

CRITICISMS OF VENICEINTRODUCTION

At the request of the Co-Chairmen I have written this paper as an attempt to 'see the wood for the trees' in ARCIC's consideration of criticism of Authority in the Church. Bishop Alan Clark asked me to include Roman Catholic criticisms as well as Anglican: I have done this on the basis of the documents already circulated by my Co-Secretary (ARCIC 216).

I have not cited praise, though there is much, nor requests for an ecclesiology, as these have been fulfilled. It also seemed best to pay more attention to official comment, though I have not kept rigidly this self-discipline. In any case categories are not absolute: for example speeches at an Anglican Synod are in an 'official' context though made by private individuals.

When writing 'Anglican Response to Windsor and Canterbury' (ARCIC 162) I followed the earlier Agreed Statements paragraph by paragraph. The danger with such a method of summarising criticism is that response may follow the same pattern: paragraph annotations to Agreed Statements. Indeed, superseded stages of ARCIC's response included the drafting of additional footnotes. The present meeting at Burnham will presumably attempt to draft something more ambitious for the autumn plenary, perhaps on the lines of the Elucidations. Even so, I feel the Sub-Commission will best be able to do this after some examination of detailed criticism before a more comprehensive view is taken. I have therefore divided the paper into three parts: Introduction; Detailed Criticism; and Emergent Major Issues.

The Sub-Commission should not forget that at the Chichester meeting a preliminary response was already drafted (ARCIC 173/Venice/11 and 12) though this was only eight months after the publication of the Statement. Another document which will be of great assistance is an article by Fr. George Tavard: 'The Anglican-Roman Catholic Agreed Statements and their Reception' (ARCIC 223). It has certainly made my task easier and my concentration on more official response is complemented by his fuller treatment of the comments of individual theologians.

Official response in both Churches has usually taken the form of a report drawn up by an appropriate theological committee and forwarded to the central authorities through either General Synods (sometimes Houses of Bishops) or Episcopal Conferences. But the exact endorsement varies considerably. In some cases General

Synods have passed relatively positive resolutions commending the study of the Statement on the basis of reports which have included sharp criticism. On the Roman Catholic side there has been some reliance on papers by individual theologians which have subsequently been accorded quasi-official status. There have also been responses from joint Anglican/Roman Catholic Commissions.

The following is a list of those responses which contain critical comments (many or few) from the above it will be clear they do not have a uniform style, quality or status:

Anglican

Faith and Order Advisory Group of the General Synod of the Church of England (FOAG)

New Zealand Provincial Committee for Doctrinal and Theological Questions (NZPCDTQ)

Southern African Anglican Theological Commission (SAATC)

Theological Commission of the Anglican Council of South America (TCCASA)

Roman Catholic

English and Welsh Hierarchy's Theology Commission (EWHTC)

Irish Hierarchy's Theology Commission (IHTC)

Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC)

Joint

Australian Anglican/Roman Catholic Bishops' Consultation (AA/RCBC)

Joint Anglican/Roman Catholic Theological Commission for Southern Africa (SA-ARC)

Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for the USA (US-ARC)

For the sake of completeness this is the place to record that: 11 Anglican General Synods or Houses of Bishops have welcomed the Statement and commended it for study as well as the ACC and the Lambeth Conference 1978; some considered responses find no specific fault (the Report of the Theology Commission of the Church in Wales (Anglican) and the submissions of the Canadian and French Episcopal Conferences); ecumenical criticism has been received from the Free Church Federal Council and from Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (both of England).

Anne Tyler has prepared an Appendix with catalogue references to comments already circulated.

DETAILED CRITICISM

Paragraph 1 The opening paragraph has received little criticism and much praise, though there have been requests to define authority as such (imperium or auctoritas?) (SAATC, SA-ARC, Thijssen).

