



Responses to the Final Report of ARCIC.

May 1985

Draft responses, in various stages of preparation, have been sent to the ACC office, and I summarise points which are worthy of note in the hope that these might contribute to the process of forming an Anglican consensus. It should be emphasised, that with the exception of Melanesia and Wales, these are drafts and carry no more weight than that of the group which has made them. I have no doubt that Provinces will be pleased to share the full drafts with you, should you ask them. At the Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches, I was impressed by the consistency of Anglican contributions to debates, although in many cases there had been no previous Anglican discussion of the issues. A similar consistency is being manifested in these responses, with little sign of irreconcilable differences emerging.

Australia

A Committee set up to consider ARCIC I has reported to the General Synod Standing Committee, which has sent the report on for consideration by General Synod in August, 1985. There are no recommendations as to the form the response by GS should take.

The Committee has already reported on Eucharist, Ministry and Authority I, and Synod responded in 1979. It now reports on Authority II and the Elucidation of Authority I. It questioned whether the need for universal primacy had been conclusively demonstrated. Concern was expressed over the place of the laity and synodical government. It was questioned whether too much weight had not been placed on Koinonia, and whether it had not been separated from its NT roots.

The report goes on to comment critically on the Petrine Texts, Jus divinum, Jurisdiction and Infallibility, but it is left to General Synod to discuss and assess the Final Report before making its official response.

Council of the Church of East Asia

The CCEA Theological Commission is preparing a report for consideration by the Bishops of the Council in October, 1985. The preliminary draft repeatedly makes the point that some of the key words of the Final Report, such as Authority, have a different connotation in an Asian context. They do not think that they are bound by Western European theological disputes of the Reformation and would like to see the ARCIC found its agreement on the Biblical historical events.

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The Church of England.

The Report of the Archbishop's Faith and Order Advisory Group, **Towards a Church of England Response to ARCIC and BEM** was discussed in General Synod in February 1985 and referred to Dioceses. It will be considered definitively by General Synod in July 1986 after hearing from the Dioceses. During the February Synod debate powerful voices expressed concern with the lack of treatment of Synodical government.

Towards a Church of England Response is by far the fullest discussion of the **Final Report** so far. Its detailed analysis is subtle and almost impossible to summarise. Copies of the book have been sent to Ecumenical Officers by the Church of England. The document welcomes the **Final Report** and gives the fullest treatment to Authority I and II, since the previous statements have already been considered by Synod. It remains, however, a consideration of the whole Report. It notes that in the Authority Statements, it is difficult to comment on aspects of authority which remain to a certain extent ideal, and which have not yet been experienced. Both statements provide a solid basis for further discussion. It notes, however, that a way would have to be found to enable a church which does not ordain women to be in Communion with a Church that does.

Melanesia

One of the earliest responses came from Melanesia and was prepared by a group of theologians at Kohimarama, the Provincial theological college. While generally approving, it also questioned whether the freedom of the local church was sufficiently safeguarded from the centralised power of Rome.

New Zealand.

The Doctrinal and Theological Commission has greatest difficulty with Authority I & II. "We would wish to resist attempts to invest any organ of the Church with a teaching authority which is infallible, or even to invest any definition of faith with a final and absolute authority."

"We agree in principle to the possibility of a universal primacy if exercised in a thoroughly conciliar manner with appropriate safeguards to prevent juridical control, and in collegial association with other orders of the Christian Church."

They express concern over the absence of an acknowledged place for the laity in the governance of the church, and over the election of bishops.

They do not think that the ordination of women can be avoided by ARCIC, and state that their experience in this "has brought a deeper understanding to the nature and function of priesthood."

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Southern Africa.

The Southern African Theological Commission has produced a paper for consideration by Provincial Synod in July 1985. The Synod of 1982 had received the **Final Report** with gratitude and commended it to Dioceses for study. This paper undoubtedly reflects something of this process, as well as previous work on the Reports up to Authority I.

It notes with particular approval Introduction para. 9: "The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace."

