

General Synod

Response by The Church of England

to the Agreed Statements by the Anglican-Roman Catholic
International Commission on

Eucharistic Doctrine (Windsor, 1971)

Ministry and Ordination (Canterbury, 1973)

Authority in the Church (Venice, 1976)

*A Report by the Faith and Order Advisory Group
of the Board for Mission and Unity*

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This Report has only the authority of the body by which it was prepared

CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
	Preface	(i)-(ii)
A	GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
B	THE EUCHARIST: GENERAL COMMENT	6
C	SPECIFIC TEXTUAL COMMENTS ON THE WINDSOR STATEMENT	6
D	THE MINISTRY: GENERAL COMMENT	9
E	SPECIFIC TEXTUAL COMMENTS ON THE CANTERBURY STATEMENT	9
F	AUTHORITY: GENERAL COMMENT	15
G	SPECIFIC TEXTUAL COMMENTS ON THE VENICE STATEMENT	15
H	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	21
	Appendix (The Malta Report)	25
	LIST OF MEMBERS	31

Preface

I commend to the General Synod this Report by the Faith and Order Advisory Group (FOAG) on the three Agreed Statements by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). The Anglican Consultative Council has asked for a report from each of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and FOAG's report is that asked for from the Church of England. The report makes constructive criticism and comment on the Statements, and calls for further discussion of some matters in order to avoid future misunderstanding or dangerous ambiguities. We understand that ARCIC itself expects to produce further clarifications of its Statements in response to comment and criticisms it has received, and we hope the completion of this task will open the way to closer relationships between our two Communion not only internationally but also at provincial and at local level.

Meanwhile we are happy to note that in the considered opinion of FOAG 'the three Statements are sufficiently congruent with Anglican teaching to provide a theological basis for further official dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion.'

FOAG further reminds us that from the beginning of these discussions, the 1968 Malta Report intended that theological agreements should proceed hand in hand with practical co-operation between the leadership of the Churches at every level. It proposed 'an annual joint meeting of either the whole or some considerable representation of the two hierarchies' and further recommended:

- (a) Constant consultation between committees concerned with pastoral and evangelistic problems including . . . appointment of joint committees;
- (b) Agreements for joint use of churches and other ecclesiastical buildings . . . wherever such use is helpful . . .
- (c) Agreements to share facilities for theological education, with the hope that all future priests of each Communion should have attended some course taught by a professor of the other Communion . . . also temporary exchange of students;
- (d) Collaboration in projects and institutions of theological scholarship . . .

We hope that the Church of England will be able to take these projects further forward in consultation with the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales. FOAG points out that on the basis of the Lambeth Quadrilateral and according to the terms of the Bonn Agreement of 1932 with the Old Catholic Church 'we can see nothing which should prevent the Church of England, so far as its own requirements are concerned, from recognizing the catholicity of the Roman Catholic Church'. On the side of the Church of England this has in the past been thought sufficient 'to warrant our entering into communion with other Churches'.

Again, the Malta Report pointed to the increasing number of mixed marriages and called for a 'thorough investigation of the doctrine of marriage' (para. 16). Such an investigation has been made and published under the title *Anglican/ Roman Catholic Marriage* and was circulated to members of the Synod in August 1976 (and cf. G.S. Misc. 81—a letter to the Anglican Consultative Council on this subject in March 1978). The recommendations of this report await implementation.

The three Statements represent the work of our theological experts. We believe the measure of agreement they reveal needs now to be matched by a strong move forward in practical action.

✱DAVID GUILDFORD

Chairman of the Board for Mission and Unity

A. General Introduction

1. In August 1977 Bishop Howe sent a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury (and to all the Primates of the Anglican Communion) requesting a general response for ACC-4 from our Church to the three ARCIC Agreed Statements on Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination, and Authority in the Church. The letter continued:

'It will be of special help if this response indicates to what extent your Church generally finds the approach and content of the ARCIC Statements acceptable as a theological basis for possible further discussions with the Roman Catholic Church towards visible unity. I can now say that the fourth meeting of the ACC is planned for April/May 1979. Reports for that meeting should be sent to me by December 1978¹. It is expected that a report on similar lines may come to ACC-4 from the Lambeth Conference 1978.

The indication of the way we may proceed is as follows: In the light of the responses which the ACC receives it may propose, from the Anglican side, that discussions should be sought with the Roman Catholic Church—between the Churches, not within a Commission—which aims towards visible unity . . . This might be done by the ACC requesting of the Anglican General Synods—

(a) an affirmation of the congruence of the three ARCIC agreed Statements with Anglican teaching (this already done by some Churches for the Windsor and Canterbury Statements, e.g. Canada):

(b) an affirmation that the three ARCIC agreed Statements provide a sufficient basis for further official dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion with "United not Absorbed" as its goal.'

2. This request was considered by the Policy Sub-Committee of the General Synod which forwarded it through the Board for Mission and Unity to the Faith and Order Advisory Group (FOAG) for a response. The following document represents:

(a) our introductory presentation of a number of general points applicable to all three Agreed Statements raising questions of principle;

(b) a general comment on each Statement as a whole;

(c) in each case, a number of specific comments or qualifications on particular sections of each text which have aroused questions, misunderstandings or controversy;

(d) further, where the Group considered points germane to each subject had not been raised, or had been insufficiently dealt with, it has mentioned

¹ In circulating this paper the ACC has noted that it is to be presented to the General Synod in February 1979.

them in the hope that they may be the subject of further dialogue within ARCIC, and has also sought at the end to indicate possible ways forward.

3. The General Synod has itself passed two resolutions relating to these Statements. The first related to the Eucharist and Ministry Statements following the introduction of these to the Synod by the Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of ARCIC, the Rt Rev. Alan Clark, now Bishop of East Anglia, when he visited the Synod on the 7th November 1974. It was as follows:

That this Synod welcomes the Agreed Statements on the Eucharist and the Ministry, and commends them to the study of the Church at large, particularly at parochial level, in the hope that such study will help forward the cause of Christian unity. (*Report of Proceedings* Vol. V.3, p. 748.)

The second resolution was the outcome of a considerable debate on the Authority Statement, in February 1977, in which both critical and appreciative points were made. It reads as follows:

That this Synod, noting the willingness of both Churches to develop their understanding of ways in which the authority of Christ as Lord is transmitted in his Church, welcomes the recent publication by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission of the Agreed Statement on Authority, commends it for study and discussion in the dioceses, especially in smallish groups where unhurried discussions can take place, and endorses the view that this Statement (together with those on the Eucharist and Ministry) not only justifies but requires action to bring about a closer sharing between our two communions in life, worship and mission, and respectfully requests their Graces to seek ways and means to implement such action. (*Report of Proceedings* Vol. VIII 1, pp. 338, 372, 373.)

4. In attempting this task the Group first sought clarification from the ACC on the sense of 'congruent with Anglican teaching' since three interpretations seemed possible:

- (a) what is *permissible* within the Church, given goodwill;
- (b) what teachings are *representative* of the mainstream of Anglican thought;
- (c) what might be considered *authoritative* teaching with mandatory force.

ACC's reply proposed the second interpretation, but as discussion continued, FOAG found difficulty in operating strictly in relation to any one of these interpretations alone, and has sought rather to establish whether or not the position set out in the Agreed Statements could be regarded as acceptable to all the main streams of thought within our Church. We have further

looked in general for a 'relation of harmony or consonance on which official dialogue could be based'. Much of our subsequent comment is based on this general interpretation of congruence.