Paragraph 2 Some have felt the treatment of Scripture too condensed and the absence of mention of the Old Testament has been queried (SA-ARC). Not all have been absolutely convinced that the Primacy of Scripture has been secured (AARCBC). The most serious Anglican criticism has been that 'normative record' is ambiguous as in practice ARCIC accepts Scripture and Tradition as distinct sources of authority (against Articles 6, 20, 21, 3<sup>4</sup>); its acceptance of Metropolitan authority is offered as evidence for this (TCCASA). There has been little Roman Catholic criticism other than a disquiet at 'through these written words'; it being held that authority is a quality of a person rather than documents (Thijssen).

Paragraph 3 A change in the meaning of 'authority' has been noted between this and the preceding paragraphs and there has been confusion as to the meaning of the last sentence (SA-ARC, AARCBC) ARCIC has been criticised for failing to incorporate its insight on intrinsic authority into the rest of the Statement (TCCASA).

Paragraph 4 The Commission's interpretation and use of koinonia has been criticised. It has been recognised that koinonia can mean both 'community' or 'participation' in the New Testament, but that ARCIC would be less obscure if it consistently followed one usage (SAATC, Lampe).

Paragraph 5 An implied restriction of the gifts of the Spirit for ministry has been detected in the phrase 'some individuals and communities'. An inconsistency between a general and specific use of episcope has also been objected to (as exemplified between this paragraph and paragraph 10 (SAATC). Questions have also been raised as to the propriety of linking episcope with charismatic gifts at all (AARCBC)! More general has been an Anglican unease with the nature of episcopal authority found in this paragraph and the whole Statement. Objection has focussed on the phrase 'he can require the compliance' (AARCBC, TCCASA, Montefiore). A Roman Catholic query has been whether this adequately covers the traditional concepts of potestas and jurisdiction (SACBC). But the most serious criticism of the paragraph has concerned the penultimate sentence. It has not so much taken the form of an Anglican rejection of the ordained ministry as of the csse of

the Church, as a strong affirmation that the laity have a degree of oversight in the Anglican Synodical system which is not apparently envisaged in the Statement or found in the present practice of the Roman Catholic Church (FOAG, TCCASA, US-ARC, AARCBC, NZPCDTQ, Lampe, Montefiore).

Paragraph 6 While this paragraph has been seen as open to a perfectly orthodox (Roman) Catholic interpretation, doubt has arisen (in conjunction with paragraph 16) whether the response and reception of the faithful is required to make the definitive decisions of ecumenical councils binding (SACBC).

Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 Human weakness, the local church and councils have received a nihil obstat.

Paragraph 10 ARCIC's handling of metropolitans has been thought inadequate, especially in view of the implications of regional primacy in the logical development of the Statement. A more extensive historical treatment has been requested and a theological investigation of the distinction between the pastoral role of the metropolitan and the jurisdiction of the local bishop in his diocese (SAATC). Along with this may be taken the criticism of a lacunae on Patriarchs and other intermediate forms of primacy (Ware Lampe).

Paragraph 11 This has excited no specific comment beyond paragraph 10.

Paragraph 12 Clarification has been requested on whether the Roman Primacy here described (and at 24(d)) implies jurisdiction over the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and whether such jurisdiction would include matters like the appointment of bishops, or whether it is rather seen as a point of arbitration in doctrinal disputes (NZPCDTQ). More critically, it has been suggested the paragraph is historically naive and unfaithful to the Eastern Orthodox view of Rome (TCCASA). On the Roman Catholic side doubts (of varying intensity) have been expressed as to whether the historical exposition does full justice to Roman Catholic faith, even taken with 24(c). It has been emphasised that communion with the Bishop of Rome safeguards catholicity and signals unity by divine intention (SA-ARC, SACBC, IHTC, EWHTC, Dumont, Thijssen).

Paragraphs 13 and 14 These have received neither blame nor praise!

