

Lambeth '88 and A.R.C.I.C. I

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Introduction

The Bishops of the Anglican Communion will meet in July and August 1988 at the University of Kent, Canterbury, for the next Lambeth Conference. As well as addressing the problems and opportunities before the churches of the Communion today, it will give special attention to the *Final Report* of the first Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission. It may also discuss the first report, *Salvation and the Church*, of the second Commission, but only in a preliminary way.

What are we to make of these reports? Are they faithful to Scripture? Or do they compromise the biblical doctrines with which they deal? And, will acceptance of them mean that the Church of England will forfeit the right to call herself Scriptural and Reformed?

In this paper I seek to establish, and illustrate, that the Report of A.R.C.I.C. I leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, I believe that the Bishops who participate in Lambeth '88 should agree that, despite all the hard work of the Commissioners, it is not yet possible to affirm, without equivocation, that this report is consonant in substance with either the faith of Anglicans or Biblical Christians.

The twenty members (ten Anglican and ten Roman Catholic) of the Commission have said all that they wished to say on the subjects they have considered. In 1971 the Commission issued its first agreed statement on *Eucharistic Doctrine*. Two years later, in 1973, the Commission agreed a statement on *Ministry and Ordination*. This was followed in 1976 by, what was to turn out to be, their first statement on *Authority in the Church*. When each Agreed Statement was published, the Commission invited both comment and criticism. These were evidently forthcoming for, in 1979, the Commission issued an *Elucidation on Eucharistic Doctrine* and an *Elucidation on Ministry and Ordination*. Their *Elucidation on Authority in the Church*, did not appear until 1981. The same year saw the publication of a fourth statement entitled *Authority in the Church II*. This deals with what they saw, at the time of the publication of *Authority in the Church I*, as the 'four outstanding problems' of 'the interpretation of the Petrine texts, the meaning of the language of "divine right", the affirmation of papal infallibility, and the nature of the jurisdiction ascribed to the bishop of Rome as universal primate' (p. 81).

All in all, A.R.C.I.C. I met in plenary session some thirteen times during the years 1970–81. The statements issued were unanimously agreed and the respective Anglican and Roman authorities gave permission for the publication of *The Final Report* in January 1982. At its fifth meeting, held in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1981, the Anglican Consultative Council resolved that the Churches of the Anglican Communion should consider the two questions posed by the Co-Chairmen of A.R.C.I.C. I in their letter of 2nd September 1981 to the Archbishop of Canterbury. These are: [1] 'Whether the Agreed Statements on Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination, and Authority in the Church (I and II) together with the Elucidations are consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans' and, [2] 'Whether the *Final Report* offers sufficient basis for taking the next concrete step towards the reconciliation of our Churches grounded in agreement in faith.'

Similar questions have been sent for discussion to the Roman Catholic episcopal conferences (or councils) throughout the world but, as the Church of Rome is centrally governed, we should recognize that its decision about the *Final Report* (and those that A.R.C.I.C. II produces) will be made there and not elsewhere. An indication of Rome's response is to be found in the *Observations on the Final Report of A.R.C.I.C.* issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and dated 29th March 1982. These *Observations*, which are conservative and even reactionary in tone, were sent to the Bishops' Conferences with the intention of guiding them in their assessment of the *Final Report*.

Since its publication in 1982 the *Final Report* has been discussed by the Synods of the twenty-seven national or regional churches of the Anglican Communion. In February 1985 the General Synod of the Church of England accepted that the statements on *Eucharistic Doctrine* and *Ministry and Ordination*, together with their respective *Elucidations*, are 'consonant in substance with the faith of the Church of England' but with regard to the statements on *Authority* and the *Elucidation* the Synod affirmed that these 'record sufficient convergence' on the nature of authority in the Church for our communions to explore further the structures of authority and the exercise of collegiality and primacy in the church.' Subsequently the dioceses were asked to debate and discuss the Synod's motions before the General Synod engaged in its final debate on this subject in November 1986. At that session the Synod approved the motions before it, although the House of Laity, in particular, fired a warning shot indicating that it is far from happy. This came as a surprise, if not a shock, to many.