5. The Group considers the concept of *sufficiency*, which covers both the affirmations requested by the ACC, to be on the whole more helpful. This term also reveals one characteristic of the Anglican ethos, which is to exercise some reserve in the dogmatic definition of the central mysteries of our faith. This should not be considered mere vagueness or indifferentism nor does it mean there are no cases in which precision is necessary; indeed we have sought more precision on certain points which follow (cf. para. 14 below). Our concern with 'sufficiency' is intended to allow for a certain flexibility and width in the range of apprehension of these mysteries (cf. economy in Orthodox thought). On this basis we have also tried to make comments which a fairly high proportion of Anglicans can accept, and which are therefore, in that limited sense, representative.

6. Given then that we should look for what is 'representative and sufficient' in assessing the work of ARCIC the Group has adopted the following guidelines for its study:

- (1) Are the issues dealt with in the ARCIC documents:
 - (a) living questions for the Church of England today, or
 - (b) issues which were living questions in the past but are so no longer; or
 - (c) living questions for both past and present?
- (2) Are the responses made by ARCIC to the living issues such as members of the Church of England can receive as:
 - (a) answers that are generally acceptable today, and that would have been so in the past, or
 - (b) answers generally acceptable today though not in the past, or
 - (c) not generally acceptable answers either today or in the past?

7. A particular problem has arisen for FOAG due to our close links with ARCIC members and the ongoing nature of the dialogue both between our Churches and within ARCIC. The Group has kindly been permitted to share some understandings of ARCIC's work on criticisms already received, and is aware of material about to be published in the form of comments, elucidations of difficult points in all these documents, and expansions on problems listed at the end of the Authority Statement. There is an inter-relationship between ARCIC's present work in response to criticism of the three Agreed Statements, and issues raised in this paper.

8. We recognise and appreciate ARCIC's attempt in these documents to escape from the traditional terms of argument. But we would like to make

four general comments on matters arising from the form in which the Agreed Statements have been conceived and presented:

(i) In short statements such as these, the *sequence* in which different points are presented may acquire undue emphasis: it may look as if what came first is *ipso facto* more important than later parts. We have sought to discount this impression, and stress that the balance of all aspects, rather than the order of their presentation, is what matters.

(ii) The specific questions discussed in relation to the eucharist, ministry, and authority depend inevitably on the two particular communions between whom this dialogue has occurred. This has been a basically Western debate. Hence these documents cover only those theological issues and presuppositions which have caused difficulties between these two types of tradition—the Anglican and the Roman Catholic—in the past; whereas, had the debate taken place between (say) Anglicans and Orthodox, Pentecostals or Presbyterians, we recognise that somewhat different points would have been raised.

(iii) Arising from point (ii) is a further consideration of substance. FOAG has been for a number of years engaged in dialogue with the WCC Faith and Order Commission on closely cognate issues. It has had a part in producing material for two recent papers, *One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry*, 1975 (BEM) and *Towards an Ecumenical Consensus 1977* (TEC) and is in touch with the Church of England's representatives both on that Commission and on the WCC Central Committee. This lends a wider context to the views herein expressed. In particular we have noted that there is a degree of convergence between questions such as baptism, the eucharist, or authority, debated in bilateral conversations with other Churches (e.g. the Lutheran World Federation), and in multilateral groupings. The developing spread of Christianity in Latin America or Africa, both within and beyond our two traditions, may widen this context yet further.

(iv) Although ARCIC has deliberately and justifiably tried to pursue the path of agreement by avoiding as far as possible the terminology of past controversies and by seeking new ways of expressing the doctrines at issue, we need to ask how far this commendable effort has been successful, or whether some real issues which the old terminology did in fact raise may not have been somewhat obscured.

9. We wish to stress the fact to which ARCIC itself has drawn attention, that the Statements on Eucharist and Ministry differ in important ways from that on Authority. On the basis of the Eucharist Statement, Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences in regions where Anglicans have few churches have taken action to permit Anglicans to receive communion on occasion at Roman Catholic celebrations. We also think that ARCIC has

some ground for its hope that the agreement expressed in the Ministry Statement has been, in its turn, sufficient to enable a serious start to be made on discussions about the orders in the Church (cf. Ministry Statement, para. 16). However, the agreement expressed in the Authority Statement is offered simply as 'a significant contribution to the resolution' of the questions that have divided us, and explicitly recognises that important questions remain. This however, is no more than might be expected at this early stage of consideration by our churches of this vital subject. Moreover, though Anglicans may feel ready to move even beyond such discussions towards intercommunion, it should not be thought that such readiness is equivalent to unqualified agreement with the Statements *as they stand*. Some of the comments that follow will make this clear.

10. Part of the changed situation is the widespread co-operation between our churches at the local level. The desire voiced in February 1977 by the General Synod for *action* towards unity was repeated in the different context of the Joint Declaration of the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury of May 1977, that ARCIC's work 'be pursued . . . towards unity' and commending 'the *practical* response of the faithful to the task of restoring unity'. Interplay is needed between Statements and action, and is already taking place. Such action is moreover faithful to the emphasis of the 1968 Malta Report (which initiated ARCIC's work) which recommended that close relationships should be established on pastoral/evangelistic questions, by joint use of churches, in theological education and in scholarship (Malta Report para. 9).¹ FOAG urges that this recommendation of that Report be more fully implemented. In particular we feel that progress will be hindered unless there are regular meetings between the Roman Catholic and the Anglican episcopates at both national and local level.

11. The Malta Report also spoke of stages in relationship:

'We recommend that the second stage in our growing together begin with an official and explicit affirmation of mutual recognition from the highest authorities of each Communion. It would acknowledge that both Communions are at one in the faith that the Church is founded upon the revelation of God the Father made known to us in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, who is present through the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and his Church, and is the only Mediator between God and Man, the ultimate Authority for all our doctrine. Each accepts the basic truths set forth in the ecumenical Creeds and the common tradition of the ancient Church, although neither Communion is tied to a positive acceptance of all the beliefs and devotional practices of the other.' (Para. 7.)

ARCIC hopes that the three Agreed Statements will provide the basis for such recognition. We therefore turn to examine each one individually.

¹ The full text of the Malta Report is appended to this document.

B. The Eucharist: General Comment

12. Our history suggests that while in its formularies our Church accepts without qualification such doctrines as those of the Trinity and Incarnation, which have been ecumenically defined, it has been more reluctant to insist on particular understandings of the doctrines of grace and the sacraments, which have not.

13. In an area such as the doctrine of the eucharist, which is heavy with historical disputes, it seems preferable now to keep dogmatic statement to the minimum necessary for the holding together of the Church. Within that minimum outline, theology can then retain a legitimate freedom. It will thus be able to ignore any issues and avoid any terminology which time has made irrelevant: and be able to treat matters which *are* still 'living issues for the Church'. Hence one principle on which our comments are based is that of not setting one particular theological 'precision' on the eucharist over against another, as if they were mutually exclusive. The attempt to establish extensive dogmatic norms applicable for all times and places is bound to fail.

14. Why then do we ask in some cases for *more* precision? Because we are anxious to avoid any justifiable feeling that an apparent agreement may not be genuine because the situation has been over-simplified.

C. Specific Textual Comments on The Windsor Statement

THE EUCHARIST AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST (Para. 5)

15. ARCIC has used the term *anamnesis*, despite the controversies surrounding it, because it is scriptural—'Do this in commemoration of me'. *Anamnesis* brings past and present together. The sacrifice was 'once and for all'—historically unique—yet concerned with what is done today in a sacrament. In identifying what the 'one sacrifice' did or did not do, it is clear that Christ's work is not wholly complete, in the sense that it is not finished until all mankind has become integrated into God. Christ dedicated himself to a sacrificial death, which is *finished* in that all are included in its purpose; it is in that sense unrepeatable. But it follows that believers must be incorporated into that death, and for each individual the incorporation into Christ's death is by baptism. The effect of this incorporation is renewed and made continually manifest by the eucharist: the eucharist links the passion and resurrection with what happens to us.

