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EVANGELICAL ANGLICANS

in the Church of England are represented in the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion by the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC). Here CEEC responds firmly but amicably to the recent ARCIC *Final Report*. A foreword is contributed by the Co-chairmen, Timothy Dudley-Smith, Bishop of Thetford, and John Stott, Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, who also drafted the main text of this critique on behalf of CEEC.

ALSO—TO BE PUBLISHED IN AUGUST 1982

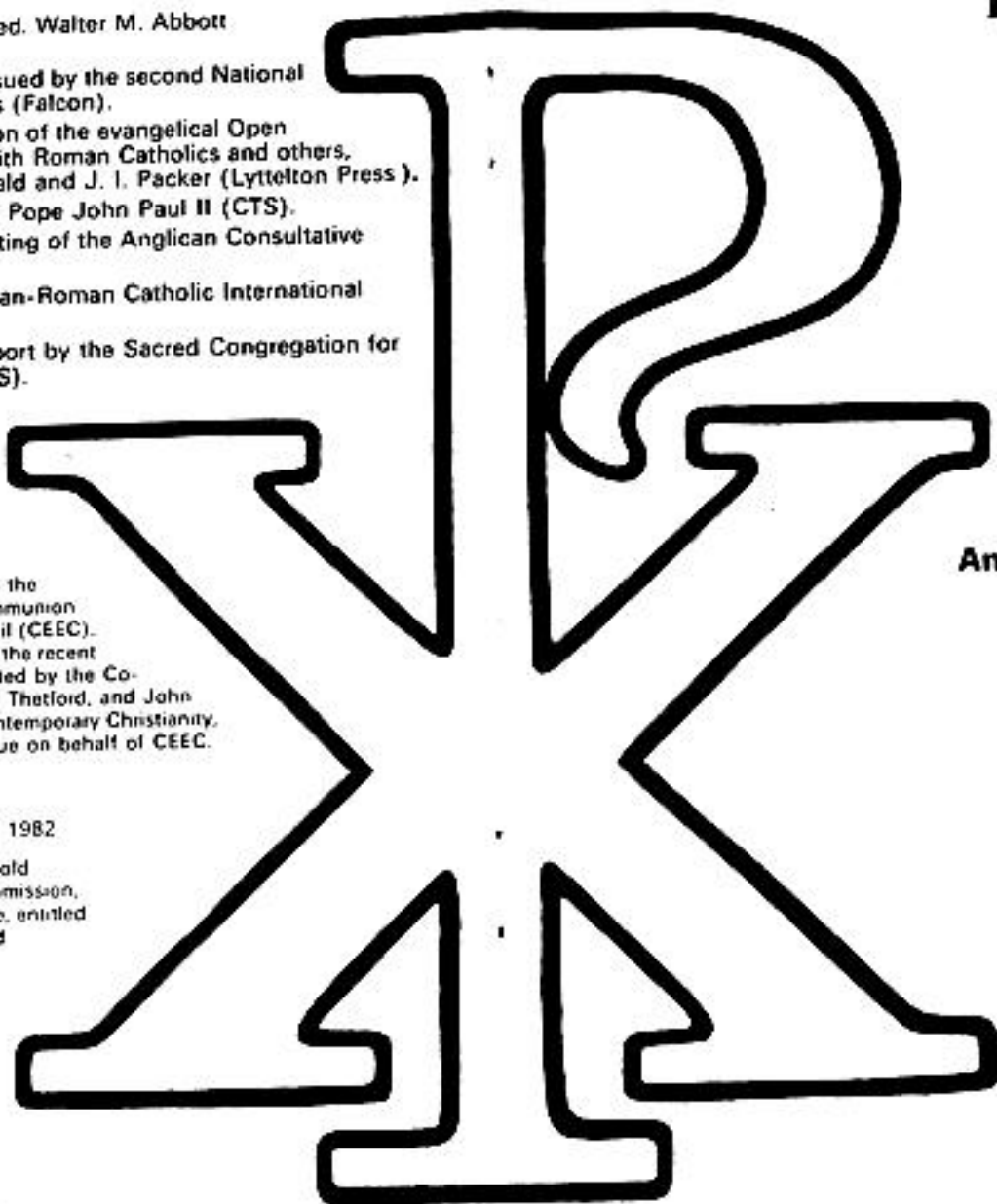
Julian Charley, the only evangelical on the old Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, has written his own account of the dialogue, entitled *Rome, Canterbury and the Future*, published by Grove Books (c. 70p).

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EVANGELICAL ANGLICANS

and the ARCIC FINAL REPORT:

An Assessment and Critique

Drafted by
JOHN STOTT

on behalf of the
**CHURCH OF ENGLAND
EVANGELICAL COUNCIL**

40p

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FOREWORD

by the co-chairmen of the C.E.E.C.

We write in the warm afterglow of the Pope's visit to Britain. He seems to irradiate the love, joy, and peace, of Christ. We have been challenged by his evident godliness and goodness.