Events took a different course across the water in Ireland. The General Synod of the Church of Ireland resolved, on 21 May 1986, that the questions which the Anglican Consultative Council had asked it to

consider 'are so broad and relate to only part of what "agreement in the faith" would have to entail, that it is not possible realistically to answer with a general "Yes".' In other words, the Church of Ireland does not accept that the Agreed Statements, together with their Elucidations 'are consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans.'

These responses, along with those of the other churches of the Anglican Communion, will have been discussed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1987 and fed into the Lambeth Conference of 1988. What happens then we shall have to wait and see. Having sketched in the historical background to the pronouncements of A.R.C.I.C. I will now endeavour to illustrate how these documents compromise biblical truth.

Inevitably I must be selective. Neither time nor space permit a detailed analysis of the documents before us. I start with a consideration of:

I. The Statement and Elucidation on Eucharistic Doctrine.

It is worthwhile remembering that the three great reformers Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer died for their beliefs on the Lord's Supper. Cranmer, although teaching the real presence of Christ's person and, what Roger Beckwith terms, the 'virtual' presence of his body and blood in the administration and hearts of those who believe, denied that there is any change in the substance of the elements. He also denied any offering of Christ by the Church during the sacrament. Clearly he held a very high view of the sacrament yet at the same time he averred that the Church of England differs from the Church of Rome in its eucharistic doctrine. A.R.C.I.C. though, informs us that they have reached 'a consensus at the level of faith' and that they 'have reached agreement on essential points of eucharistic doctrine' (p. 11).

We are not convinced. Moreover, we find ourselves asking: How can the Anglican members of the Commission, let alone Anglicans at large, be satisfied with a document that compromises the Biblical doctrine of the Lord's Supper? It does so in the following areas.

[a] The once and for all nature of Christ's sacrifice of himself upon the Cross is compromised.

The New Testament and Articles are quite clear on this point. Christ's sacrifice is unrepeatable. He died once for all (see e.g. *Romans* 6.10, *Hebrews* 10.10 and 1 *Peter* 3.18 and *Article* 31). To be fair A.R.C.I.C. seems, in a number of places, to present and uphold the Biblical teaching. For example it says: 'There can be no repetition of or addition to what was then accomplished once for all by Christ' (p. 13), and: 'There is therefore one historical, unrepeatable sacrifice, offered once for all by Christ and accepted once for all by the Father' (p. 20). But in the next breath the authors speak of the eucharist as: 'a means

through which the atoning work of Christ on the cross is proclaimed and made *effective* in the life of the church' (p. 14, my italics). This quotation gives us an inkling of where things are going. It comes, therefore, as no real surprise to find, a sentence or so later, that mention of the church entering 'into the movement of his self-offering.'

Worse, though, is found in the *Elucidation*. There we read this statement: 'In the celebration of the memorial, Christ in the Holy Spirit unites his people with himself in a sacramental way so that the Church enters into the movement of his self-offering' (p. 20). Just how one is to interpret this is far from clear. Some members of the Commission would argue, no doubt, that it is not a reference to Eucharistic Sacrifice but that is not how the Roman Catholic Bishop Butler, a member of the Commission, interprets it. In *The Tablet* of 8 January 1972 he said:

a careful reading of the section of the Statement on the Eucharist as *anamnesis* will disclose that the Eucharist is here regarded as the 'making effective in the present' the 'totality of God's reconciling action in Christ'. This reconciling action of God is summed up in the Cross, and from the New Testament times the event of the Cross has been regarded as a sacrifice. To make that sacrifice effective in an *anamnesis* ('memorial' in the rich Biblical sense of the term) is to represent it, and in the Eucharist 'the members of Christ united with God and one another . . . enter into the movement of his self-offering'.