16. In our culture the sense of 'memory' has been unduly restricted. In biblical thought 'memory' does not simply record as past, something that remains in the past. The Church is concerned with the past only in so far

as it retains a living relation with the present and testifies to the deeds of the living God.

17. God's saving act which happened in the past is also a reality in our present and is creative of our future, because it is eternally true of him. Hence *anamnesis* refers properly both to eternity and to the whole of time as is expressed by the WCC:

'The "memorial" (*anamnesis*) is seen as related both to the past reality of the life and work of Jesus Christ and to the future glory which it is the foretaste of.' (TEC p. 9)

Another relation of the *anamnesis* to the future is suggested by Paul's words, 'until he come'. The Church pleads with God to bring to fulfilment the work for which the event of the Cross occurred.

18. As will be apparent from the preceding paragraphs, we agree with the major theme of para. 5. But we think ARCIC's case can be made without hanging everything on particular reconstructions of the Passover rite or particular scholarly interpretations of the meaning of Jesus's use of the word *memorial*. Indeed a helpful approach is weakened if it is made to depend on the conclusion of research about which there is not yet general agreement.

PRESENCE OF CHRIST (Paras. 6-11)

... *the bread and wine which, in this mystery, become his body and blood.* (para. 6)

19. Fundamental to ARCIC's thinking is its concept of the 'sacramental order'; that order in which the realities of faith, which are real in themselves independently of the existence of the believer, also become present in visible and tangible realities of the earthly order, and therefore need to be apprehended by faith. It is this concept which enabled ARCIC in the Eucharist Statement (paras. 8 and 9) to acknowledge the validity of the receptionist tradition in Anglicanism as one important aspect of a full understanding of the eucharist, though this development—which we warmly welcome—has largely been overlooked or misinterpreted as a result of concentration on anxieties about the language of 'becoming'. In this connection we feel it will be helpful to quote from an important paper prepared for ARCIC in 1971 by one of its own members, Fr Jean Tillard, OP:

'... precisely the fact that we are within the sphere of sacramental realities ... should induce us to distinguish within the framework of the whole ritual action two sacramental moments linked together in the one, indivisible salvific operation—the moment when the Lord offers himself gratuitously and the initiative of God absorbs our attention, and the moment when the Church draws near in faith to welcome this gift in communion. In the opinion of the present writer, provided the overall

dynamic finality of the celebration is taken into consideration and the first of the two moments is not understood in crude materialistic terms, the distinction between these two moments provides a much greater safeguard for the great affirmation, so felicitously defended in the Anglican tradition, that everything here is based on the movement of God to man, in strict accord with our Christian faith.'

(Published in *One in Christ*, 1973 No. 2, and originally in French in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, June 1971.)

20. We consider the above quotation from Fr Tillard important, since he recognises that within Anglican thought there are current two principal emphases about the eucharist, and that both must be given full consideration and development. One focuses on the fact that Christ is really present in the eucharistic elements after the consecration, the other—the receptionist view—on the fact that when the consecrated elements are given and received, the believing recipient of them is nourished by Christ. The misgivings expressed in a number of official responses elsewhere in the Anglican Communion, concerning the phrase quoted above from para. 6, and the words, 'By the transforming action . . .' in para. 11, can we feel be properly allayed if it is acknowledged that both the understandings of the eucharist just mentioned are legitimate, and stand in a complementary relation to one another. Classic receptionism in Anglican tradition sees the elements as a 'visible word' of God which assures to the believing recipient that he is spiritually nourished by Christ's redemption ('Feed on him *in your hearts* by faith with thanksgiving'). If ARCIC has glossed 'become' with recognition of the truth in the receptionist position, then it has gone far to bridge the gap between the eucharistic thinking of our two Churches. We draw attention, however, to the fact that this would have the effect of involving a readiness on the part of all Anglicans to gloss receptionism in the light of what the word 'become' implies by way of a God-given association of the Real Presence with the elements. We are encouraged by our understanding that ARCIC is preparing material on the two complementary movements discernible in the one eucharistic action, and hope that it will indeed further our agreement.

CONCLUSION: 'SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT' (para. 12)

21. In the context of formal theology it is possible and desirable to 'acknowledge a variety of approaches'. But if 'substantial agreement' is to be reached, how far can the possible liturgical extensions of a (quite legitimate) emphasis on one or other side, in the whole range of devotional usages, extend? The absence of any reference in the Agreed Statement to the practice of reservation of the sacrament is a case in point. We understand ARCIC to be responding on the subject: and the Commission recognises the need to ensure a balanced approach in both Churches. This too is still a 'living question for the Church of England today'. 'Agreement

with regard to the *essentials*' (Charley) is not yet complete among Anglicans at large; but here too we look forward to the forthcoming work of ARCIC on the eucharist, which may also be of value to those still dealing with the problem of reservation in the Church of England.

D. The Ministry: General Comment

22. The Ministry Statement does not attempt to deal with all the problems that are now arising about different forms of ministry in the Church. It attempts to go behind the present teaching and practice of both Churches in relation to ministry, to examine ministry in the Bible and the early Church and on the basis of that examination to offer comment as to what the churches should teach on ministry today. In all this, we should remember that there are dangers in speaking as if the New Testament makes explicit provision for all that is needed for today, and as if everything now found in ministry is indeed discoverable from the New Testament.

E. Specific Textual Comments on The Canterbury Statement

I. MINISTRY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH (paras. 3-6)

In the early Church the apostles exercised a ministry which remains of fundamental significance for the Church of all ages. (para 4)

23. This statement is unclear and indeed ambiguous: it might be intended as a weak justification of the term 'apostolic' as applied to the Church's ministry, or as a way of evading that traditional use. Anglicanism may have encouraged this ambiguity in the past, but we should not be complacent about it. Some only of the apostles' functions were transmissible: and the application of 'apostolic' to the succeeding ministry of the Church requires a number of qualifications.

Functions . . . located in specific officers. (para. 5)

24. In seeking to work out this subject we draw attention to the statement in the Report 'Doctrine in the Church of England' (1938) that:

'There was not first an Apostolate which gathered a body of believers about itself; nor was there a completely structureless collection of believers which gave authority to the Apostles to speak and act on its behalf. To suppose that the organisation of the Church must have begun in one or other of those ways is to misconceive the situation. From the first there was a fellowship of believers finding its unity in the Twelve. Thus the New Testament bears witness to the principle of a distinctive Ministry, as an original element, but not the sole constitutive element, in the life of the Church.' (pp. 114-115)

Apostolicity belongs to the *whole* church. But we have also to say clearly that there are those within the church who have a special responsibility for the apostolic ministry and who symbolise and maintain the apostolicity of the whole Church.

Normative principles governing the purpose and function of the ministry are already present in the New Testament documents. (para. 6)

25. The Group finds ARCIC unclear here, and particularly queries the precise function of the scriptural quotations adduced (are they deemed to apply exclusively to the ministerial office?). That God's design for his people does include the emergence of diverse ministries among them is not questioned, but the implementation of that design in structures is described in a way that seems unduly compressed. The Group commends the typical Anglican caution of a Book of Common Prayer reference to 'divers orders in the Church' (Ember Collect). ARCIC seems here to commit itself to the correctness of the shift away from 'ministries' towards ministerial *office*, as we now understand that office. We suggest that the concepts of office and function be examined more closely.

Thereafter this threefold structure became universal in the Church.

26. A great deal depends on whether the statement in the final sentence of para. 6 is meant to be seen as in any way normative. If the word 'thereafter' is taken to mean 'up to the present time', then the sentence could be construed as 'unchurching' those ecclesial bodies which do not have a threefold ministry. Other references in the Statement, such as those in paras. 9 and 16, do not suggest that the threefold ministry is necessarily regarded by ARCIC as of the *esse* of the Church. It is recognised by many scholars that although the continuation of an apostolic ministry and commission is attested in the New Testament, the differentiation of this ministry into distinct orders occurred over a considerable period of time and the details are obscure. It would seem better, therefore, to understand ARCIC to be making a historically descriptive statement about the early Church.