There are two reasons why we consider the issue of this Evangelical Anglican assessment and critique of ARCIC's *Final Report* to be opportune.

First, the ecumenical euphoria surrounding the Pope's visit needs to be balanced by, and has set the mood for, the rigorous theological discussion which is now needed. There is nothing inconsistent about affirming the Pope as a Christian leader, while at the same time asking questions about the claims of the papacy and the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, the personal *charisma* of John Paul II encourages us to face the differences between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches with integrity and charity.

Secondly, the 'Common Declaration' signed by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury includes their decision to set up a new international Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission. So there is an urgent need both to stimulate the evaluation throughout the Anglican Communion of the first Commission's work and to consider what should be on the second Commission's agenda.

The Church of England Evangelical Council (which is the English group member of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion) considered the first draft of this Assessment at its meeting on 3 June, suggested a number of emendations and endorsed its publication. We as co-chairmen of C.E.E.C. have taken responsibility for its final form. We hope it will help to clarify some of the important issues relating to Anglican-Roman Catholic relations.

Timothy Dudley-Smith

John Stott

7 June 1982

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INTRODUCTION

It is now almost 20 years since the Second Vatican Council opened in Rome, having been convened by Pope John XXIII. It was the beginning of a new era of relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Reformation including the Church of England (and the Anglican Communion.)

The Council's fourth and last session concluded on 8 December 1965. Only three months later Archbishop Michael Ramsey visited Pope Paul VI in Rome, and as a direct result of this visit, and of their Common Declaration, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission was set up, though its first meeting was not held until January 1970.

Evangelical Anglicans have followed its work with the greatest interest, and have studied each *Agreed Statement* and each *Elucidation* as it has been published.

In June 1977, after the first three Statements had appeared, about 100 Evangelical Anglicans signed an Open Letter, which was addressed to the Anglican Episcopate, on relations between the Anglican Churches and the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Old Catholic, and Ancient Oriental Churches. In it we welcomed the fact that 'conversations between our Churches on a basis of genuine openness to the Bible' seemed increasingly possible, and expressed our wish to play a full part in such conversations. We also noted with joy that others 'share our own concern for real and tested theological agreement as a precondition of closer churchly relationships, and our own unwillingness to be hurried into superficiality as we seek this agreement'.

On the basis of this 'theological seriousness' we emphasized the need for more discussion and deeper agreement in at least four fields:

- 1 *Scripture and Tradition.* 'We are obliged to press the question', we wrote, 'whether the non-reformed Churches are yet sufficiently ready to test all their traditions of teaching and practice by Holy Scripture, as we know we are bound to test ours, in order to correct what the theology of the Bible will not justify'. We went on to list some traditions which, being additional to Scripture, seem to us to cause acute problems.
- 2 *Justification.* We drew attention to the large amount of space given to this truth in the Anglican Articles (numbers 9-18), and continued: 'We are anxious to explore whether the Roman Catholic Church now agrees that justification is essentially God's free gift of acceptance, bestowed on sinners by grace alone, in and through Christ, and received by God-given faith alone'. If so, we asked how this related to a number of traditional Roman Catholic beliefs.
- 3 *Church and Ministry.* Here we posed a question about the claims 'to be the Church exclusively' which are still apparently made by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. We welcomed the view of

the Church as 'God's pilgrim people', but expressed grave disquiet about all mediatorial concepts of ministerial priesthood.

- 4 *Holy Communion*. Dissatisfied with the declaration of an objective change in the elements, which is made in the Agreed Statement on the Eucharist, we drew attention to Richard Hooker's well known dictum that 'the real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not... to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament.'

The Open Letter concluded with five paragraphs about the conditions on which, and the form in which, we considered 'full churchly intercommunion' possible.

Now, five years later, ARCIC's *Final Report* has been published (March 1982). It includes the first three Statements (*Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination* and *Authority in the Church I*), each followed by an official 'Elucidation', together with the fourth and final Statement (*Authority in the Church II*), which relates particularly to papal infallibility and primacy.

It is now possible to evaluate the Commission's twelve years of solid work. We urge all Anglicans to give thorough consideration to the Report as a whole. It repays careful study.

There is much in it to applaud.

First, both the Commission's goal and the means by which this would be sought were well stated. The Common Declaration set the goal as 'that unity in truth for which Christ prayed', and the means to it 'a serious dialogue' (p.118). The Evangelical Anglican 'Declarations of Intent' adopted at Nottingham in 1977 included similar words: 'We reaffirm our commitment to the goal of visible unity in Christ's Church . . . and 'we renew our commitment to seek with them [sc. Roman Catholics] the truth of God and the unity he wills . . .'. We note with thanksgiving the seriousness of theological concern which the ARCIC documents represent, and the Commission's recognition of the principle that there are 'essential matters where it considers that doctrine admits no divergence' (*Ministry and Ordination*, para. 17).