The significance of this should not be missed. It is possible to read A.R.C.I.C. and find traditional Roman Catholic teaching within it. The language may be different yet among certain seemingly sound statements one finds veiled references to the official Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass. In this case a form of words is used that can be said to imply a repetition of Christ's sacrifice during the eucharistic celebration. This being so we assert that the *Final Report* compromises the Biblical doctrine of the once and for all nature of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. As Biblical Christians and Anglicans we cannot acknowledge any repetition of that sacrifice. Furthermore, we have no choice other than to reject A.R.C.I.C. as unacceptable because this fundamental Biblical truth is not safe-guarded as it ought to be.

[b] **The nature of Christ's Presence at the sacrament is compromised.** We have already mentioned that Cranmer held a high view of this sacrament and that he did not shirk from using 'strong' sacramental language. It is quite true that he taught, as Roger Beckwith puts it, 'a real presence of Christ's person, and a virtual presence of his crucified body and blood, in the administration of the sacrament and the hearts of those who receive the sacrament by faith.' (*Church of England Newspaper* 17 July 1987, p. 6) but it is also true that he saw Christ's presence in spiritual as opposed to material terms. Indeed, Articles 28 and 29 affirm that this sacrament is essentially spiritual in

character. A careful reading of them shows that they teach that there is no change in the bread and wine when they are consecrated. They remain bread and wine, natural substances, and do not contain any presence of Christ's body and blood. The only difference between the elements, on the one hand, and other bread and wine, on the other, is that they are set apart for sacramental use. In that sense they are 'consecrated' but there is no change in their substance. Anglican teaching is faithful to Scripture but the same cannot be said about A.R.C.I.C. Instead it goes beyond the New Testament towards the traditional Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass. We saw this in part above when we noted that the term 'memorial' is interpreted by Roman Catholics as teaching that the redemptive sacrifice of Christ is made present and effective in the eucharist. But we should also note that the Agreed Statement uses terms which clearly assert an actual change in the bread and wine. For example we are told,

The elements are not mere signs; Christ's body and blood become really present and are really given (p.15) Through this prayer of thanksgiving, a word of faith addressed to the Father, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood By the transforming action of the Spirit of God, earthly bread and wine become the heavenly manna and the new wine (p. 16).

In the *Elucidation* the Commission is at pains to point out that: '*Becoming* (their italics) does not here imply material change What is here affirmed is a sacramental presence' (p. 21) but in the very next sentence we are told that: 'Before the eucharistic prayer, to the question: "What is that?", the believer answers: "It is bread." After the eucharistic prayer, to the same question he answers: "It is truly the body of Christ, the Bread of Life."' There is no Biblical warrant for such a statement. What is more, we must agree with John Stott when he says that although the Commission argues that Christ's presence is not limited to the consecrated elements (p. 21) 'it certainly appears to be localized there' (*Evangelical Anglicans and the A.R.C.I.C. Final Report*, p. 7). Some, like Dr. Peter Forster of St John's College, Durham, and a professed Evangelical, seem quite happy with all this. At the General Synod of November 1986 he concluded his speech in favour of the motion on the Agreed Statement on Eucharistic doctrine by saying: 'in my view the eucharist section is the best part of A.R.C.I.C., and we should warmly welcome it'. But, more importantly, we should note that during his speech he argued that the sacramental, as opposed to a physical, change which A.R.C.I.C. teaches:

is not much more than the classic Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation . . . because for theologians from Thomas Aquinas

onwards a change in the substance of the bread and wine did not entail a change in the physical elements of bread and wine. Now, modern Roman Catholic theology is no longer bound to the Aristotelian philosophy of substance and accidents, and hence transubstantiation as a concept has taken a back seat—it is relegated to a footnote in A.R.C.I.C. Roman Catholic theology is in process of consolidating this positive change, away from our outmoded philosophical expression based on outmoded Aristotelian categories. A.R.C.I.C. is a powerful stage along that road to change and renewal, which we in the Church of England should do our best to encourage.

