1906 and 1907, in which a working arrangement between the two Churches was practically agreed upon as a basis of union.

The Conference of Committees appointed by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania and by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia passed a series of resolutions, of which the first three embodied the first three conditions of the Lambeth Quadrilateral. The next four carefully define ordination, the eighth opposes any possible establishment of a State Church in Australia. The crucial resolutions were as follows :—

"That a Union of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania and the Presbyterian Church of Australia be effected and consummated by a joint Solemn Act under the authority and sanction of both Churches, in which each Church shall confer upon the Presbyters of the other all the rights and privileges necessary for the exercise of their office in the United Church, so that from the moment of such Union all the Presbyters of each Church shall have equal status in the United Church.

"That some form of individual superintendence and government, constitutionally exercised, is expedient for the United Church, and that authority to execute such superintendence and government shall be conferred by a Solemn Act of Consecration duly administered on a Presbyter, with the title of Bishop exclusively attached."

"This Conference, while recognizing that the authority to perform an act of ordination is inherent in the Church, agrees that as a matter of order in the United Church all ordinations of persons to the office of presbyter as ministers of the Word and Sacraments shall be by a Bishop and three Presbyters at least.

"And further, that in the consecration of every Bishop, three Bishops at least shall take part and such Presbyters as may be appointed for the purpose."

The rock on which the plan was wrecked was the bond between the Australian and the home Church, commonly referred to as the *nexus*.

The nexus is an integral part of the constitution of the Australian Church which has by this means bound itself voluntarily but unmistakably to follow the leading and usage of the Church of England. The nexus could not be dropped without a special Act of Parliament, and responsible leaders shrink from taking such a step for fear of other consequences within the Australian Churches. The matter was therefore referred to the Lambeth Conference of 1908, which practically shelved the plan, and report points to Bishop Gore as its chief opponent.

Resolution 75 of the Conference possibly has the Australian proposals in mind when it says that—

“in the welcome event of any project of reunion between any Church of the Anglican Communion and any Presbyterian or other non-episcopal Church which, while preserving the Faith in its integrity and purity, has also exhibited care as to the form and intention of ordination to the ministry, reaching the stage of responsible official negotiation, it might be possible to make an approach to reunion on the basis of consecrations to the episcopate on lines suggested by such precedents as those of 1610. Further, in the opinion of the Conference, it might be possible to authorize arrangements (for the period of transition towards full union on the basis of episcopal ordination) which would respect the convictions of those who had not received episcopal Orders, without involving any surrender on our part of the principle of Church order laid down in the preface to the Ordinal attached to the Book of Common Prayer.”

These cautious phrases refrain from facing the issue while speciously commending as possibilities the very course actually adopted. At any rate, in 1909 the Australian Joint Conference, having the Lambeth Resolutions before it, merely reported the eighteen Resolutions “as a basis of future negotiations.” The project therefore seems to be in abeyance.

The writer remembers a saying of the late Bishop Walsham How at the Shrewsbury Church Congress, to the effect that Home Reunion could only take place if, through a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the existing Nonconformist ministers were willing to accept episcopal ordination, or if, through a similar outpouring of grace, the episcopal Church became willing to accept such ministers without re-ordination. The Australian resolutions seek to translate that saying into action, and may be commended to the attention of all those who are labouring for reunion.

It is worthy of note that in both these great oversea dominions definite steps towards local reunion should have been taken, that in both cases the Presbyterian Churches should have been the responding party, and that in both the main Anglican leaders should have been not Evangelicals, but Moderate or High Churchmen. We can but trust that the forthcoming Lambeth Conference will give more definite encouragement to such proposals than previous Conferences have felt free to do. Public opinion is certainly far more ripe for reunion than it was twelve years ago. Nor should there be any disposition to wait until the Anglican Communion as a whole, or even the Church of England throughout the

Empire, can adopt uniform action. The Church of South Africa is expressly independent of the Church of England. The Church in Canada is unhampered by any obligation to follow the home Church : indeed, it has recently shown its independence by revising the Prayer Book along its own lines. The Church in Australia cannot move except with the concurrence of the Church in England. The Church in India is a part of the State Establishment. The circumstances, therefore, of these Churches, of the disestablished Church in the West Indies, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, differ fundamentally. The Anglican Communion as a whole is so vast and so diverse an organization that to wait until it moves as one mass is to wait till Doomsday. If each of the component Churches is set free to negotiate for local reunion, either with one non-episcopal Church such as the Presbyterians or on a wider basis, as in South India, the way would be paved for a more general reunion. It will be evident from the foregoing that in my opinion the Presbyterian Church, whose instincts and form of Church order most nearly approximate to our own, offer the most promising outlook for the beginnings of the formation of a united Church under a "constitutional episcopate adapted to local needs."

Finally, I wish to state emphatically that the surest, if not the only, way to secure adequate spiritual ministrations for our own brethren in the pioneer regions of the Empire is by some effective combination with fellow-workers, now non-episcopal. The deplorable overlapping and rivalry which now exist in even out-back towns and villages waste the energies of Christians, are a source of mockery to the non-religious man and to the Roman Catholic, while other areas are left without any ministry of religion. Concordats between the Churches, if not at first organic reunion, are plainly indicated by the facts to be required. Such approaches as those recorded in this paper, coupled with the remarkable movement in South India between the Anglican and the South India United Church and the Kikuyu Federation, are evidence of so widespread a desire for union that surely the Lambeth Conference will be bound to give them countenance, lest haply it be found to be fighting against God.