It thinks that there may be matters such as justification and clerical celibacy which require treatment, together with Baptism and the Holy Spirit in initiation. Underlying this seems to be a certain concern with conversion. It also makes the point that popular practice differs due to our separation, and wishes discussion on agreed principles in pastoral practice.

Eucharist. The Commission welcomes the balance of the statement, but would wish that in the matter of the Presence of Christ, the balance between associating this with the elements and with presence in the heart of the believer should be emphasised. It is concerned with the somewhat static nature of this section.

Ministry and Ordination. The Report takes a conservative stance with regard to the ordination of women, in that it would wish that no further steps be taken while the greater part of the Church universal would withhold recognition. It is unhappy with para 13: "Nevertheless, their ministry is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit." They continue: "We see the ordained ministry as being Christ's gift to his Church in the sense that it is part of the Church, but chosen and commissioned by Christ in and through his Church for ministry to the Church and the world. We therefore could accept the sentence in para. 13 as being congruent with Anglican teaching only in terms of a difference in relationship, which does indeed affect the being of the persons concerned."

There is a concern here that the **Final Report** might be proposing an ontological difference in the ordained minister. (I should like to comment personally that the breakthrough made by the Fathers in articulating the doctrine of the Trinity, was when they succeeded in separating it from Greek ideas of ontology and conceived ontology in terms of relationship. When this issue was discussed in the Anglican Reformed talks, Bishop Newbigin remarked: "What could be more ontological than relationship." The question of indelibility, which is widely accepted in practice, even though the term may be denied by many, seems to point in this direction. Perhaps there is room for some clarification here.)

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Authority. The report sees this as being intimately related with the question of Orders, and goes on to discuss the question in an illuminating fashion, which contributes to the whole debate. It is very happy with Authority I and II, but would wish the subject to be further examined, and the Commission's comments contribute to this examination.

We await the verdict of the Southern African Provincial Synod on this Report.

Wales

The responses of the Doctrinal Commission and the Provincial Unity Commission were considered by the Governing Body in March 1985, which carried the following motions with no dissentients, with the exception of 3. which had two adverse votes.

1. That the Windsor Statement on the Eucharist together with its Elucidation is consonant in substance with the faith of the Church in Wales.
2. That the Canterbury Statement on Ministry and Ordination together with its Elucidation is consonant in substance with the faith of the Church in Wales and provides a firm basis upon which to move towards the reconciliation of the ministries of our two communions.
3. That the Venice Statement on Authority I together with its Elucidation and Authority II record sufficient convergence on the nature of authority in the Church for our communions together to explore further the structures of authority and the exercise of collegiality and primacy in the Church.

The Doctrinal Commission regretted that the ecclesiology of ARCIC was based entirely on *koinonia*, which it saw as being static and lacking the dynamism of the image of the Body of Christ. It pointed out that many of the NT images had an eschatological reference, thus containing the idea of growth and development. It questions whether *koinonia* in the NT can bear the weight placed upon it by ARCIC.

On Ministry it expresses some concern as to whether the phrase about the ordained ministry that "it is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit" does not suggest that the ordained minister's authority is derived independently of the Church, and not from the Church.

On Authority I & II it is much more critical, having difficulty with concepts such as jurisdiction, and a primacy which is more than one of honour. It expresses particular concern that there is no mention of a place for Synodical government. This is underlined by the Provincial Unity Committee, which after expressing concern about Eucharistic Sacrifice, ends: "In conclusion, it

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might be possible to accept a universal primate as a sacramental figure, as a focus of unity or even as a powerful moral and spiritual leader, but to invest the office with such attributes as being held by divine right, having the power of jurisdiction over the Church, being infallible in matters of the Faith, would render it unacceptable to the very large majority of Anglicans."

Both Groups agree that Authority I & II does provide sufficient basis for further talk and discussion, and advocate that this should take place at many levels.

Roman Catholic Responses.