Paragraph 15 Not all readers of the Statement have been convinced that ARCIC has got 'development' right, and an 'unpacking'

of the last sentence has been called for. It has been pointed out that there are enormous difficulties in 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 have been superseded. To some ARCIC has veered too far towards an automatic ratification of the past (FOAG, Lampe).

Paragraph 16 The phraseology of this paragraph has been too strong for some, and in particular that councils 'determined' the limits of the New Testament. Some Anglicans would prefer 'recognised' (FOAG, SAATC).

Paragraph 17 Apart from one fear that the paragraph perhaps presented an idealised and over-simplified picture this escaped critical notice (NZPCDTQ).

Paragraph 13 The first part of the paragraph has been held to be inconsistent with the current Roman Catholic understanding of doctrinal development (and therefore presumably with paragraph 15) (IHTC).

The second part has come under Anglican attack for the use of the term 'indefectible' (Lampe). There has been a request for a clarification of the difference between 'indefectibility' and 'infallibility'; the Anglican/Orthodox Commission's preference for 'inerrancy' has been noted (NZPCDTQ, TCCASA). On the Roman Catholic side it has been alleged that the Commission has accepted Hans Kung's analysis of the problem and substituted 'indefectibility' for 'infallibility' (IHTC).

Paragraph 19 It is notorious that the second sentence has been challenged by many Anglicans. It has been regarded as conflicting with Article 21: 'General Councils...may err and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God'. Anglicans, it has been claimed, acknowledge the findings of Councils because they are perceived to be true, not because they are said to be inerrant. The sentence has also been alleged to be inconsistent with paragraphs 6, 9 and 16 and a clarification of the criteria for ecumenical councils has been requested (FOAG, NZPCDTQ, AARCBC, TCCSA, SAATC, SA-ARC). Some expounding and expansion is an absolute requirement because two General Synods have taken up this issue in resolutions otherwise accepting the general congruence of the three Agreed Statements with Anglican teaching: the General Synods of the Church of the Province of New Zealand and the Church of the Province of South Africa. Even sympathetic Anglicans have wondered whether ARCIC is ambiguous over Ecumenical Councils (Louth). There has not been any direct Roman Catholic criticism

but doubt has been expressed whether the paragraph can be acceptable to Anglicans, or if it is whether it has a univocal meaning (SACBC).

Paragraph 20 It has been asserted that there is nothing in Anglican formularies, structures, or experiences to support the view that 'bishops are collectively responsible for defending and interpreting the apostolic faith'. Likewise that primates may speak in the name of the bishops (AARCBC). A discerning critic has taken the paragraph, together with 24(c), as an implied recognition of papal as well as conciliar authority to define dogma (Lampe).

Paragraphs 21 and 22 There has been no direct criticism of these paragraphs, but this may be the place to record an invitation to develop the relationship between conciliar and primatial authority. More particularly, ARCIC has been requested to state clearly that just as the Bishop has the charism of episcopo for safeguarding the koinonia in his local church and between it and others, ipso facto the same charism empowers a primate to carry out his functions regionally and (by implication) the universal primate universally (Dumont).

Paragraph 23 It has been noted that 'needs to be realised at the universal level' goes well beyond the historical description of paragraphs 10-12. ARCIC has been asked to justify its implied view that what happened had to happen and so has normative value. A related question has been whether a sole claim to universal primacy can be an 'appropriate' reason for the location of such a primacy in the Roman See (FOAG, TCCASA). The House of Bishops of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, in enigmatic Anglican and Japanese style, has declared that though some Anglicans would look forward to a renewed Papacy as a focus of Christian unity, others would prefer a federal pattern of union.

Paragraph 24 The Commission's claim to have reached a consensus 'on the basic principles of primacy' has been challenged. It has been claimed that the Roman primacy rests not simply upon historical development or conciliar recognition but on an 'intimate and immediate conviction of faith'. This view has been repeated, sometimes without acknowledgement (AARCBC, JIBC, SACBC, FOAG). There has been a more precise doubt whether 24(c) does full justice to Vatican I's non autem ex consensu ecclesiae (NZPCDTQ).