Secondly, the Commission declared its purpose both to get *behind* the sixteenth century debates and definitions to the real issues at stake and to go *beyond* them into the present era in their attempts to find and express agreement. Although we thankfully acknowledge the clear-headed and courageous stand which the Reformers took, we too recognize the need to forego the repetition of ancient positions merely because they have been hallowed by age, to examine whether we are not prisoners of now outdated controversies, and to address ourselves to the contemporary forms in which they reappear.

Thirdly, we welcome the absence from the ARCIC documents of all rancour. We also desire to eschew emotive polemics and to develop candid discussion in the spirit of charity.

1. THE FINAL REPORT and OBSERVATIONS

Unfortunately, hot on the heels of the publication of ARCIC's *Final Report*, a comment on it entitled *Observations* was issued by the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.¹ It is an extremely reactionary document, and breathes an entirely different spirit from that of ARCIC. Indeed, it appears neither to understand the ARCIC enterprise, nor even to be in sympathy with it. ARCIC pursued its work in the spirit of Pope John XXIII's statement during his opening speech to the Second Vatican Council, namely that 'the substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another'.² But the re-statements of *Observations*, instead of attempting like ARCIC to be creative, are wooden and unimaginative. The Sacred Congregation appeals constantly to definitions of the Council of Trent (1545-63) and of the First Vatican Council (1870) as well as the Second (1962-5), as if they were all equally unchangeable. Is this really so? Is the Roman Catholic Church trapped inside its own doctrine of irreformability? *Observations* certainly gives the impression that the only road to the reunion of our two Churches is for the Anglican Communion to swallow traditional Roman Catholic teaching in its entirety, and so itself be swallowed up by Rome. In fact, the publication of *Observations* seems to us a signal (and dismal) example of the very 'Vatican centralization' about which Archbishop Robert Runcie in Westminster Abbey in March 1981 said that 'hard questions' needed to be asked by Anglicans.

How then are we to interpret *Observations*? On the one hand, members of the Roman Catholic Church are being invited to study the ARCIC Statements, and *Observations* is offered as a 'contribution to the dialogue'. On the other hand, its publication seems to us to pre-empt the very discussion which it claims to wish to promote. We are at a loss to understand how Bishop Alan Clark in his Foreword can describe it as a 'positive contribution' to the continuing study, for it appears to us to be almost entirely negative.

Again, we know that the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is an ancient body, otherwise known as the Holy Office, indeed the first and most important of the Vatican's Sacred Congregations, which is sometimes on that account (though not on this occasion) presided over by the Pope himself. Its prestige suggests that we should take its *Observations* very seriously. On the other hand, we know that within the Roman Catholic Church there is now a broad diversity of viewpoints. We wonder therefore whether we should regard *Observations* as only one voice among many, and in this case how these other voices will be able to gain a hearing for themselves.

We also ask how the publication of *Observations* tallies with the signing at Canterbury in May 1982 of the new Joint Declaration by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury that another Commission is to be set up to continue the dialogue. It seems to us urgent that the Vatican clarify the status of *Observations*, at the latest when the Synod of Roman Catholic Bishops meets in 1983, though preferably earlier. For if *Observations* is

¹ It is published by the Catholic Truth Society.

² *The Documents of Vatican II* (ed. Walter M. Abbott) (Geoffrey Chapman, 1969) p. 715.

really only a 'contribution', well and good; it can be discussed and debated along with other documents lying on the table. But if it is in any sense the Vatican's official response to ARCIC, then not only is further discussion pre-empted, but the work of the new Commission is condemned to fruitlessness and failure before it begins.

Since a serious rift has arisen between ARCIC and *Observations*, it is not possible to comment on the former without taking note of the latter. So, although this Evangelical Anglican assessment and critique is concerned mainly with the ARCIC statements and evaluations, it also refers where necessary to the comments contained in *Observations*.¹

2. SALVATION AND EUCHARIST

The absence of an agreed Statement on Salvation in general and Justification in particular is extremely regrettable.

First, the doctrine of justification was the chief point at issue in the sixteenth century when the separation of Churches took place. How then can they be reconciled until they have reached agreement on it? No fewer than 10 of the Anglican 39 Articles relate directly or indirectly to this topic. Evangelical Anglicans have several times raised this matter (e.g. a number of times in General Synod and by Archbishop Marcus Loane at the 1978 Lambeth Conference). Each time the official reply has been that no disagreement now remains over this doctrine. If this is really so, then there is all the more reason to express and publish the agreement. To affirm accord without expressing it will never convince those who doubt whether it exists. We think that the Anglican Consultative Council was exaggerating when, during its fifth meeting at Newcastle in September 1981, it referred to 'the extensive agreement on justification already achieved, internationally and regionally, in Lutheran-Roman Catholic discussions', but we are glad ACC 5 recognized the importance of this issue and recommended that it should be taken up.² We ourselves are strongly of the opinion that this vital topic *must* be included on the new Commission's agenda.