The challenge to those of us on the more Protestant side of the Church of England is to beware of also being caught in an outmoded philosophy—in our case not Aristotelianism, but Platonism. Augustine, the greatest of all Christian Platonists, consolidated the idea of sacrament as ‘an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace’; the Anglican Reformers, influenced by the Protestant Reformation on the Continent, took over this definition of a sacrament. But it is a definition which, at the end of the day, drives too great a wedge between the material and the spiritual. And we, too, have to learn to let Scripture judge our historic categories.

What Forster asserts needs to be demonstrated. It may well be the case that transubstantiation is only mentioned as a footnote in the *Agreed Statement* but that footnote is of value, as the Church of Ireland has pointed out (*The Response of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland to the Final Report of A.R.C.I.C.—I*, p. 3), because it highlights the problems associated with the interpretation of that term. What Forster, and so many others, appear to forget is that what some contemporary Roman Catholics are saying is one thing, whilst the Church’s traditional teaching, which is *authoritative*, is another. It is possible for the language of A.R.C.I.C. to be interpreted as being consistent with the Roman Church’s traditional teaching on transubstantiation. This being so we have no choice but to state that the Biblical teaching on the nature of Christ’s presence in the sacrament is compromised and that the language of A.R.C.I.C. appears to contradict the Anglican view taught in Article 28 and the Black Rubric, which can be found at the end of the Lord’s Supper in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

[c] Right Reception is compromised.

Both the New Testament (I Corinthians 11) and the *Book of Common Prayer* emphasize the necessity of receiving the sacrament in a worthy manner. We are to come to the Lord’s Table in faith. Those who receive the bread and wine with faith, trusting in God’s promise to save all who believe on his Son, feast spiritually on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the spiritual benefits of his passion. They are reassured of the forgiveness of sin, of God’s grace and favour towards them, and that they are numbered amongst his chosen people (see the second prayer that may be said after the Lord’s

Prayer at the end of the Lord's Supper in the *Book of Common Prayer*). Those, though, who are devoid of faith and yet partake of the bread and wine do not, according to Article 29, partake of the benefits of Christ's death, nor do they feed upon the spiritual food of Christ's body and blood. Instead, as I Corinthians 11.29 indicates, they eat and drink 'judgment' upon themselves. It is strange, then, that the A.R.C.I.C. *Agreed Statement* is silent on the importance of worthy reception. However, this topic is dealt with, inadequately, in the *Elucidation* in one paragraph only:

Some traditions have placed a special emphasis on the association of Christ's presence with the consecrated elements; others have emphasized Christ's presence in the heart of the believer through reception by faith. In the past, acute difficulties have arisen when one or other of these emphases has become almost exclusive. In the opinion of the Commission neither emphasis is incompatible with eucharistic faith, provided that the complementary movement emphasized by the other position is not denied (para. 7).

On the surface this may sound fine but where in the New Testament are we taught to associate 'Christ's presence with the consecrated elements'? We are not, but it does stress the importance of right reception by faith. A.R.C.I.C. argues for a sort of even-handedness towards both these 'emphases', which appears to be compromising Biblical truth.

We should also note what is said in the *Elucidation* about veneration. The statement: 'If veneration is wholly dissociated from the eucharistic celebration of the community it contradicts the true doctrine of the eucharist' (p. 23), is capable of a variety of interpretations. Certainly it leaves the door open for the elements to become objects of worship, which official Roman Catholic teaching encourages. Such, after all, is a logical development of a belief in transubstantiation.

A.R.C.I.C. also implies that the sacrament is indispensable for the spiritual well-being of the individual, for it seems to say that Christ's presence cannot be had without the use of the sacramental elements. This is neither Biblical nor Anglican, as the rubric at the end of *The Communion of the Sick*, in the *Book of Common Prayer*, shows. There it is explicitly stated that the person who truly repents of his sins and steadfastly believes:

that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed his Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore; he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth.

