



## ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

### THE FINAL REPORT

#### PREFACE TO THE FINAL REPORT

The Report which follows is the outcome of work begun at Gazzada, Italy, on 9 January 1967. A Joint Preparatory Commission met there, in fulfilment of a joint decision by Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey, expressed in a Common Declaration during their meeting in Rome in March 1966. Meeting three times in less than a year, that Commission produced a Report which registered considerable areas of Roman Catholic – Anglican agreement, pointed to persisting historical differences and outlined a program of 'growing together' which should include, though not be exhausted in, serious dialogue on these differences. It proclaimed penitence for the past, thankfulness for the graces of the present, urgency and resolve for a future in which our common aim would be the restoration of full organic unity.

That Report was endorsed in substance by a letter of Cardinal Bea in June 1968 and by the Lambeth Conference a few weeks later. In January 1970 the signatories of the present Report met first as 'The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission'. Eight members of the Preparatory Commission continued to serve on the new Commission.

The purpose of this Preface is to explain briefly the aim and methods of ARCIC as these have matured in the light of our own experience, of the developments – in some aspects rapid within our own Churches in the twelve years of our experience, in response to criticisms we have received and having regard to other ecumenical dialogues.

From the beginning we were determined, in accordance with our mandate, and in the spirit of *Phil 3:13*, 'forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead', to discover each other's faith as it is today and to appeal to history only for enlightenment, not as a way of perpetuating past controversy. In putting this resolve into practice we learned as we progressed. As early as 1970 our preliminary papers on our three main topics link each of them with 'the Church', and this perspective was maintained and is reflected in what follows here: our work is introduced with a statement on the Church, building on the concept of *koinonia*. in the Statement *Eucharistic Doctrine* (Windsor 1971) we went so far as to claim 'substantial agreement' which is consistent with 'a variety of theological approaches within both our communions'. The Preface to our Statement *Ministry and Ordination* (Canterbury 1973) expressed the belief 'that in what we have said here both Anglicans and Roman Catholics will recognize their own faith'.

It was in the first of our two Statements on Authority (Authority in the Church I, Venice 1976) that we spoke more fully and revealed a more developed awareness of our aims and methods. Because 'It was precisely in the problem of papal primacy, that our historical divisions found their unhappy origin', reference was made to the 'distinction between the ideal and the actual which is important for the reading of our document and for the understanding of the method we have used' (Authority I, Preface). Acknowledging the growing convergence of method and outlook of theologians in our two traditions, we emphasized our avoidance of the emotive language of past polemics and our seeking to pursue *together* that restatement of doctrine which new times and conditions are, as we both recognize, regularly calling for (Authority I, para. 25). In concluding we felt already able to invite our authorities to consider whether our Statements expressed a unity at the level of faith sufficient to call for 'closer sharing ... in life, worship, and mission'.

Some provisional response to this was forthcoming a few months later in the *Common Declaration* of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Donald Coggan, made during the latter's visit to Rome in April 1977. Echoing our original statement of intent, 'the restoration of complete communion in faith and sacramental life', Pope and Archbishop declared, 'Our call to this is one with the sublime Christian vocation itself, which is a call to communion' (cf. *1 John 1:3*). This passage (Common Declaration, paras. 8-9) provides a striking endorsement of a central theme of our Statements, and insists that though our communion remains imperfect it 'stands at the center of our witness to the world'. 'Our divisions hinder this witness, but they do not close all roads we may travel together.' In other words, the *koinonia* which is the governing concept of what follows here is not a static concept – it demands movement forward, perfecting. We need to accept its implications.

This official encouragement has been echoed by many of our critics. We have seen all of them, encouraging or not, as reflecting the interest aroused by the dialogue and helping us to make ourselves clearer, as we have tried to do in the *Elucidations* (Salisbury 1979 and Windsor 1981).

Paragraph 24 of our Statement *Authority in the Church I* made it clear that, while we had reached a high degree of agreement on 'authority in the Church and in particular on the basic principles of primacy', differences persisted concerning papal authority. A much closer examination of those differences has been our main task since then. The results of that work are embodied in the Statement *Authority in the Church II* (Windsor 1981) which is here presented for the first time. Though much of the material in this Final Report has been published earlier, we are confident that the Report will be read as a whole, and that particular sentences or passages will not be taken out of context.

We believe that growing numbers in both our communions accept that, in the words of the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism*, 'There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion. For it is from newness of attitudes of mind, from self-denial and unstinted love, that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way' (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, para. 7).

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that all the criticisms we have received over the twelve years of our work have been encouraging. We are aware of the limits of our work—that it is a service to the people of God, and needs to find acceptance among them.