Secondly, the sacraments cannot be treated outside the doctrine of salvation, and the statement on *Eucharistic Doctrine* suffers from its unnatural isolation from its proper context.

We welcome the strong assertion that 'Christ's redeeming death and resurrection took place once for all in history', that his death 'was the one, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world', and that 'there can be no repetition of or addition to what was then accomplished once for all by Christ' (*Eucharistic Doctrine*, para. 5). This appears to be an unequivocal statement of the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice. Yet the logic of it does not seem to have been grasped. For if Christ's self-offering was unique and unrepeatable, how can the Church 'enter into the movement of his self-offering' (para. 5)? We cannot accept this. True, this clause

¹ Since the above paragraphs were written, Bishop B. C. Butler wrote to *The Times* that *Observations* (being 'observations not verdicts'), should not be given 'an authority which they do not claim'. This is reassuring. Yet he made it clear that he was writing 'in a purely personal capacity'. So an official classification is still needed.

² ACC 5 (A.C.C., 1981) section 2 and 4.

occurs in the context of a discussion about the word 'memorial' (*anamnesis*). We endorse the usefulness of the parallel between the passover and the eucharist, in that by the sacramental action a past event is recalled, proclaimed, and made effective in the present. But this falls far short of any idea of the Church sharing in the offering itself. The *Elucidation* tries to help by distinguishing between the historical and the sacramental. It argues that, whereas the historical sacrifice of Christ is unrepeatable, yet, 'the Eucharist is a sacrifice in the sacramental sense'. But the sacramental action must be a faithful memorial of the historical action. We have no liberty to import into the former a concept not present in the latter. How can the Church 'enter into the movement of Christ's self-offering' sacramentally if it did not do so historically?¹

What then is the Church's relation to the sacrifice of Christ? It is at least fourfold. We remember his sacrifice with humble thanksgiving. We partake of its benefits by faith. We proclaim it. And we offer ourselves to him in response to his self-offering for us. These four elements are all part of the eucharistic celebration. But to respond to his self-offering and to 'enter into its movement' are two quite different concepts. Indeed, to participate in the benefits of Christ's sacrifice and to participate in the offering of it are concepts which move in opposite directions. *Observations* convinces us that there is a real divergence here, for it speaks of an actual 'participation of the Church, the Body of Christ, in the sacrificial act of her Lord, so that she offers sacramentally in him and with him his sacrifice'. We are deeply disturbed that the Sacred Congregation goes on to reaffirm 'the propitiatory value' of the Eucharist (B.I.1).

We note that the word 'transubstantiation' has been relegated to a footnote in the Statement. Yet we fear that this dogma continues to be affirmed in alternatives terms, for the bread and wine are said to 'become' Christ's body and blood, and this is explained as 'a change [even 'a radical change'] in the inner reality of the elements' (para. 6, note). True, the *Elucidation* helps by assuring us that the verb 'become' implies neither a material change nor a limitation of Christ's presence to the consecrated elements.

Yet even if his presence is not 'limited' to the bread and wine, it certainly appears to be localized there. For the *Elucidation* goes on to say that after the eucharistic prayer, to the question 'what is that?' the believer answers 'it is truly the body of Christ, the bread of life' (para. 6). *Observations* enforces this, quotes the Council of Trent with approval ('the wonderful and unique change of the whole substance of the bread into his body and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood, while only the species of bread and wine remain'), emphasizes that the ARCIC statement does not express this ontological transformation of the elements with sufficient clarity, and adds that 'the adoration rendered to the Blessed Sacrament' was dogmatically defined by Trent in such a way as to seem incompatible with the statement of the Book of Common Prayer that the sacramental bread and wine 'remain still in their natural substances and therefore may not be adored' (*Observations* B.I.2,3).

¹ *Eucharistic Doctrine* ii.5 and *Elucidation* para. 5

In contrast to the complaint of the Sacred Congregation that ARCIC has not sufficiently expressed Catholic Eucharistic dogma, we ourselves are of the opinion that it has already gone too far in this direction. If only the Commission had had the wisdom of Hugh Latimer before his judges! His explanation of the change which takes place at consecration was that: 'that which before was bread now has the dignity to exhibit Christ's body. And yet the bread is still bread, and the wine still wine. For the change is not in the nature, but the dignity'.