27. But how does the whole Church express its continuing apostolicity and ministry? The need for apostolicity is constant: and this is manifested in the way in which experiments through the ages in ecclesial structure always seek consciously to be in union with the intentions of the apostles. The WCC expresses this centrality as follows:

'Apostolicity has a central place for the understanding of the ministry. Christ is the true apostle whom God, in the Holy Spirit, sent into the world. Through him the world is reconciled to the Father in the communion of the Holy Spirit. The apostles whom Christ chose and sent to continue this mission of reconciliation, are the foundations of the community created by the Spirit. To this community Christ gave the authority to accomplish the apostolic mission. The Holy Spirit

realises this mission by communicating and manifesting himself in this community.' (BEM page 31)

Within this there is need of a role of leadership to be manifest. The Ministry Statement has no comment on this leadership as indeed heritable from the apostles, and now found in the episcopate. (cf. para. 24 above)

28. In relation to this point we note the comment of a member of ARCIC:

'Now the Commission's Statement emphasises "oversight" (*episcopo*) as an essential element in the ordained ministry . . . It does not say the same about "bishops" (*episcopoi*). Instead there is a description of Anglican and Roman Catholic practice—what happens and why it happens . . . No exclusive claim is made for possessing the only acceptable form of Church order. This is implicit in the words of the Co-Chairmen about "respecting the different forms that ministry has taken in other traditions" (*Preface*).'

(J. W. Charley, *Agreement on the Doctrine of the Ministry*, Grove, 1973, p. 17.)

On this subject, as on the Eucharist Statement, we look forward to the publication of new material now in preparation by ARCIC.

II. THE ORDAINED MINISTRY (paras. 7-13)

. . . *fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today*, . . . (para. 9: our emphasis)

29. We noted above (para. 25ff) our hope that the context of the functioning of the threefold ministry be more clearly stated, and now add a further hope that the participation of the whole people of God in both ministry and decision-making be given more emphasis. This section is too compressed. The responsibility for oversight involves *seeing to*, fostering, the embodiment of the faith and the transmission of the faith. But the actual embodiment of that faith is not, as the sentence might be thought to imply, confined solely to those with oversight of the flock. Equally, elements of Christian oversight, as part of the embodying of Christ, are found throughout the people of God. The 'episcopal' duty of ensuring that the Christian community itself remains faithful does not obviate the responsibilities of the whole body to exercise an oversight in the world. In this context we also hope it might be possible to see the bishop's task more fully related to the divine mission to the world *beyond* the Church.

Authority to pronounce God's forgiveness of sin, given to bishops and presbyters at their ordination . . . (para. 11)

30. Similarly, the reference to 'authority to pronounce forgiveness' should not be taken to imply that any Christian (other than the ordained man) is precluded from giving a general assurance to others of the divine forgiveness; possibly the attempt to compress this expression has led to

apparent ignoring of the concept of the whole Church as the reconciling community. We note that some Anglicans prefer 'declare' to 'pronounce' in this context. ARCIC's contention here would be enriched by addition of the WCC point that:

'Christ sends his Church into the world to participate in his ministry of reconciliation and liberation, and membership in diverse communities forces many pressing human concerns into the centre of the Christian fellowship. The Church should take the needs, worries and hopes of its surrounding culture seriously . . . through these groups too, Christ is building up his kingdom in the hearts of men to unite all things to him.'
(BEM page 32)

But we particularly welcome the ARCIC stress on the *continuing* nature of the reconciling ministry.

Because the eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, the action of the presiding minister . . . is seen to stand in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did . . . (para. 13)

31. The meaning of *sacramental* here is still less than clear. It is reasonable to say that the outward sign in the eucharist is primarily bread and wine, whatever be the relation to it of the minister's action in the worshipping community. This, together with Anglican specification only of the two dominical sacraments (using for the others the general phrase of having the 'nature of sacraments') leads some of us to question the inference which follows, 'So (i.e. therefore) our two traditions commonly use priestly terms . . .'. Some in our Church hold that there can be no general theological inference from the minister's action to the use of priestly terms. They query the propriety of applying the word 'priest' to the presiding minister at the eucharist, even when it has analogical reference to Christ. How is the minister's 'action' related to Christ's? To say, as ARCIC does, 'Because the eucharist is the memorial . . .' is insufficient to establish this point: the argument is too compressed. ARCIC would appear to be accepting the argument propounded by Fr Tillard in a paper prepared for its discussion on sacerdotal language:

'But within the ritual celebration of the *ephapax* (once for allness) of this Sacrifice, in the Memorial—i.e. in an association of signs and symbols directed towards it—there is room for an 'evocation', a 'presence as in a sign' of the priestly quality of the Event thus *commemorated*. If historically Jesus has been the priest of the sacrifice, in the *Memorial* in which his gestures and their profound significance are rehearsed, it will be possible to introduce a reference to his priesthood. His words and his gestures, taken up once more by the one presiding, will be perceived as priestly words and gestures. Will not one then be inclined to speak of a priesthood of the minister?

But one thus sees what meaning is to be given to this priesthood. If the priesthood in question is not the same type as that of the *basileion*

hierateuma (royal priesthood), since it belongs to the domain of ritual, nevertheless neither can it be assimilated without qualification to the Levitical priesthood. . . . We have rather to do with a priesthood *sui generis*, wholly relative to the unique priestly act of Jesus intended to assure the contact of the community with that act in the *hic et nunc* (here and now).

(From *What Priesthood has the Ministry?* Grove, 1973, pp. 26-7)

Another realm of the gifts of the Spirit (para. 13)

32. We note this controverted phrase applies not to the word 'priest' but to 'ministry'. One commentator assumes that it did not mean that ordained ministry was 'priesthood' at all but something else:

'In unambiguous terms it denies that the ministry of the ordained man (including his sacramental ministry) is "an extension of the common Christian priesthood". In the strictest sense it is not a priesthood at all, but "belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit" . . . Christian ministers (are found) rather in the gifts to the Church of the ascended Lord.'

(Charley, *Agreement on the Doctrine of the Ministry*, Grove, 1973, p. 23)

33. That there *is* ambiguity is evident from the alternative interpretation of another commentator:

'The priest has a special role which is his alone . . . The ordained ministry is not to be interpreted as the ministry of the people of God developed to its highest possibilities in a particular layman. It belongs, on the contrary, "to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit". Roman Catholic teaching expresses the difference as one of *essentia non gradu* (essence not degree) . . .'

(Clark, *Ministry and Ordination*, Catholic Information Office, 1973, p. 34)

i.e. Clark finds ordained and lay ministries to be inter-related but clearly distinguishable. Where should the aspect of the divine commission be found? And how far is the 'liturgical argument' to be pressed—that priesthood is *best* seen in presiding at the eucharist, being in this way representative of Christ who himself presides at this feast? How is the quality of Christ's own priesthood to be communicated? Obviously the function of the liturgical leaders differs from that of the congregation; this Statement here relates closely to the Eucharist Statement. But, to insist that *because of his liturgical function* the priesthood of the ordained ministry is of a different kind from the priesthood of the congregation, though such an idea develops logically from the Eucharist Statement, is unacceptable to some Anglicans. Nevertheless we would point out that ARCIC goes on to define the difference as one of enabling: 'It exists to help the Church to be a royal priesthood . . .'—a ministry given to certain representatives of the Church to help the laity to develop to their highest

possibility. In this sense it is 'of essence and not of degree'. A genuine divergence does however exist between the two views, both held in our Church, which were expressed above, and more work will be needed before it is resolved.