Paragraphs 25 and 26 These have not been subject to criticism, but it may be worth remarking that the whole of section VI (paragraphs 24-26) may have to be reviewed in the light of the eventual 'elucidations' and the 'continuation'.

EMERGENT MAJOR ISSUES

It has been perfectly clear from the publication of the Venice Statement that some of its critics have widely different presuppositions from the Commission. So, Professor Geoffrey Lampe, mixing a proper concern for the relation of doctrine to revelation with liberal protestant preconceptions as to the outcome of that debate finds Venice very unsatisfactory. In a rather different way Père Christophe Dumont, OP in effect criticises a joint commission for not having the kind of 'intimate conviction of faith' only possible to those whose living experience of faith includes recognition of a universal primacy. In a sense the questions they raise are really pre - and post - ecumenical issues. Dumont momentarily betrays that he has forgotten one of the first presuppositions of ecumenical dialogue - one begins where the partners in dialogue are, not where ~~one~~ would like them to be. Lampe's concern for the urgent philosophical and theological issues involved in the idea of personal revelation and the belief of the Church is surely best met by the Churches together, not just because these issues are not a traditional matter of dispute but also because only together can the riches and insights of one tradition properly cross fertilise another.

To keep a perspective it is interesting to observe that when such critics are prepared to enter into the spirit and method of the Statement they are considerably less critical: Lampe admits in an unguarded moment that "the first eighteen paragraphs are wonderfully encouraging"; Dumont too has a good deal of surprised admiration in spite of the method. It may be that the best the Commission can do with this kind of criticism is to show its readers that it is well aware of the major issues involved, pointing out the consequences of its critics' presuppositions and underlining the positive reasons for its own methodology. Something like this has already been attempted in the Chichester draft (ARCIC 173/Venice/11) and in the Chadwick/Yarnold Commentary.

More specifically 'textual' criticisms cluster round a number of theological issues ARCIC could reasonably be expected to 'elucidate'. As in Elucidations some issues will need less expounding than others (1-3). I set them out in the order of the Statement:

1. Koinonia as 'fellowship' or 'participation'. Some light may be shed on this by cross reference to the Wychcroft draft Introduction (ARCIC 217/A & B/3).

2. The nature of Christian authority and the problem of juridical compliance. With this can be taken more general requests to define authority.
3. The place of the laity in the structures of the Church with reference to the episcope of Anglican Synods. With this can be taken objections to Venice's 'hierarchical' tone.
4. Intermediate primacy: its historical development and modern forms (Metropolitans and Patriarchs to Presidents of Episcopal Conferences and Presiding Bishops); its theological status and place in the logic of the Statement.
5. The 'normative' quality of history in relation to structures of the Church. Is a universal primacy necessary simply because one has existed or been claimed? The Elucidations touched upon the same problem in relation to the threefold ministry centred upon the episcopate.
6. The 'normative' quality of history in relation to doctrine. Does belief in the 'indefectibility' of the Church and 'doctrinal development' mean an automatic ratification of the past?
7. Conciliar 'error' and 'infallibility' with reference to Article 21. Do the criteria for Ecumenical Councils include reception? With this may be taken the request for the distinction between 'indefectibility' and 'infallibility'. A start has already been made here in the Chadwick/Yarnold Commentary.

It will be clear that the more serious of these emergent issues are all related (4-7). Behind them lies the fundamental question of the degree of the irreversibility of the practice and belief of the Church of Christ.