Again we should recognize that no mention is made of the reception of communion in both kinds within the Report. The Church of Ireland, in 1976, some three years before the publication of the *Elucidation*, specifically asked the Commission for 'an explicit recognition of the reception of both bread and wine in the communion (*op. cit.* p.29). Its request was a reasonable one for the New Testament records that during the institution of the Lord's Supper our Lord handed the disciples both bread and wine (Mark 14.23; I Corinthians 11.26). Such an omission is significant and especially when you recall that the Co-Chairmen tell us in their Preface that 'though no attempt was made to present a fully comprehensive treatment on the subject, nothing essential has been omitted (p. 11). We disagree and assert that for a number of reasons—we have mentioned just three—it can be argued that the *Agreed Statement* and *Elucidation on Eucharistic Doctrine* compromise Biblical truth.

II. The Statement and Elucidation on Ministry and Ordination

A.R.C.I.C., the Co-Chairmen tell us, examined two questions in particular when its members turned their attention to the doctrine of ministry. They sought to come to a common mind on the 'understanding of the ordained ministry and its place in the life of the Church' (p. 29). Basically speaking they speak of the ordained ministry in terms of function and status. On both counts they compromise the teaching of the New Testament.

[a] The Function of the Ordained Ministry is compromised.

On the positive side, we acknowledge that the Statement recognizes 'That the early churches may well have had considerable diversity in the structure of pastoral ministry' (p. 32), and that 'The goal of the ordained ministry is to serve the priesthood of all the faithful' (p. 33). We also welcome the summary of the terms used in the New Testament to describe the function of the ordained minister. Thus in paragraph eight (p. 33) we are reminded that he is called to be a 'minister', 'servant', 'herald', 'ambassador', 'teacher', 'shepherd' and 'steward', as well as being responsible for 'oversight' (§9). Mention is also made, in paragraphs 9 and 10, of the ordained ministry being a ministry of the Word. However, and this is most serious, once the subject of 'priesthood' is raised the Commission quickly departs from the New Testament concept of ministry and becomes hidebound by tradition. In the same sentence that it acknowledges 'the fact that in the New Testament ministers are never called "priests" (*hieris*),' the Commission goes on to say 'Christians came to see the priestly role of Christ reflected in these ministers and used priestly terms in describing them' (p. 35). A few sentences later in the same paragraph we are told that the ministry of the ordained 'is not an extension of

the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit' (p. 35). No evidence is cited in support of this perplexing statement but it is not difficult to deduce why it is said. The Commission uses terms that it hopes will be 'acceptable' to those who hold a sacerdotal as opposed to a presbyteral concept of ministry. In fact a careful reading of all that the Commission says on Ministry and Ordination reveals a bias in the direction of the former rather than the latter. In this A.R.C.I.C. is not Biblical. In the New Testament the preaching of the Word takes precedence over the administering of the sacraments. The Reformers recognized this and gave expression to it in the 1550–1552 revision of the Ordinal. They abandoned the practice of delivering the chalice and bread at the laying on of hands and replaced the accompanying words authorizing the priest to offer sacrifice for the living and the dead with these words, 'Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments in this congregation where thou shalt be so appointed.' This was no minor change. It might seem like that to some but in effect it represents a return to the New Testament understanding of the function of the ordained ministry. Acceptance of A.R.C.I.C. will inevitably entail the overturning of that which was achieved at the Reformation and a return to unBiblical concepts of ministry within the Church. Ministers are not sacrificing priests. They do not share in the priestly work of Christ through the offering of his body and blood in the eucharist. And, the New Testament does not teach, as A.R.C.I.C. does, that 'because the eucharist is central in the Church's life that the essential nature of the Christian ministry, however this may be expressed, is most clearly seen in its celebration' (p. 36).

[b] The Status of the Ordained Ministry is also compromised.