This understanding corresponds closely to what is called 'trans-signification' by some contemporary Dutch Roman Catholic theologians, in contrast to 'transubstantiation', because the change which takes place is not in the substance of the bread and wine but in their significance: they now have the dignity to represent Christ's body and blood. 'Trans-signification' preserves the meaning of a sacrament (which according to our Church of England Prayer Book Catechism is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace . . .'), by carefully distinguishing between symbol and reality, whereas 'Transubstantiation' 'overthrows the nature of the sacrament' (Article XXVIII) by confusing the outward sign with the inward thing signified. Or, as Cranmer expressed it in his *An Answer*:

'figuratively he is in the bread and wine, and spiritually he is in them that worthily eat the bread and wine'

3. MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD

We welcome the Statement's recognition that there exists in both our Churches 'a diversity of forms of ministerial service' (*Ministry and Ordination*, para. 2), that New Testament churches enjoyed 'considerable diversity in the structure of pastoral ministry' (para. 6), and that there is a 'priesthood of all the faithful' (para. 7). At the same time, we wish the Statement had begun with a thorough biblical exposition of the Church as the people of God and of the every-member ministry of the body of Christ, before moving on to the clergy who are called to serve them. The Church must not be defined in relation to the clergy, but rather the clergy in relation to the Church.

It seems to us good and wise that the Statement lists the 'variety of images' which the New Testament uses to describe an ordained minister's functions, e.g. 'servant', 'herald', 'ambassador', 'teacher', 'shepherd', 'steward', and 'example' (para. 8). Also that it stresses 'oversight' (*episcopate*), and states that the ordained ministry is essentially a ministry of the Word (paras. 9, 10). When the Commission broaches the subject of 'priesthood', it frankly recognizes that 'the priestly sacrifice of Jesus was unique', that there is a priesthood of all God's people, and that 'in the New Testament ministers are never called "priests" (*hiereis*)'. But then, instead of courageously accepting the logic of its own candour, the Commission continues that, in spite of these facts, 'Christians came to see the priestly role of Christ reflected in these ministers, and used priestly terms in describing them' (para. 13). It then makes matters worse by affirming without evidence

that the ministry of ordained 'priests' is 'not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit' (para. 13). Here Scripture has been abandoned, and tradition has taken control of the Commission's thinking. We wonder when Scripture will liberate the Church to confess the truth Charles Hodge expressed in his

Systematic Theology:

'Every title of honour is lavished upon them (sc. ordained ministers) . . . but never priests. As the sacred writers were Jews, to whom nothing was more familiar than the word priest, . . . the fact that they never once used the word, or any of its cognates, in reference to the ministers of the gospel, . . . is little less than miraculous. It is one of those cases in which the silence of Scripture speaks volumes'.

It may be true that 'the ordained ministry is called priestly' (i.e. by those who do thus describe it) 'principally because it has a particular sacramental relationship with Christ as High Priest' (*Elucidation*, para. 2). *Observations* goes further and affirms that 'the priestly nature of the ordained minister depends upon the sacrificial character of the Eucharist' (B.II.1). This is official Roman Catholic teaching. It reflects Pope John Paul II's letter on *The Holy Eucharist* (1980): 'The Eucharist is the principal and central *raison d'être* of the sacrament of the priesthood' (para. 3). But we deny this 'particular sacramental relationship' and with it any specifically priestly function which clergy have and laity have not. It would be anomalous indeed if the Pope were to rescind *Apostolicae Curae* (1896), declare Anglican orders valid after all, and thereby recognize in Anglican clergy a distinctive 'priesthood' which the Church of England has never officially taught and which Evangelical Anglicans emphatically repudiate.

4. AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

It is heart-warming to read the Christ-centred way in which the third ARCIC Statement opens: 'The confession of Christ as Lord is the heart of the Christian Faith. To him God has given all authority in heaven and on earth'. It goes on to state that Christ as Lord of the Church bestows the Holy Spirit upon his people (para. 1), and later that 'the Holy Spirit keeps the Church under the Lordship of Christ' (para. 7). It is, however, when we ask *how* Christ by his Spirit exercises authority in his Church that the confusion and disagreement begin.

Evangelical Anglicans have two particular concerns about this first Statement on *Authority in the Church*. First, it contains no explicit affirmation of the supremacy of Scripture, although this is fundamental to Anglicanism, as is evident throughout the Prayer Book and Articles. Instead, the New Testament documents, although acknowledged by ARCIC as apostolic and inspired, are described as 'a normative record [note the indefinite article] of the authentic foundation of the faith' (para. 2). The *Elucidation* admits that 'behind many reactions to the Statement is a degree of uneasiness as

to whether sufficient attention is paid to the primary authority of Scripture' (para. 1). In response to this criticism the Commission makes the following strong assertion:

'The person and work of Jesus Christ, preached by the apostles and set forth and interpreted in the New Testament writings, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are the primary norm for Christian faith and life' (para. 2).

We welcome this sentence and its change of the indefinite article into the definite, even if we would have preferred 'supreme' to 'primary'. We also welcome the later statement that 'no endeavour of the Church to express the truth can add to the revelation already given'. Yet the Commission is then obliged to confess that there are two approaches to Scripture, one of which is concerned 'never to go beyond the bounds of Scripture', since tradition is no more than 'an unfolding of the riches of the original revelation', while the other approach rests on the conviction that 'the Holy Spirit is seeking to guide the Church into the fulness of truth' (para. 2). The *Elucidation* claims that the latter approach 'does not necessarily contradict the former'. Yet the two approaches seem incompatible to us. And the authors of *Observations* have spotted this. They are not satisfied with ARCIC's use and interpretation of Scripture. 'The historical method (seeking to determine what the biblical author meant) is inadequate, they say; in addition one must take into account the authentic interpretation of the Scriptures which it pertains to the Church to make' (B.II.2 and B.III.1). In other words, tradition must take precedence over Scripture. This is totally unacceptable to us.