National Episcopal Conferences have been asked to reply to the Secretariat for Unity by April of this year. Two of these responses have been published, that of the United States Bishops, and that of England and Wales.

The American Episcopal Conference.

The Response (Origins, Dec 84, Vol 14, No 25, Catholic Documentary Service, Washington, DC) to the Secretariat for Unity is positive, but asks for further consideration and clarification on certain points:

- o Eucharist - the bishops wonder if the fact and the how of the presence of Christ can be quite so easily distinguished. They also question whether the sacrificial character of the Eucharist is adequately covered by the concept of anamnesis. They ask if Anglicans would be happy with others using the four Eucharistic Canons of Paul VI's Sacramentary, and engaging in devotion to the Sacrament.
- o Ministry and Ordination - further consideration should be given to the use of the word priest, in relation to the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. They consider that it is not possible to separate women's ordination from the theology of ministry, and request further work on what they see to be a highly divisive issue.
- o Authority - The Final Report described the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome in terms of Providence. The Bishops do not consider that "permissive" Providence expresses the Roman doctrine of the papacy adequately. They also question whether Apostolic Succession has yet found satisfactory treatment or agreement.

They conclude that there is an unfinished agenda for ARCIC II, but ask that their criticisms do not detract from the praise they think the Report deserves.

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The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

On 18 April, 1985, the Conference approved the Response (Catholic Media Office, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 5HN, .40p + p.p.) which is very positive. The Bishops recognise that this will have a particular significance, since the people they serve belong to a "privileged terrain of ecumenism." They welcome the methodology of exploring the common tradition, but they go on to note that "there remains the delicate and difficult task of specifying the relationship between diverse theologies and the fundamental truths of faith to which Christians must be committed. We acknowledge 'a variety of theological approaches within both our Communion' (Eucharist, para.12). These approaches need not be mutually exclusive in the expression of truth. Indeed, we perceive that, in our understanding of the Word of God, differing theological expressions often can be complementary. At the same time we are concerned to ensure that the relationship of authoritative formulae to the truths they seek to convey should not be weakened, despite the contingent element in all such formulae."

Eucharist. They consider that this is a true expression of Catholic Faith in regard to sacrifice and real presence, but consider that there needs to be further consideration of the Elucidation on Eucharist on devotion to the reserved sacrament, and they are not entirely happy with the treatment of transubstantiation in the footnote, although they recognise that they need not be bound to "any one theological/philosophical attempt to explain it."

Ministry and Ordination. They welcome the text, but do not think that the distinction between "the origin and nature of the ordained ministry" and "the question of who can or cannot be ordained" in the matter of the ordination of women "is as clearcut as the Commission maintains and a problem remains that will have to be taken up". On the matter of Anglican orders, they agree that this needs to be explored in a "new context" and they ask "whether an agreed act of public convalidation or reconciliation could resolve the present situation." In their minds this clearly remains a difficult problem.

Authority. They are happy with the general approach, but agree that further work needs to be done, especially on Universal Primacy, where they note that not sufficient weight has been given to the lived tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. "In its appreciation of the position and role of a universal primate, the Final Report can be interpreted as giving insufficient weight to this primacy as intrinsic to the nature of the Church." They consider that further consideration needs to be given to reception, which is not well understood in the Catholic community. It is here that Anglican concerns about synodical government could also surface.

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Conclusion. They note that the relations of Church and State in England need examination, particularly the 'hurtful anomaly' of the Act of Settlement, which establishes the Protestant Succession of the British Crown. They emphasise that the Anglican evangelical view is very important, and this has implications for ecumenical relations between the RCC and other churches.

This positive document proposes for further consideration many of the difficulties experienced in Anglican responses, but it is encouraging to note that these are regarded as issues which can be resolved by patient hard work.

Conclusion

A pattern among responses is beginning to emerge. There is a slight groundswell, which questions whether Justification by Faith does not need to be treated. This ARCIC II is already doing within the context of Salvation within the Church. There is general approval of The Windsor Statement on Eucharist, with its Elucidation, although there has been questioning by both Roman and Anglican responses on the question of Sacrifice in the Eucharist.