34. The presence of a priestly quality in the ordained ministry is widely felt in Anglicanism. In this connection we note that Fr Tillard says that:

'Careful consideration of the major texts of the Anglican tradition incline one to think that the maintenance of priestly vocabulary is not purely fortuitous; in spite of the anti-sacrificial declarations which one constantly meets, Anglicanism tries to remain loyal to the main thrust of the common tradition of the Church. Fidelity to the hierarchical structure 'bishops, priests, and deacons' reveals an intuition that there is an interior quality of the apostolic ministry, which the sacerdotal terms express . . .'

(*What Priesthood has the Ministry?* p. 7)

Because (bishops) are entrusted with the oversight of other churches, this participation in his ordination signifies that the new bishop and his church are within the communion of churches. (para. 16: our emphasis)

35. Both Anglicans and Roman Catholics value the presence of those with oversight of other churches particularly as bringing the *Church* of the new bishop within the whole communion. As Bishop Clark comments:

'The importance . . . is not purely personal . . . by ordaining the new bishop of this particular church (the bishops) recognise that he and his church stand within that communion. The chain is . . . in an unbroken 'communion' of local churches, focused in the person of their bishops with each and every other local church and their bishops.'

(Clark, *Ministry and Ordination*, p. 36)

Charley, though raising many questions on the historic episcopate, agrees with the authors of *Growing into Union* (C. O. Buchanan, E. L. Mascall, J. I. Packer, the Rt Rev. G. D. Leonard, SPCK 1970 p. 77) that the episcopal 'pattern of apostolic pastoral ministry', continuing in the whole life of the church, is fundamental (Charley, *Agreement on the Doctrine of the Ministry*, p. 30).

Bishops . . . are members of the episcopal college. (para. 16)

36. As the references given above indicate, both our Churches teach that individual bishops are heads of *dioceses*—local units within the historic church. But Roman Catholic thought has often appeared to lay particular emphasis on bishops in the *whole* church, seeing succession corporately within the episcopal college (*corpus apostolorum corpus episcoporum*: the apostolic body is the body of bishops). Anglicans likewise speak of new bishops as being taken into the order of bishops and the episcopal college. But they wish to emphasise also the continuing apostolicity of the whole Church 'in mission, faith, and holiness'.

F. Authority: General Comment

37. The resolution passed by the General Synod requested the Presidents to 'implement action' on the issues raised in this Statement. Some action, in terms of the sermon preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Westminster Cathedral on the 25th January 1978, and of the address of Cardinal Hume to the General Synod on the 1st February 1978, has followed. However in 1977 the Synod 'welcomed' the Authority Statement rather than commenting on its contents, and this commentary will refer primarily to aspects on which discussion is still incomplete.

38. The scheme whereby ARCIC has discussed the ministry and the eucharist *before* its consideration of authority presents several difficulties. In each case issues arise which can only be dealt with on the basis of wide agreement on the doctrine of the church. Understanding of the Church's place in the scheme of salvation cannot but affect our understanding of the nature of the eucharist and of forgiveness, and hence of the nature of ministry and of authority. On the latter subject, wide and general questions concerning revelation and the place of authority in matters of belief inevitably arise; e.g. how does one understand the nature of Christ's authority or that of the inspired documents? Hence in making the specific comments which follow, we consider it important to recognise that ARCIC has not attempted to discuss these problems in the Agreed Statements.¹ It has presupposed certain answers to them and proceeded thence. But in neither Church can these presuppositions be accepted without further discussion (cf. para. 54 below).

G. Specific Textual Comments on The Venice Statement

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH (paras. 4-7)

Oversight . . . officially entrusted only to ordained ministers . . . (para. 5)
The perception of God's will for his Church does not belong to the ordained ministry but is shared by all its members. All who live faithfully . . . may become sensitive to the leading of the Spirit . . . (para. 6)

39. While in the Church of England, as in the Church of Rome, the bishops and other ordained ministers have an official responsibility in relation to the maintenance of faith and charity in the daily life of the church, and in the pastoral care and discipline of individuals, it needs adding that in the Church of England the laity have a place synodically in the determination of the general rules which provide the framework for this ministry. The Anglican laity thus have a share in authority and a

¹ They were touched on in the 'Venice Conversations' of September 1970: see *Theology* February 1971 pp. 54-58.

degree of oversight not clearly envisaged in paras. 5 and 6; but we note ARCIC's reference to laity in councils in para. 9 (and cf. also paras. 45-46 below).

40. The Churches today have to ask themselves to what extent freedom to dissent is compatible with the preservation of true *koinonia*. Growth into a mature understanding of the faith is not an even process, and the incentives to dissent are much stronger today than they have often been in the past. This may mean that we must turn more to the basic 'Christian Authority' mentioned in paras. 2-4, and to the good sense of the people of God.

AUTHORITY IN THE COMMUNION OF THE CHURCHES (paras. 8-12)

41. Anglicans have as yet little theology of the structures of autocephalous churches, or of how, in its unity expressed in legitimate diversity, the Anglican Communion coheres. Cardinal Willebrands, preaching in Cambridge on the unity of the Church in 1970, spoke of the '*typos*' (form, character) of a church and the possibility of a plurality of '*typoi*' within the one communion of Christ's Church. He quoted the following passage from Vatican II to support this concept of the variety of local Churches:

'By divine Providence it has come about that various Churches, established in various places by the apostles and their successors, have in the course of time coalesced into several groups organically united, which preserving the unity of faith and the unique divine constitution of the universal Church, enjoy their own discipline . . .' (*Lumen Gentium* 23)

Consideration of the right relationships between Churches which are in communion with one another would be greatly helped if the Roman Catholic Church could develop and clarify its own theology of local churches and their relation with the Papacy: and even more if the position of the 'uniate' eastern patriarchates could be clarified for western readers.

42. The earlier phrase 'united not absorbed' has been revived as a plan of relationship: ARCIC has noted the growth of Anglican conciliarity. As the Anglican Communion has grown from half a dozen or so original provinces in the British Isles to a worldwide family, it has welcomed the development of independent and autonomous provinces. Until the creation of the Lambeth Conference in 1867 there was no organ (other than the person of the Archbishop of Canterbury)¹ to hold the various parts together. Since then the Lambeth Conferences have been accepted as having not juridical but a strong moral authority. The setting up in 1968 of the Anglican Consultative Council was an attempt to find a way of relating the synodical structures of different parts of the Anglican Communion: but no rationale of internal relationships was evolved even then. In two

¹ The speech of the present Archbishop at the 1978 Lambeth Conference on this subject should be noted: (1978 Lambeth Conference Report pp. 122-124).

recent cases Anglican provinces have been prepared to 'dissolve' in order to make possible the unity of the local church (i.e. in India and Pakistan). Since the Statements were published, the Lambeth Conference of 1978 has given some attention to the question of authority within the Anglican Communion and has set on foot a wider study.¹

AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF FAITH (paras. 13-18)

Restatement always builds upon and does not contradict, the truth intended by the original definition. (para. 15)

43. We welcome the insistence of the Commission—something well understood in classical Anglicanism, but which has tended to be obscured in recent centuries—that the Church can learn from the guidance of the Spirit throughout the ages, and in particular that the solemn decisions of councils regarded as ecumenical form part of the acquired wisdom of the Church. The Statement also here refers to certain formulas (which the Church has endorsed) as 'authentic expressions of its witness, whose significance transcends the setting in which they were first formulated'. In the past, there has been a tendency in Roman Catholic theology towards what might be called a merely cumulative view of truth, and such might seem to lurk behind the phrase quoted at the head of this paragraph. Nevertheless it is clear that the Commission has in mind not a gradual narrowing of the range of truth, as precedent is built on precedent, but a deepening and broadening of our understanding of the Truth, which is Christ who through his Spirit leads the Church into all truth.