If only the Commission had grasped the nettle of the Marian dogmas, those of her Immaculate Conception (1854) and her Bodily Assumption (1950)! It was not enough to say that some Anglicans do not consider them 'sufficiently supported by Scripture' and would ask whether in a future union of Churches they would be required to subscribe to them (*Authority in the Church II*, para. 30). The simple truth is that they cannot be defended from Scripture, although *Observations* insists on them as 'true and authentic dogmas which pertain to the fulness of faith' (B.III.3). Only the second approach to Scripture could attempt to justify them, and then only with much artificial contriving. Several times in the ARCIC documents Scripture and Tradition are in fact put on a level with one another, and the deeper understanding sought by the Commission is described as being 'consonant with biblical teaching and with the tradition(s) of our common inheritance' (e.g. *Eucharistic Doctrine*, para. 1 and *Ministry and Ordination*, para. 1).

Nothing is said as to what will happen if either Scripture and Tradition, or the traditions of our two Churches, are incompatible with one another. It is not helpful to affirm that the New Testament is 'the primary norm for Christian faith' if this principle is not boldly and rigorously applied to unbiblical traditions. That is why we wrote in our Open Letter of the need for both our Churches 'to correct what the theology of the Bible will not justify'. Whichever approach to Scripture we take, Scripture must be allowed to reform us. Are both Churches willing to put themselves under its judgment?

Our second disquiet over *Authority in the Church I* concerns its statement that 'when the Church meets in ecumenical council its decisions on fundamental matters of faith exclude what is erroneous' (para. 19). The *Elucidation* points out that such inerrant conciliar judgments

- (1) relate only to 'fundamental matters of faith' (though *Observations* denies this, insisting that they extend to 'the entire domain of faith and morality' B.III.4),
- (2) must be, as the Statement says, 'consonant with Scripture' and
- (3) must be received by the whole people of God, although the effect of this reception is not to 'legitimize the decision' but to supply 'the final indication that such a decision has fulfilled the necessary conditions for it to be a true expression of the faith' (para. 3. *Observations* denies this too. B.III.5).

These clarifications go some way to meet our disquiet, but in spite of what the Commission says, the claim that any Council under any circumstance is inerrant contradicts Article XXI which seems to say that any Council 'may err', since not all its members will be 'governed with the Spirit and Word of God'.

5. PAPAL PRIMACY

The latest ARCIC Statement (*Authority in the Church II*), published only in March, is the longest of the four, and also the most diffuse and repetitive. In seeking to commend to Anglicans an acceptable form of papal primacy, it uses three approaches.

The first is *biblical*. A valiant attempt is made to offer a fresh exposition of the Petrine texts. Indeed, so fair and unprejudiced does the exposition seem that the Commission makes the astonishing admissions (1) that 'the New Testament contains no explicit record of a transmission of Peter's leadership' (para. 6) and (2) that 'the New Testament texts offer no sufficient basis for' papal primacy (para. 7). The strongest biblical argument for it which can be put forward is one of 'analogy' (despite the well-known dangers which attend all argument by analogy), namely the analogy between 'the importance of the bishop of Rome among his brother bishops' and 'the position of Peter among the apostles' (*Authority in the Church I*, para. 12; cf. *Authority in the Church II*, para. 5). This is much too weak for *Observations*, however. The Sacred Congregation is emphatic that ARCIC's re-interpretation 'does not satisfy the requirements of the dogmatic statement of Vatican Council I', namely that 'the apostle Peter . . . received immediately and directly from Jesus Christ our Lord a true and proper primacy of jurisdiction' (B.III.1).

For lack of biblical warrant, the Commission resorts to the *historical evidence*. It cannot be denied that the Church of Rome (and therefore the as Bishop of Rome) was accorded a primacy of honour in the Church from early as the second century. Moreover, in spite of the rivalry that developed from the third century between the sees of Rome, Carthage, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, the claim of certain Bishops of Rome to a *juridical primacy* was increasingly recognized in the Western Church until the great schism between East and West. Because of this some Anglican theologians have suggested that it might be possible for their Communion 'to recognize the development of the Roman primacy as a gift of divine providence — in other words, as an effect of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church' (*Authority in the Church II*, para. 13). Arguments from history can always be two-edged, however. If the historical emergence of Roman primacy is to be attributed to God's providence, what are we to say about the evils and errors of which at times it has been guilty? It is claimed that a primacy acknowledged by our two Churches would be a 'sign and safeguard' of unity and truth; but has it really been such for the Roman Catholic Church in the past? The Commission speaks of divine guidance and providence, but supplies no criteria by which these may be discerned. Prominent among them, we believe, since God's Spirit is the Spirit of truth and the Holy Spirit, and his first fruit is love, should be truth, holiness, and charity.