The Canterbury Statement on Ministry and Ordination, with its Elucidation, also meets with general approval although with some questioning as to whether the Ministry of the Laity and the relationship between lay and ordained ministry is adequately covered.

Authority I and II, as the Commission recognised, are the Statements which raise the greatest difficulties, since they marked convergence rather than consensus. Reactions have been largely positive in approving the discussion so far, and recognising the statements as a useful basis for further discussion by ARCIC II.

Some responses question whether it is entirely wise for the Introduction to place so much weight on Koinonia, as the basis of ecclesiology. In ARCIC's defence, it has to be said that both **Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry** and **God's Reign and our Unity** presuppose a similar ecclesiology. This is not to devalue other images, such as the Body of Christ, but to recognise that koinonia seems to bring healing to division and represent a new departure which is proving very fruitful.

George Braund,
31 May 1985

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Appendix

In view of the questioning of Eucharistic sacrifice, it might be useful to recall para 68 of the Anglican Reformed Report, *God's Reign and our Unity*.

Our being united to Christ in his offering of himself to the Father is a work of the Holy Spirit. The prayer of invocation (epiklesis) is therefore a proper part of the eucharistic action. 'The Church prays to the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit in order that the eucharistic event may be a reality: the real presence of the crucified and risen Christ giving his life for all humanity' (BEM, p.13, para.13). The Eucharist is a making present of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. Joined to Christ in that sacrifice, the Church makes an acceptable offering of itself in thanksgiving to the Father. We therefore invoke the gift of the Spirit from the Father to sanctify both us and the elements of bread and wine, so that in our eating and drinking we may be united with the one sacrifice of Jesus. 'Sanctified by his Spirit, the Church, through, with and in God's Son Jesus Christ, offers itself to the Father. It thereby becomes a living sacrifice of thanksgiving through which God is publicly praised" (WARC/RC, Section 81).

RESPONSES TO DIALOGUES
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DIALOGUE = ARCIC

PROVINCE	RESPONSE DATE	AUTHORITY
AUS Pubs. G. Travelling Together. Joint A RC	Aug 85	Prov Synod
BRA	Nov 85	Bps & Exec Cncl
CAN Pubs. S. Building Bridges. MacBeath Brown and	Jun 86	Gen Syond Prideaux
EAS Pubs. Doct Cmssn Interim Rpt Rem. Bp Choi/Savarimuthu	1986	Bishops
ENG Pubs. P. Bibliographies Pubs. B. Twds Response BEM/ARCICG. Twds Response. Pubs. B. Angs in Dialogue.	Nov 86	Gen Synod
IOC	JUL 85	Prov Synod
JME Rem. Prov Syn has asked Dioceses to reply separately.	Jan 86	Prov Synod
MEL Pubs. Report to ACC	1985	Doct Commsn
NIG	Later	Prov Stdg Cte
NSK Pubs. P. Jap trnsltn Final Report	1986	Prov Syn
NZD Pubs. P. Reps of Prov Th and Ecum Commissions	Jun 86	Gen Synod
PNG	1986	Bps Meeting
SAF Pubs. P. Rep of SA Th Commission	July 85	Prov Synod

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PROVINCE	RESPONSE DATE	AUTHORITY
SAM Rem. Ec Offr; R Maitland, Cas 1077, 5000 Cordoba, Argentina	Jan 86	Bps Exec
TAN	Aug 86	Prov Syn
UGA Pubs. New Century Rem. Difficulty in engaging non-English speakers.	Dec 86	?Bishops
USA Pubs. Art: ARCIC:Authy:Ec Bull 60 Pubs. Art: ARCIC:RC Response, Ec Bull Feb 85	Sep 85	Gen Convention
WAL Pubs. Resp of Doctrinal Cmssn & Prov Unity Cte to ARCIC	Apr 85	Gov Body
WIN	Nov 86	Prov Syn