44. We further note the balanced care of para. 15 in its attempt to make a positive and helpful contribution to a problem that exercises all churches, namely that of the development of doctrine. What can each generation take on with confidence from the past, and how should these past insights be expressed? The Commission makes a clear affirmation that 'all . . . restatement must be consonant with the apostolic witness recorded in the Scriptures'. Issues of central importance are, however, raised by the last sentence of the paragraph. On the one hand, there are the notorious difficulties of determining how far any restatement does in fact build upon, and not contradict, an original definition, if the original categories of thought and modes of expression are superseded. On the other, if this sentence is taken as normative (as it seems possible it might have to be) then does it not exclude any possibility that the post-apostolic Church

¹ 'The Conference asks the Archbishop of Canterbury, as President of the Lambeth Conference and President of the Anglican Consultative Council, with all the primates of the Anglican Communion, within one year to initiate consideration of the way to relate together the international conferences, councils and meetings within the Anglican Communion so that the Anglican Communion may best serve God within the context of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.' (Resolution 12)

might be seen at some stage to have taken a radically wrong direction in faith and practice, which needs to be corrected? We recognise that to some extent all Christians, as having their roots in scripture, are bound to approach the question of the authority of the tradition in some way along these lines. But we are not convinced that ARCIC has yet struck its particular balance correctly. It seems to us still set too far towards an automatic ratification of the past, and of the institutions through which past formulas have been endorsed and by which these institutions are themselves stamped as authentic.

45. In the matter of development in understanding truth, the importance of the lay part in 'discernment' is a strong feature of Anglicanism. The Canterbury Convocation Report of 1902 stated that:

'Theology justifies and history demonstrates that the ultimate authority and right of collective action lies with the whole body, the Church, and that the co-operation of clergy and laity in church government and discipline belongs to the true idea of the Church.'

This appears to have found general acceptance. While the voice of elected lay representatives is not the whole lay voice, it is a partial expression of a determinative process which, over a period of time, can be indicative of the *sensus fidelium* (the mind of the faithful: cf. para. 39 above). The synodical institution can operate rightly (albeit partially) on practical matters. Any process of attempting to discover the *sensus fidelium* on doctrinal issues, however, cannot but be a long and complex matter.

46. The Roman Catholic concept of authority has often seemed defective to Anglicans precisely because, in popular thought, it has appeared so strongly related to the ministerial hierarchy, thus depriving the phrase, *sensus fidelium*, of a large part of its meaning. We therefore welcome the emphasis in the Authority Statement para. 18 that the mission of proclaiming and safeguarding the gospel 'involves the whole people of God', and would welcome an expansion of ARCIC's own recognition of the ordained minister as part of the whole community (para. 6), of the place of the laity in the conciliar process (para. 9), and of the churches' acceptance of the Scriptures as normative (para. 2) in relation to this section. We urge that the formation of pastoral councils (at all levels), including the laity, begun after Vatican II, be encouraged and considered as an integral part of the Church's attempt to recover the Lord's will for its exercise of authority: that is in itself a *sine qua non* of effective unity. As the ARCIC Co-Chairmen have written:

'On both sides the readiness to learn necessary to the achievement of such a wider *koinonia*, would demand humility and charity . . . the Roman Catholic Church has much to learn from the Anglican Synodical tradition of involving the laity in the life and mission of the Church.'

(Preface)

47. It ought perhaps to be noted in passing that the Authority Statement, in saying as it does in para. 16 that 'local councils from the Second Century determined the limits of the New Testament', has been taken by some Anglicans to be implying more than we believe it meant to do. The reference here is to the promulgation of the limits of the canon, which did involve debate as to the inclusion or exclusion of certain works, and decisions by the Church on these issues. To that process the word 'determine' can properly be applied, even if some Anglican theology would prefer to use the term 'recognise' for fear of misunderstanding. What was certainly 'recognised' by the Church, not 'determined', was the primacy of the New Testament Scriptures.

CONCILIAR AND PRIMATIAL AUTHORITY (paras. 19-23)

When the Church meets in ecumenical council its decisions on fundamental matters of faith exclude what is erroneous. (para. 19)

48. This statement was challenged by several members during the debate in General Synod in February 1977, both because it was regarded as in conflict with Article XXI ('General Councils . . . may err and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God'), and because it was suggested that, for Anglicans, the findings of Councils are acknowledged to be true because they are perceived to be true, not because they are said to be inerrant. The statement appears to conflict somewhat with earlier paragraphs: cf. para. 9 'decisions are authoritative when they express the common faith and mind of the Church', and the references in paras. 6 and 16 to the reception and recognition of such declarations, which tests their authenticity. In the process of reception, the laity have their place. A different kind of Christian authority is outlined in para. 3—'when Christians so speak and act, men perceive the authoritative word of Christ'. The inter-relationship of these different aspects of authority might be helpfully expanded.

This general pattern of the complementary primatial and conciliar aspects of episcopate . . . needs to be realised at universal level. (para. 23)

49. Whereas paras. 10-12 described the historical process whereby the regional and universal primacy emerged, here the process appears to be regarded as normative: the pattern 'needs to be realised'. But we note that this necessity relates to the 'unity in truth and love of the whole Christian community', and that the same necessity is equally affirmed for a universal 'and complementary' conciliarity.

50. On the one hand, in this context the presupposition of a cumulative theory of truth leads to the principle that what happened in history had to happen and so has normative value: a principle which might blind us to the lessons history may still have in store for us. On the other hand,

such an argument may also tend to suggest that the papacy is purely constitutional—the Pope being simply the primate of the episcopal college—which seems a dilution of the sort of charismatic leadership that has been claimed for the Petrine Office and is said to be what that Office has to offer the Church.

A universal primacy such as has been described. (para. 23)

51. ARCIC develops *one* line of argument which leads up to the papal primacy. But this does not do justice to the full position traditionally held by the Roman Catholic Church. Various modern Roman Catholic writers have forcefully expressed the view that to be effective in ministry for a united Christendom, the Petrine Office cannot be seen in a minimising way. A merely 'representative primacy of honour' would not suffice, for universality cannot be obtained without some binding character. Limitation of papacy to (e.g.) an executive organ would deny the present conviction of Roman Catholics that the Petrine ministry is a 'charism'. We should note here that the Anglican use of 'charismatic' today means something spontaneous or, in some contexts, the particular endowment of one individual. This differs from Roman Catholic usage, in which 'charism' relates to the permanent endowment of an ongoing special ministry (of the Pope alone). The debate among Roman Catholics on collegiality concerns various ways in which such a ministry would be articulated to the whole Church. This is not familiar territory to Anglicans; but if the question of authority is to be pursued, the whole issue will evidently require most serious attention. ARCIC's argument at present only succeeds because there is latent in it a suppressed presupposition i.e. that the Papacy is the correct answer.

52. For such reasons the historical arguments, both here and in paras. 10-12, justifying papal primacy may cause misgivings. Thus in para. 23 it is said to be appropriate that such a universal primacy should be held by the see of Rome, apparently on the grounds that Rome is the only see that has ever claimed such a universal primacy. Yet here again the primacy referred to is 'such as has been described'; that presumably means a conciliar primacy of service for the sake of unity, rather than one of power or domination. Though many Anglicans may agree, not all of them are yet convinced by the arguments in the Statement. But while all Anglicans will find helpful the stress on the complementarity of conciliarity and primacy (having both councils and primates themselves), questions still remain on the arguments for the necessity of a universal primacy for the sake of unity, and on the case for that primacy's appropriateness to the Roman see. In reflecting further on the whole question of primacy, regional as well as universal, Anglicans will surely need to consider also the practice and experience of the Orthodox Churches in which there is both an acceptance of a Roman primacy in terms of the ancient patriarchates, and a rejection of its modern developments.