There is no Scriptural warrant to assert that the presiding minister at the Lord's Supper stands 'in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in offering his own sacrifice' (p. 35) or that 'their ministry . . . belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit' (p. 36). The first of these quotations, as the Church of Ireland illustrates in its submission to the Anglican Consultative Council, is interpreted in two quite different ways by two members of the Commission, namely Julian Charley and Bishop Alan Clark. The latter is, to say the least, nothing less than vague and ambiguous. The point we should not miss is that both leave room for the sacerdotal as opposed to the presbyteral concept of ministry. There can be no question about this. Roman Catholics like Bishop Alan Clark have already intimated that they see the Roman view of ministry within the *Final Report*. In terms of status, then, the door is left wide open for affirming an hierarchical and representative priesthood. This being so we can do no other than say with the General Synod of the Church of Ireland 'that A.R.C.I.C.'s concept of ministerial priesthood lies much closer to the teaching of Vatican II than to the concept of priesthood in the

1662 Ordinal' (*op. cit.* p. 13). It will come as no surprise to hear the A.R.C.I.C. also states that ordination should 'take place within the context of the eucharist' (p. 37) and that ordination is itself 'a sacramental act' (p. 37).

In a foot note the Commission seeks to explain and justify its use of the term 'sacrament' by drawing our attention to the distinction made in Article 25 between the two 'sacraments of the Gospel' and the five that 'are commonly called sacraments'. We are led to believe that because Article 25 does not 'deny these latter the name sacrament' then it is all right for us to describe them as such. This is yet another example of A.R.C.I.C.'s unBiblical methodology.

III. The Agreed Statements and the Elucidation on Authority in the Church

It is generally agreed that this is the most unsatisfactory section of the Report. It is not only the longest, it is also difficult, diffuse, tortuous and repetitive. It speaks to an ideal (p. 50) rather than the real situation. The Report, which appears to be looking in all directions at the same time, fails to achieve reconciliation between the opposing views on this subject. To be fair it does not claim this. That is why the Commission speaks of its statements reflecting 'convergence' (p. 90) and that they represent 'a significant contribution to the resolution of these questions' (p. 49).

We, however, question whether they do even that for they are remiss in at least two areas.

[a] They compromise Scripture as our Authority.

The position of the Articles is that Holy Scripture, God's Word written, is the source and seat of all authority within the Church (see *Articles* 6–8, 20–22). On this point the Articles reflect what Scripture says about itself. The same cannot be said about A.R.C.I.C. In *Authority in the Church I* the primacy and all-sufficiency of Scripture is nowhere clearly affirmed. A little progress in the right direction appears, at first sight, to be evident in the *Elucidation* (p. 69ff.), but even there a lack of consistency can be detected. The way is left open for tradition to come in alongside Scripture, as well as for the development of doctrine along the lines espoused by Newman last century. The Commission tells us:

Tradition has been viewed in different ways. One approach is primarily concerned never to go beyond the bounds of Scripture . . . It is an unfolding of the riches of the original revelation. Another approach, while different, does not necessarily contradict the former. In the conviction that the Holy Spirit is seeking to guide the contemporary church into the fullness of truth, it draws upon everything in human experience and thought which will give to the content of revelation its fullest expression and widest application. It is primarily concerned with the growth of the seed of God's word from age to age (p. 70f.).

Roger Beckwith's comment on this quotation is apposite. He says:

This appears to be an expression of Newman's hypothesis in his *Development of Doctrine*, according to which anything which the contemporary church authoritatively teaches *must* be a legitimate development of the original revelation, even though no clear connection can be traced, simply because the contemporary church authoritatively teaches it. But this is to make the contemporary church your authority and not Scripture, and explains how the Roman Catholic members of A.R.C.I.C. are able to maintain as part of revelation the dogmas that our Lord's Mother was sinless, that she ascended bodily into heaven and that the pope is infallible, despite the fact that there is no hint of these things in the New Testament (*Rome and Canterbury and the Final A.R.C.I.C. Report* p. 14).