The Commission's third argument for a universal primacy strikes us as exceedingly surprising. It writes in *Ministry and Ordination* that 'like any human community the Church requires a focus of leadership and unity, which the Holy Spirit provides in the ordained ministry' (para. 7). Certainly the Holy Spirit does give pastors to his Church (e.g. Acts 20.28), and elders were appointed in every church from the beginning (Acts 14.23). But it is precarious to extrapolate from the local to the universal, and assume that 'like any human community' the worldwide church needs a world-wide leader. Yet this is what the Commission does. 'Visible unity requires' it, in this case a combination of 'primal and conciliar' oversight (*Authority in the Church I*, para. 8). Again, 'we ... agree that a universal primacy will be needed in a reunited Church' (*Authority in the Church II*, para. 9).

But why? Is this any more than the reasoning of a secular mind? A 'human community' may indeed require a leader to unite it, but is the Church only a 'human community'? Are the Commissioners not in danger of repeating the Israelites' sin when, forgetting or resenting the fact that they were a unique theocracy, they demanded a king 'like all the nations' (1 Sam. 8.5)? Their request was a repudiation of Yahweh, their invisible king. As for the Church of the New Testament, it is certainly not a 'human community', but rather the divine society, a new international theocracy. To be sure, there is abundant New Testament evidence that its local manifestations were to have pastors, gifts of the ascended Christ (Eph. 4.11). But nowhere in the New Testament is there even the smallest hint that a universal pastor would be necessary.

We suspect that the Commissioners' choice of *koinonia* (communion) as their controlling model of the Church and as the fundamental concept of

their statements was the influential background to their commendation of the papacy. For already in the Introduction they write of 'primacy as a visible link and focus of *koinonia*' (*Introduction* para. 6). But the New Testament develops several other models of the Church, into which papal primacy cannot so easily be fitted, if at all. Thus the Church already has a Chief Pastor, the 'Good Shepherd' and 'that great Shepherd of the sheep', who tends his flock by his Word and Spirit. Similarly, the Church is the Body (whose head is Christ), the Bride (whose husband is Christ) and the Building (whose foundation is Christ). There seems to be no room in these metaphors for a human primate. Indeed, the demand for a primate with universal jurisdiction seems to us a repudiation of the headship of Jesus Christ, in spite of the fact that Christendom has become so used to the papacy and to patriarchates as to take them for granted.

In saying this, we are of course aware that in New Testament days, in addition to local presbyters, there were men like Timothy and Titus whose oversight was more regional than local, and that James presided over the apostles and elders at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. Yet his was a regional leadership, and his presidency *ad hoc* because the Council met in Jerusalem, where the Saviour rose, the Spirit came, the New Testament was born, and the Christian mission began; there is no suggestion that he had any wider (let alone universal and permanent) jurisdiction.

If it be asked how, on the basis of this reasoning, Anglican evangelicals would justify Archbishops, we would reply that they too have a regional responsibility. It is true that the Archbishop of Canterbury exercises a kind of 'universal' leadership, at least within the worldwide Anglican Communion, and in this sense it may be said, as the Commission does, that 'Anglicanism has never rejected the principle and practice of primacy' (*Authority I*, para. 8). Nevertheless, whatever 'authority' he has (it has never been defined) is not a legal jurisdiction but only a moral leadership born of history and affection. Could not a similar kind of papacy be envisaged, then? Yes, possibly. And the Commission has been at pains to develop an image of the complementarity of primacy and conciliarity (*Authority I*, para. 22), much as 'Peter's role is never isolated from that of the apostolic group' (*Authority II*, para. 8). But for the papacy to become acceptable to Anglicans, the Pope would have to renounce such titles as 'the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church', and—more important still—divest himself of monarchical authority and of the power and glory traditionally associated with his position. We would welcome some gestures on his part which might foreshadow a substantial self-emptying and so dissipate our doubts. But *Observations* does not encourage us. It insists on the *ius divinum* (divine right) of the papal primacy, of which Vatican I had spoken, but which the ARCIC Statement tried to play down. The Sacred Congregation will not allow this, because what Vatican I meant by 'the institution of Christ our Lord himself' is that 'Christ himself provided for the universal primacy' (B.III.2). Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* also spoke of the Pope's 'full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church' (para. 22, quoted in B.III.2). There seems little room left either to reinterpret these statements or to change the reality they express.

6. CONCLUSION

ARCIC's original statement of intent referred to 'the restoration of complete communion in faith and sacramental life'. At the end of its work its members could declare that sufficient doctrinal agreement had been reached 'to call for the establishing of a new relationship between our Churches as a next stage in the journey towards Christian unity' (*Final Report*, p.99). although, they added, 'our agreement still needs to be tested'.