53. A non-theological issue arises for the Church of England in particular if we commit ourselves to any form of universal primacy. There would be constitutional consequences relating to our position as the established church, were we to accept any other concept of authority; the most obvious is the repeal of the Act of Supremacy. One commentator (Fr Kerr, *OP. New Blackfriars*, April 1977) calls it an 'unravelling of the whole texture of Anglicanism as the national church'. We note that some Anglicans would welcome this development.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS (paras. 24-5)

54. The authors of the Statement claim to have reached 'a consensus on authority in the Church, and, in particular, on the basic principles of primacy' (para. 24). In para. 25 the statement is described alternatively as 'a significant convergence'. This claim has been questioned. Is there any real consensus within the churches themselves here? Fr Dumont, *OP*, says that the Roman primacy rests not simply on facts of history or past recognition by council, but

'on an intimate conviction that the authority of the Lord of the Church himself has been entrusted to the apostolic college, and within it by a special title to Peter, to continue to be exercised visibly and ministerially by their successors with the indefectible light and prompting of the Holy Spirit.'

(*Doctrine and Life*, February 1977)

If this commentator is right, the problems arising in para. 24(b) and (c) may be even more serious than there appears: and the Anglican use of Scripture and reason as referents may need a greater emphasis. These problems should not be underestimated, in particular the issue of infallibility and cognate ideas.

H. Conclusions and Recommendations

55. Our discussion of the three Statements indicates that there are questions of varying degrees of importance still unresolved in relation to Roman Catholic and Anglican doctrines of the eucharist, ministry and authority. It would be surprising if there were not, and if all the differences and misunderstandings of three centuries had been totally removed within a decade. What we have to ask is whether any of these questions is so important and fundamental that it must be resolved before further action can be taken 'to bring about a closer sharing between our two communions in life, worship and mission', and whether 'the three Agreed Statements provide a sufficient theological basis for further official dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion'.

'Closer sharing' already occurs in England in the context of some Local Ecumenical Projects: this cannot but exert a certain pressure within both our Churches.

56. It is right to recall what has been thought sufficient in the past to warrant our entering into communion with other Churches. Two statements in particular stand out as relevant, namely the Lambeth Quadrilateral, and the Bonn Agreement of 1932 which is the basis of our communion with the Old Catholic Churches.

57. The first of these was formulated by the Lambeth Conference of 1888:

'That in the opinion of this Conference, the following Articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards Home Reunion:

(A) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation", and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

(B) The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

(C) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

(D) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.'

58. The second runs:

'(1) Each Communion recognizes the catholicity and independence of the other and maintains its own.

(2) Each Communion agrees to admit members of the other Communion to participate in the Sacraments.

(3) Intercommunion does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith.'

59. In relation to these, para. 2 of the Common Declaration of April 1977 by Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury is to be noted. It reflects para. 3 of the Malta Report:

'As the Roman Catholic Church and the constituent Churches of the Anglican Communion have sought to grow in mutual understanding and Christian love, they have come to recognize, to value and to give thanks for a common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; our common baptism into Christ; 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 and mission.'

60. Paras. 2 and 18 of the Authority Statement speak of the normative character of holy scripture as acknowledged by both Churches, and there is no doubt about their acceptance of the creeds and the two dominical sacraments in the terms of the Quadrilateral. Nor again is there any doubt about the Church of England's recognition of the validity of holy orders in the Roman Catholic Church. The terms of Canon B.15A allow Roman Catholics to be welcomed as communicants at Anglican eucharists and there is nothing in the discipline of the Church of England which would forbid members of our church to receive holy communion at Roman Catholic eucharists if invited to do so.

61. Looking at the terms of the Bonn Agreement we can see nothing which should prevent the Church of England, so far as its own requirements are concerned, from recognising the catholicity of the Roman Catholic Church, accepting that it holds all the essentials of the Christian Faith. The Church of England should, for its part then, raise no objection to intercommunion.

62. The position would seem to be rather that the Roman Catholic Church asks for more explicit dogmatic statements than does the Church of England, and we must ask whether the three Agreed Statements conflict with what the historic position of the Church of England on these questions warrants us to say. We have pointed to the need for further discussion on some matters in the interests of avoiding misunderstandings and dangerous ambiguities but, in the words of the 1978 Lambeth Conference, we recognise in the three Agreed Statements 'a solid achievement, one in which we can recognise the faith of our Church' and we make our own the hope of the Conference that 'they will provide a basis for sacramental sharing between our two Communion if and when the finished statements are approved by the respective authorities of our Communion'.

63. We report to the Synod that in our view the three Statements are sufficiently congruent with Anglican teaching to provide a theological basis for further official dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion.

64. Full communion is normally taken to mean mutual exchange of ministers and communicants, and this requires mutual recognition of ministry. Concerning this the Malta Report said that it presents a particular difficulty in regard to Anglican orders, according to the traditional

judgment of the Roman Church. The Report continues:

'We believe that the present growing together of our two Communion 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 re-examine historical events and past documents only to the extent that they can throw light upon the facts of the present situation.' (para. 19)

65. We hope the Synod will consider the issues raised in these comments on the three ARCIC Statements also in the light of the basic Malta Report which preceded them (see Appendix), and in particular will take seriously the terms of the reference made to that Report at the end of the Authority Statement:

The Malta Report of 1968 envisaged the coming together of the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion in terms of 'unity by stages'. We have reached agreements on the doctrines of the Eucharist, Ministry, and apart from the qualifications of para. 24, Authority. Doctrinal agreements reached by theological commissions cannot, however, by themselves achieve the goal of Christian unity. Accordingly, we submit our Statements to our respective authorities to consider whether or not they are judged to express on these central subjects a unity at the level of faith which not only justifies but requires action to bring about a closer sharing between our two communions in life, worship, and mission.

✠ERIC CICESTR:

Chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group

December 1978

The Malta Report

REPORT OF THE ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC
JOINT PREPARATORY COMMISSION
AFTER MEETING AT GAZZADA
(9 to 13 January 1967),
HUNTERCOMBE MANOR
(31 August to 4 September 1967),
AND MALTA
(30 December 1967 to 3 January 1968)

I

1. The visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Pope Paul VI in March 1966, and their decision to constitute an Anglican/Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission, marked a new stage in relations between our two Churches. The three meetings of the Commission, held during 1967 at Gazzada, Huntercombe, and in Malta, were characterized not only by a spirit of charity and frankness, but also by a growing sense of urgency, penitence, thankfulness, and purpose: of urgency, in response to the pressure of God's will, apprehended as well in the process of history and the aspirations and achievements of men in his world as in the life, worship, witness, and service of his Church; of penitence, in the conviction of our shared responsibility for cherishing animosities and prejudices which for four hundred years have kept us apart, and prevented our attempting to understand or resolve our differences; of thankfulness for the measure of unity which through baptism into Christ we already share, and for our recent growth towards greater unity and mutual understanding; of purpose in our determination that the work begun in us by God shall be brought by his grace, to fulfilment in the restoration of his peace to his Church and his world.

2. The members of the Commission have completed the preparatory work committed to them by compiling this report which they submit for their consideration to His Holiness the Pope and His Grace the Archbishop. The Decree on Ecumenism recognizes that among the Western Communion separated from the Roman See the Churches of the Anglican Communion 'hold a special place'. We hope in humility that our work may so help to further reconciliation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics as also to promote the wider unity of all Christians in their common Lord. We

share the hope and prayer expressed in the common declaration issued by the Pope and the Archbishop after their meeting that 'a serious dialogue founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions may lead to that unity in truth for which Christ prayed'.