But we have as much reason now as ever to echo the concluding lines of the *Common Declaration* of 1977:

to be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into hope — 'and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given us' (*Rom* 5:5). Christian hope manifests itself in prayer and action — in prudence but also in courage. We pledge ourselves and exhort the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Anglican Communion to live and work courageously in this hope of reconciliation and unity in our common Lord.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Our two communions have been separated for over 400 years. This separation, involving serious doctrinal differences, has been aggravated by theological polemics and mutual intolerance, which have reached into and affected many departments of life. Nevertheless, although our unity has been impaired through separation, it has not been destroyed. Many bonds still unite us: we confess the same faith in the one true God; we have received the same Spirit; we have been baptized with the same baptism; and we preach the same Christ.

2. Controversy between our two communions has centered on the eucharist, on the meaning and function of ordained ministry, and on the nature and exercise of authority in the Church. Although we are not yet in full communion, what the Commission has done has convinced us that substantial agreement on these divisive issues is now possible.

3. In producing these Statements, we have been concerned, not to evade the difficulties, but rather to avoid the controversial language in which they have often been discussed. We have taken seriously the issues that have divided us, and have sought solutions by re-examining our common inheritance, particularly the Scriptures.

4. The subjects which we were required to consider as a result of the Report of the Joint Preparatory Commission all relate to the true nature of the Church. Fundamental to all our Statements is the concept of *koinonia* (communion). In the early Christian tradition, reflection on the experience of *koinonia* opened the way to the understanding of the mystery of the Church. Although '*koinonia*' is never equated with 'Church' in the New Testament, it is the term that most aptly expresses the mystery underlying the various New Testament images of the Church. When, for example, the Church is called the people of the new covenant or the bride of Christ, the context is primarily that of communion. Although such images as the Temple, the new Jerusalem, or the royal priesthood may carry institutional overtones, their primary purpose is to depict the Church's experience as a partaking in the salvation of Christ. When the Church is described as the body of Christ, the household of God, or the holy nation, the emphasis is upon the relationships among its members as well as upon their relationship with Christ the Head.

5. Union with God in Christ Jesus through the Spirit is the heart of Christian *koinonia*. Among the various ways in which the term *koinonia* is used in different New Testament contexts, we concentrate on that which signifies a relation between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality (cf. *1 John* 1:3). The Son of God has taken to himself our human nature, and he has sent upon us his Spirit, who makes us so truly members of the body of Christ that we too are able to call God 'Abba, Father' (*Rom* 8:15; *Gal* 4:6). Moreover, sharing in the same Holy Spirit, whereby we become members of the same body of Christ and adopted children of the same Father, we are also bound to one another in a completely new relationship. *Koinonia* with one another is entailed by our *koinonia* with God in Christ. This is the mystery of the Church.

6. This theme of *koinonia* runs through our Statements. In them we present the eucharist as the effectual sign of *koinonia*, episcopate as serving the *koinonia*, and primacy, as a visible link and focus of *koinonia*.

In the Statement *Eucharistic Doctrine* the eucharist is seen as the sacrament of Christ, by which he builds up and nurtures his people in the *koinonia* of his body. By the eucharist all the baptized are brought into communion with the source of *koinonia*. He is the one who destroyed the walls dividing humanity (*Eph* 2:14); he is the one who died to gather into unity all the children of God his Father (cf. *John* 11:52; 17:20ff).

In the Statement *Ministry and Ordination* it is made clear that *episcopate* exists only to serve *koinonia*. The ordained minister presiding at the eucharist is a sign of Christ gathering his people and giving them his body and blood. The Gospel he preaches is the Gospel of unity. Through the ministry of word and sacrament the Holy Spirit is given for the building up of the body of Christ. It is the responsibility of those exercising *episcopate* to enable all the people to use the gifts of the Spirit which they have received for the enrichment of the Church's common life. It is also their responsibility to keep the community under the law of Christ in mutual love and in concern for others; for the reconciled community of the Church has been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18).

In both Statements on authority the Commission, discussing primacy, sees it as a necessary link between all those exercising *episcopate* within the *koinonia*. All ministers of the Gospel need to be in communion with one another, for the one Church is a communion of local churches. They also need to be united in the apostolic faith. Primacy, as a focus within the *koinonia*, is an assurance that what they teach and do is in accord with the faith of the apostles.