Appendix

COMMENTS ON THE STATEMENT ON AUTHORITY CIRCULATED TO ARCIC MEMBERS

- \*ARCIC 158/C "Critical Analysis of the ARCIC Statement on 'Authority in the Church'" by the Revd.Fr.C.Dumont, OP.
- \*159/A "Authority in the Church". Revd.Prof.Geoffrey Lampe's Speech to the General Synod of the Church of England, 18th February 1977.
- 159/B Comments on the ARCIC Statement 'Authority in the Church' by Revd.Fr.Kallistos Ware.
- \*159/C "Authority in the Church" by Hugh Montefiore, "Theology" May 1977.
- \*161 "A Brief Apology for 'Authority in the Church' (Venice 1976)" by Henry Chadwick. (Published in "Theology", September 1977).
- \*168 "The Venice Statement and the General Synod of the Church of England (February 1977)" by Christopher Hill
- 169 "Authority: Consensus, No; Convergence, Yes" from "The Clergy Review", March 1977.
- \*170 "Anglican Reflections on the Venice Statement" by Andrew Louth and "Authority in the Church: a Protestant Comment" by George Appia. "Faith and Unity, Vol. XXI No.2., 1977.
- \*171 "One in Christ" 1977-3 with comments on the Statement on Authority including "An Anglican Note" by A.T.Hanson and "A Methodist Comment" by Geoffrey Wainwright.
- 173/  
Venice/11 Second amendment to paragraph 4 and revised paragraphs 5 and 12. Final draft from Venice Sub-Commission at Chichester.
- 175 A Canadian Roman Catholic Response to the Venice Statement (ARCIC). (Circulated to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops from the Roman Catholic members of Canadian ARC).
- 176 "Primacy and Conciliarity": The Agreed Statement of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission on Authority in the Church by Edward Yarnold, SJ. From "The Month", March 1977.
- 177 Comment from the Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales on Authority in the Church, June 1977.
- 178 Resolutions of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada on Authority in the Church. (Copy of a letter from the Ven. E.S. Light).
- 179 Correspondence about the Statement on Authority published in "Theology" in September and November 1977 (Hugh Montefiore and A.M.C.Waterman)
- "An Open Letter on relations between the Anglican Churches and the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Old Catholic and Ancient Oriental Churches", produced under the auspices of Latimer House, in conjunction with the Church of England Evangelical Council. (Circulated to ARCIC members without a number towards the end of 1977).

- \* ARCIC 182 "Assessment of some of the recent comments on the Venice Statement on Authority in the Church by Peter Staples in "News from the English Churches" Vol. 6, Bulls. Nos. 7 & 8, November 1977.
- 183 "Authority in the Church: Response from the English Roman Catholic Theology Commission", October 1977.
- 184 "Statement of a Free Church Working Group Regarding the Anglican and Roman Catholic Commission on Authority in the Church".
- \* 185 "The ARCIC Agreed Statement on Authority: An Orthodox Comment" by Kallistos Ware.
- \* 187 "Malta Ten Years Later" by Fr. Adrian Hastings from "One in Christ", 1978-1.
- 188 New Zealand General Synod Resolution on the Agreed Statements, together with the Report of the Provincial Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions.
- 194 Lambeth Conference 1978, Resolution 33.
- 196 "A Comment on the ARCIC Statement on Authority in the Church" by Professor J. Spoigl.
- 202 Summary of official Anglican reaction to the work of ARCIC prepared for ACC-4 London, Ontario, Canada, May 1979, by Christopher Hill.
- \* 203/A "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) (GS 394).
- 203/B Introduction to the debate on GS 394 in the General Synod by the Bishop of Chichester, 22nd February 1979.
- 203/C Summary of the debate on GS 394 in General Synod, 22nd February 1979.
- 216 Roman Catholic Comments on the Venice Statement.
- 222 "Christ's Authority and Ours" by Bishop Arthur Vogel.
- 223 "The Anglican-Roman Catholic Agreed Statements and their Reception" by George H. Tavard reprinted from "Theological Studies" Volume 41, No.1, March 1980.

\* Referred to in Fr. Tavard's paper (ARCIC 223).