3. We record with great thankfulness 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.

4. Divergences since the sixteenth century have arisen not so much from the substance of this inheritance as from our separate ways of receiving it. They derive from our experience of its value and power, from our interpretation of its meaning and authority, from our formulation of its content, from our theological elaboration of what it implies, and from our understanding of the manner in which the Church should keep and teach the Faith. Further study is needed to distinguish between those differences which are merely apparent, and those which are real and require serious examination.

5. We agree that revealed Truth is given in holy Scripture and formulated in dogmatic definitions through thought-forms and language which are historically conditioned. We are encouraged by the growing agreement of theologians in our two Communion on methods of interpreting this historical transmission of revelation. We should examine further and together both the way in which we assent to and apprehend dogmatic truths and the legitimate means of understanding and interpreting them theologically. Although we agree that doctrinal comprehensiveness must have its limits, we believe that diversity has an intrinsic value when used creatively rather than destructively.

6. In considering these questions within the context of the present situation of our two Communion, we propose particularly as matter for dialogue the following possible convergences of lines of thought: first, between the traditional Anglican distinction of internal and external communion and the distinction drawn by the Vatican Council between full and partial communion; secondly, between the Anglican distinction of fundamentals from non-fundamentals and the distinction implied by the Vatican Council's references to a 'hierarchy of truth' (Decree on Ecumenism, 11), to the difference between 'revealed truths' and 'the manner in which they are formulated' (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 62), and to diversities in the theological tradition being often 'complementary rather than conflicting' (Decree on Ecumenism, 17).

II

7. We recommend that the second stage in our growing together begin with an official and explicit affirmation of mutual recognition from the highest authorities of each Communion. It would acknowledge that both Communion are at one in the faith that the Church is founded upon the revelation of God the Father, made known to us in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, who is present through the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and his Church, and is the only Mediator between God and Man, the ultimate Authority for all our doctrine. Each accepts the basic truths set forth in the ecumenical Creeds and the common tradition of the ancient Church, although neither Communion is tied to a positive acceptance of all the beliefs and devotional practices of the other.

8. In every region where each Communion has a hierarchy, we propose an annual joint meeting of either the whole or some considerable representation of the two hierarchies.

9. In the same circumstances we further recommend:

(a) Constant consultation between committees concerned with pastoral and evangelistic problems including, where appropriate, the appointment of joint committees.

(b) Agreements for joint use of churches and other ecclesiastical buildings, both existing and to be built, wherever such use is helpful to one or other of the two Communion.

(c) Agreements to share facilities for theological education, with the hope that all future priests of each Communion should have attended some course taught by a professor of the other Communion. Arrangements should also be made where possible for temporary exchange of students.

(d) Collaboration in projects and institutions of theological scholarship to be warmly encouraged.

10. Prayer in common has been recommended by the Decree on Ecumenism and provisions for this common worship are to be found in the *Directory* (para. 56). We urge that they be implemented.

11. Our similar liturgical and spiritual traditions make extensive sharing possible and desirable; for example, in non-eucharistic services, the exploration of new forms of worship, and retreats in common. Religious orders of similar inspiration in the two Communion are urged to develop a special relationship.

12. Our closeness in the field of sacramental belief leads us further to recommend that on occasion the exchange of preachers for the homily during the celebration of the Eucharist be also permitted, without prejudice to the more general regulations contained in the *Directory*.

13. Since our liturgies are closely related by reason of their common source, the ferment of liturgical renewal and reform now engaging both our Communion provides an unprecedented opportunity for collaboration. We should co-operate, and not take unilateral action, in any significant changes in the seasons and major holy days of the Christian Year; and we should experiment together in the development of a common eucharistic lectionary. A matter of special urgency in view of the advanced stage of liturgical revision in both Communion is that we reach agreement on the vernacular forms of those prayers, hymns, and responses which our people share in common in their respective liturgies. (A list of these texts is appended.) We recommend that this be taken up without delay.

We are gratified that collaboration in this work has been initiated by the exchange of observers and consultants in many of our respective liturgical commissions. Especially in matters concerning the vernacular, we recommend that representatives of our two Communion (not excluding other Christian bodies with similar liturgical concerns) be associated on a basis of equality both in international and in national and regional committees assigned this responsibility.

14. We believe that joint or parallel statements from our Church leaders at international, national, and local level on urgent human issues can provide a valuable form of Christian witness.

15. In the field of missionary strategy and activity, ecumenical understanding is both uniquely valuable and particularly difficult. Very little has hitherto been attempted in this field between our two Communion and, while our other recommendations of course apply to the young Churches and mission areas, we propose further the institution at international level of an official joint consultation to consider the difficulties involved and the co-operation which should be undertaken.

16. The increasing number of mixed marriages points to the need for a thorough investigation of the doctrine of marriage in its sacramental dimension, its ethical demands, its canonical status, and its pastoral implications. It is hoped that the work of the Joint Commission on Marriage will be promptly initiated and vigorously pursued, and that its recommendations will help to alleviate some of the difficulties caused by mixed marriages, to indicate acceptable changes in Church regulations, and to provide safeguards against the dangers which threaten to undermine family life in our time.

III

17. We cannot envisage in detail what may be the issues and demands of the final stage in our quest for the full, organic unity of our two Communion. We know only that we must be constant in prayer for the

grace of the Holy Spirit in order that we may be open to his guidance and judgment, and receptive to each other's faith and understanding. There remain fundamental theological and moral questions between us where we need immediately to seek together for reconciling answers. In this search we cannot escape the witness of our history; but we cannot resolve our differences by mere reconsideration of, and judgment upon, the past. We must press on in confident faith that new light will be given us to lead us to our goal.

18. The fulfilment of our aim is far from imminent. In these circumstances the question of accepting some measure of sacramental intercommunion apart from full visible unity is being raised on every side. In the minds of many Christians no issue is today more urgent. We cannot ignore this, but equally we cannot sanction changes touching the very heart of Church life, eucharistic communion, without being certain that such changes would be truly Christian. Such certainty cannot be reached without more and careful study of the theology implied.

19. 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 Communion 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 re-examine historical events and past documents only to the extent that they can throw light upon the facts of the present situation.

20. In addition, a serious theological examination should be jointly undertaken on the nature of authority with particular reference to its bearing on the interpretation of the historic faith to which both our Communion are committed. Real or apparent differences between us come to the surface in such matters as the unity and indefectibility of the Church and its teaching authority, the Petrine primacy, infallibility, and Mariological definitions.

21. In continuation of the work done by our Commission, we recommend that it be replaced by a Permanent Joint Commission responsible (in co-operation with the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations in association with the

Anglican Executive Officer) for the oversight of Roman Catholic/Anglican relations, and the co-ordination of future work undertaken together by our two Communion.

22. We also recommend the constitution of two joint sub-commissions, responsible to the Permanent Commission, to undertake two urgent and important tasks:

ONE to examine the question of intercommunion, and the related matters of Church and Ministry;

THE OTHER to examine the question of authority, its nature, exercise, and implications.

We consider it important that adequate money, secretarial assistance, and research facilities should be given to the Commission and its sub-commissions in order that their members may do their work with thoroughness and efficiency.

23. We also recommend joint study of moral theology to determine similarities and differences in our teaching and practice in this field.

24. In concluding our Report we cannot do better than quote the words of those by whom we were commissioned, and to whom, with respect, we now submit it:

In willing obedience to the command of Christ who bade his disciples love one another, they declare that, with his help, they wish to leave in the hands of the God of mercy all that in the past has been opposed to this precept of charity, and that they make their own the mind of the Apostle which he expressed in these words: 'Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 3.13-14).

The Common Declaration by Pope Paul VI
and the Archbishop of Canterbury
24 March 1966

Malta, 2 January 1968

Faith and Order Advisory Group

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IN ATTENDANCE:

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