7. The Church as *koinonia* requires visible expression because it is intended to be the 'sacrament' of God's saving work. A sacrament is both sign and instrument. The *koinonia* is a sign that God's purpose in Christ is being realized in the world by grace. It is also an instrument for the accomplishment of this purpose, inasmuch as it proclaims the truth of the Gospel and witnesses to it by its life, thus entering more deeply into the mystery of the Kingdom. The community thus announces what it is called to become.

8. The *koinonia* is grounded in the word of God preached, believed and obeyed. Through this word the saving work of God is proclaimed. in the fullness of time—this salvation was realized in the person of Jesus, the Word of God incarnate. Jesus prepared his followers to receive through the Holy Spirit the fruit of his death and resurrection, the culmination of his life of obedience, and to become the heralds of salvation. In the New Testament it is clear that the community is established by a baptism inseparable from faith and conversion, that its mission is to proclaim the Gospel of God, and that its common life is sustained by the eucharist. This remains the pattern for the Christian Church. The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace. It is also the reconciling community, because it has been called to bring to all mankind, through the preaching of the Gospel, God's gracious offer of redemption.

9. Christ's will and prayer are that his disciples should be one. Those who have received the same word of God and have been baptized in the same Spirit cannot, without disobedience, acquiesce in a state of separation. Unity is of the essence of the Church, and since the Church is visible its unity also must be visible. Full visible communion between our two Churches cannot be achieved without mutual recognition of sacraments and ministry, together with the common acceptance of a universal primacy, at one with the episcopal college in the service of the *koinonia*.

## EUCCHARISTIC DOCTRINE

ELUCIDATION (1979)

## MINISTRY AND ORDINATION

ELUCIDATION (1979)

## AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH I

ELUCIDATION (1981)

## AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH II

## CONCLUSION

This Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission represents a significant stage in relations between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church. The decision by our respective authorities, made as long ago as 1966, to enter into serious dialogue in order to resolve long-standing issues which have been at the origin of our separation, resulted in our concentration on three main areas of controversy: the doctrine of the eucharist, ministry and ordination, and the nature and exercise of authority in the Church.

This dialogue, however, has been directed not merely to the achievement of doctrinal agreement, which is central to our reconciliation, but to the far greater goal of organic unity. The convergence reflected in our Final Report would appear to call for the establishing of a new relationship between our Churches as a next stage in the journey towards Christian unity.

We understand but do not share the fears of those who think that such Statements constitute a threat to all that is distinctive and true in their own traditions. It is our hope to carry with us in the substance of our agreement not only Roman Catholics and Anglicans but all Christians, and that what we have done may contribute to the visible unity of all the people of God as well as to the reconciliation of our two Churches.

We are well aware of how much we owe to others and of how much we have left others still to do. Our agreement still needs to be tested, but in 1981 it has become abundantly clear that, under the Holy Spirit, our Churches have grown closer together in faith and charity. There are high expectations that significant initiatives will be boldly undertaken to deepen our reconciliation and lead us forward in the quest for the full communion to which we have been committed, in obedience to God, from the beginning of our dialogue.

#### MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

##### ANGLICAN DELEGATES

The Most Revd Henry McAdoe, Archbishop of Dublin (Co-Chairman)  
The Rt Revd Felix Arnott, formerly Archbishop of Brisbane, now Anglican Chaplain in Venice  
The Rt Revd John Moorman, formerly Bishop of Ripon  
The Rt Revd Edward Knapp-Fisher, Archdeacon of Westminster  
The Rt Revd Arthur A. Vogel, Bishop of West Missouri  
The Revd Professor Henry Chadwick, Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge  
The Revd Julian Charley, Rector, St Peter's, Everton, and Warden of Shrewsbury House  
The Revd Canon Eugene R. Fairweather, Keble Professor of Divinity, Trinity College, University of Toronto  
The Revd Canon Howard Root, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome

##### *Consultants*

The Revd Canon John Halliburton, Principal, Chichester Theological College  
The Revd Dr Harry Smythe, formerly Director of the Anglican Centre, Rome

##### *Secretaries*

The Revd Colin Davey, Assistant Chaplain, Archbishop of Canterbury's Counsellors on Foreign Relations (*until July 1974*)  
The Revd Christopher Hill, Assistant Chaplain, Archbishop of Canterbury's Counsellors on Foreign Relations (*from August 1974*)

##### ROMAN CATHOLIC DELEGATES

The Rt Revd Alan Clark, Bishop of East Anglia (Co-Chairman)  
The Rt Revd Christopher Butler, OSB, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster  
The Revd Fr Barnabas Ahern, CP, Professor of Sacred Scripture, Rome  
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The Revd Dr Günther Gassmann, President, Lutherisches Kirchenamt, Hannover.

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