A lack of consistency can also be detected in the Commission's use of Scripture. In *Authority in the Church II* the Petrine texts are discussed (p. 81ff.). A.R.C.I.C. claims, and in so doing cites many texts in support, that 'the New Testament attributes to Peter a special position among the Twelve' (p. 81). Moreover, it appears, by implication, to say in a paragraph that begins with this statement 'The New Testament contains no explicit record of a transmission of Peter's leadership' that he was in fact Bishop of Rome and that the exclusive authority he exercised was passed on to his successor in that office (p. 83f.). This is, you will realize, just one of the many instances where the Commission faces both ways. Of greater concern, perhaps, is the unbalanced way in which texts are treated. In paragraph three of the second Agreed Statement on Authority we are told that Paul 'appears also to have accepted the lead given by Peter at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) (p. 82). But Peter was not the leader of that Council. James, the brother of our Lord, was (Acts 21.18). It was James who presided at the Council. It was James who, after summing up the debate, gave his personal judgment on the issue in question and advised that a letter be sent informing the Gentiles of the Council's decision. Peter acknowledged James as the leader, accepted his advice and acted upon it. Turning to Galatians it is interesting to note that Paul names James before both Peter and John when he refers to the 'pillars' of the Church (Gal.2.9.). Such evidence against the primacy of Peter should not be dismissed or over looked. A careful exegesis of the three main texts (Luke 22.32; Matthew 16.18 and John 21.15ff.) used to support the claims for the primacy of Peter would not have been amiss either. One also wonders why certain texts are not even mentioned.

I conclude this section with a quotation from the Church of Ireland report.

But the most conclusive evidence that Peter's call to shepherd the flock was not considered by the other apostles, nor even by himself, as any

unique responsibility, is the fact that Paul commissioned the elders of Ephesus to 'feed the Church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood' (Acts 20.28), and Peter himself exhorted his fellow elders to 'Feed the flock of God that is your charge' (1 Peter 5.1,2—using the same Greek word *poimaino* as in John 21.16) (p. 28).

[b] The Biblical doctrine of the visible unity of the Church is compromised.

The New Testament contains a number of models of the Church. The Commission focuses on one, namely *koinonia*. For them this is the controlling model, as a quick survey of the Introduction to the *Final Report* reveals (para. 6, p. 6). Perhaps this explains the reason why the Commissioners commend to us so warmly 'the concept of a "universal primacy" in a reunited Church'. However, as Biblical Christians we must contend that the other models of the Church which the New Testament develops are especially relevant in discussions on authority in the church. The Church, the New Testament declares, is the Flock of Christ. He is its chief pastor. And, as the Good Shepherd, he tends it by his Word and Spirit. Similarly, we learn that it is the Bride of which he is the husband. It is the Body of which he is the head. And, it is the Building of which he is the foundation and chief corner stone. These metaphors underline Christ's position as head of the Church. Christians acknowledge his headship and submit to him. The ascended Christ is the only head of the Church. This is the Biblical position but this is not the position of A.R.C.I.C. Instead it proffers that a universal primate is both desirable and necessary.

The unity in truth of the Christian community demands visible expression. We agree that such visible expression is the will of God and that the maintenance of visible unity at the universal level includes the *episcopate* of a universal primate. This is a doctrinal statement.

So speaks the Commission on page 76 of the *Final Report*. But more is to come. For on page 85 we learn that 'A universal primacy will be needed in a reunited Church and should appropriately be the primacy of the Bishop of Rome.' What Biblical warrant is there for these assertions? There is none. But we can, and must say with Roger Beckwith, that

In the New Testament, the visible unity of the Church consists in a common baptism, a common communion table, a common confession of faith, and a common allegiance to the apostles, as the preachers of that faith and the founders of the churches. The only head of the church is the ascended Christ (*op. cit.* p. 15).

There is no necessity for a universal primate as envisaged by A.R.C.I.C. Many Anglicans, it seems, have welcomed the Commission's emphasis on 'collegiality, conciliarity and reception' yet they have failed to see

that what A.R.C.I.C. really envisages is an hierarchical type of primacy which accords a universal primate too much power.

Conclusion

In this paper I have sought to illustrate the A.R.C.I.C. documents compromise both Biblical truth and the Church of England's right to call herself Protestant, Scriptural and Reformed. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Bishops of the Anglican Communion will declare at the Lambeth Conference of 1988: first, that much work still needs to be done on the issues that A.R.C.I.C. has addressed thus far. And, secondly, that it is not yet possible for us realistically to give a general 'yes' to the questions posed by the Anglican Consultative Council at its meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1981.

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