In the June 1977 Open Letter which many of us signed, we expressed our own concern for 'real and tested theological agreement as a precondition of closer churchly relationships, and our own unwillingness to be hurried into superficiality as we seek this agreement' (para. 3). In particular, we wrote: 'we are obliged to press the question, whether the non-reformed Churches are yet sufficiently ready to test all their traditions of teaching and practice by Holy Scripture, as we know we are bound to test ours, in order to correct what the theology of the Bible will not justify' (para.5.i).

In addition, we believe that much more thought and discussion are needed about what kind of closer relationship between our two Churches might be desirable. Successive Archbishops have echoed the suggestion made by Cardinal Mercier in 1925 that the Anglican Church should be 'united, not absorbed'. Quoting this in his lecture in Westminster Abbey in 1981, Archbishop Runcie quite properly went on to ask what the limits of acceptable diversity would be in such a 'union without absorption'. We ourselves, if the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures should bring us to real accord with Roman Catholics on essential doctrine, believe that the Bonn Agreement between Anglicans and Old Catholics (1931), which based full communion on agreement in essentials, while tolerating disagreement in secondary matters, would be a better arrangement than a merger or 'uniata' relationship (the latter requiring complete doctrinal accord, see *Open Letter*, para.8). It is the former way of reunion which is reflected in the ARCIC statements. The Commissioners several times use the term 'substantial agreement', and explain that this means the Commission's 'consensus', even 'unanimous agreement', 'on essential matters where it considers that doctrine admits no divergence' (*Elucidation of Eucharistic Doctrine*, para. 2; *Ministry and Ordination*, para. 17). It will have become apparent from this Assessment that we think they have in some places succeeded, while in others (crucial ones which admit no compromise) we think they have failed. The Sacred Congregation wants to go further, however. They demand 'complete' agreement in all points 'which truly pertain to the faith' (they instance Eucharistic adoration, papal primacy and the Marian dogmas), and declare an appeal to the 'hierarchy of truths' to be impossible here (*Observations* A.2.ii).

What then is the way forward? How do we see the task of the new international Anglican-Roman Catholic commission which is to be appointed? We certainly wish it well, hope that several evangelical churchmen will be invited to join it, and will pray for its work. We also venture to make the following suggestions for its agenda:

- 1 The new Commission should seek an immediate clarification from the Vatican of the status and authority of *Observations*, and make it public.

- 2 The new Commission should reaffirm ARCIC's goal of 'substantial agreement' (meaning unity in essentials, with liberty in non-essentials) and should work out this distinction thoroughly and consistently.
- 3 The new Commission should, in our opinion, be asked to review and rework the old Commission's text, with three objectives in mind:
 - (a) to eliminate the ambiguities. We agree here with *Observations* that these have permitted Anglican and Roman Catholic Commissioners to interpret some formulations in different and even contradictory ways (A.2.iii).
 - (b) to fuse each of the first three Statements with its Elucidation. We agree with *Observations* in this matter also. At present they lie side by side. This arrangement lacks 'harmony and homogeneity', and exposes the texts to mishandling (A.2.i).
 - (c) to pay more attention to the classical formularies of both Churches, and indicate both their status and how the ARCIC statements relate to them. The Sacred Congregation complains that the ARCIC documents do not accord with Catholic teaching as expressed by the Council of Trent, Vatican I and II. They also add that ARCIC should indicate their position in reference to the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal (A.2.iii). We agree.
- 4 The new Commission should be asked whether they can see any way forward without resorting to ambiguity in those areas of Eucharist, Ministry, Authority and Primacy, over which continuing misgivings, are being expressed (as in this Assessment).
- 5 The Commission should be asked to add some fresh doctrines to their agenda. Among these we put first the doctrine of salvation, with special reference to justification. Other topics might be the nature of man, the status of non-Christian religions and dialogue with people of other faiths, and the Marian dogmas.
- 6 The new Commission could profitably be invited to make their contribution to contemporary Christian social and ethical thinking in such areas as our responsibility to the poor and the oppressed, war and peace, work, unemployment and industrial relations, marriage and divorce, contraception, and abortion, and homosexual partnerships. Although these subjects are not part of the 'tested theological agreement' needed for reunion, nevertheless Roman Catholic and Anglican scholars should in our view be thinking about them together. Or, if ethical issues are not included in their brief, the new Commission should at least consider how they should be discussed.

We make these suggestions for the work of the new Commission, because we agree with the Sacred Congregation that the dialogue should be 'continued', 'deepened' and 'extended to new themes' (D.2.a,b,c).

Above all, although we wish to listen to the Roman Catholic Church and understand its own sensitivities, we plead that the new Commissioners will not abandon the essential gains of the Reformation. Without a clear affirmation by both Churches of *sola Scriptura* for our authority and of *sola gratia* for our salvation, we could not ourselves recommend any formal steps towards the formation of a re-united Church or contemplate being members of it.