

# Salvation and the Church

## An Agreed Statement

### SECOND ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

#### THE STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT

The document published here is the work of the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II). It is simply a joint statement of the Commission. The authorities who appointed the Commission have allowed the statement to be published so that it may be discussed and improved by the suggestions received. It is not an authoritative declaration by the Roman Catholic Church or by the Anglican Communion, who will evaluate the document in order to take a position on it in due time.

The Commission will be glad to receive observations and criticisms made in a constructive and fraternal spirit. Its work is done to serve the progress of the two communions towards unity. It will give responsible attention to every serious comment which is likely to help in improving or completing the result so far achieved. This wider collaboration will make its work to a greater degree work in common, and by God's grace "will lead us to the full unity to which he calls us" (Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Pentecost 1982).

#### PREFACE BY THE CO-CHAIRMEN

The 29th of May 1982, the Eve of the Feast of Pentecost, was a day of great significance for the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches on their path towards unity. In the footsteps of St Augustine of Canterbury whom his predecessor Pope Gregory the Great had sent from Rome to convert the English, Pope John Paul II visited Canterbury. There, in the church founded by Augustine, he and the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, along with representatives of the English churches and of the whole Anglican Communion, proclaimed and celebrated the one baptismal faith which we all share. The Pope and the Archbishop also gave thanks to God for the work of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) whose Final Report had just been published, and agreed to the establishment of a new commission (ARCIC II) to continue its work. The primary task of ARCIC II is to examine and try to resolve those doctrinal differences which still divide us. Accordingly, at the request of the Anglican Consultative Council (Newcastle, September 1981), we have addressed ourselves to the doctrine of justification, which at the time of the Reformation was a particular cause of contention. This request sprang out of a widespread view that the subject of justification and salvation is so central to the Christian faith that, unless there is assurance of agreement on this issue, there can be no full doctrinal agreement on this issue, there can be no full doctrinal agreement between our two Churches. We have spent more than three years on this task. The doctrine of justification raises issues of great complexity and profound mystery. Furthermore it can be properly treated only within the wider context of the doctrine of salvation as a whole. This in turn has involved discussion of the role of the Church in Christ's saving work. Hence the title of our agreed statement: Salvation and the Church. We do not claim to have composed a complete treatment of the doctrine of the Church. Our discussion is limited to its role in salvation. In our work, particularly on the doctrine of justification as such, we have been greatly helped by the statement Justification by Faith agreed in 1983 by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Consultation in the USA (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 1985). This illustrates the interdependence of all ecumenical dialogues

◆ an interdependence which is an expression of the growing communion which already exists between the churches. For the search for unity is indivisible. A question not discussed by the Commission, though of great contemporary importance, is that of the salvation of those who have no explicit faith in Christ. This has not been a matter of historical dispute between us. Our ancestors, though divided in Christian faith, shared a world in which the questions posed by people of other faiths, or none, could scarcely arise in their modern form. Today this is a matter for theological study in both our Communions. Although our first concern has been to state our common faith on the issues in the doctrine of salvation which have proved problematic in the past, we believe that the world, now as much as ever, stands in need of the Gospel of God's free grace. Part of the challenge to Christians is this: how can we bear true witness to the good news of a God who accepts us, unless we can accept one another? The purpose of our dialogue is the restoration of full ecclesial communion between us. Our work has recalled for us still wider perspectives ◆ not only the unity of all Christian people but the fulfilment of all things in Christ. We trust that God who has begun this good work in us will bring it to completion in Christ Jesus our Lord.

+ Cormac Murphy-O'Connor  
+ Mark Santer

Llandaff, 3 September 1986  
Feast of St Gregory the Great

---

## Salvation and the Church

### ***Introduction***

1. The will of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is to reconcile to himself all that he has created and sustains, to set free the creation from its bondage to decay, and to draw all humanity into communion with himself. Though we, his creatures, turn away from him through sin, God continues to call us and opens up for us the way to find him anew. To bring us to union with himself, the Father sent into the world Jesus Christ, his only Son, in whom all things were created. He is the image of the invisible God; he took flesh so that we in turn might share the divine nature and so reflect the glory of God. Through Christ's life, death and resurrection, the mystery of God's love is revealed, we are saved from the powers of evil, sin and death, and we receive a share in the life of God. All this is pure unmerited gift. The Spirit of God is poured into the hearts of believers ◆ the Spirit of adoption, who makes us sons and daughters of God. The Spirit unites us with Christ and, in Christ, with all those who by faith are one with him. Through baptism we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection, we are by the power of the Spirit made members of one body, and together we participate in the life of God. This fellowship in one body, sustained through Word and Sacrament, is in the New Testament called *koinonia* (communion). "Koinonia with one another is entailed by our koinonia with God in Christ. This is the mystery of the Church" (ARCIC I The Final Report, Introduction 5). The community of believers united with Christ, gives praise and thanksgiving to God, celebrating the grace of Christ as they await his return in glory, when he will be all in all and will deliver to the Father a holy people. In the present age the Church is called to be a sign to the world of God's will for the healing and re-creation of the whole human race in Jesus Christ. As the Church proclaims the good news which it has received, the heart of its message must be salvation through the grace of God in Christ.
2. The doctrine of salvation has in the past been a cause of some contention between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Disagreements, focusing on the doctrine of justification, were already apparent in the Church of the later Middle Ages. In the

sixteenth century these became a central matter of dispute between Roman Catholics and continental Reformers. Though the matter played a less crucial role in the English Reformation, the Church of England substantially adopted the principles expressed in the moderate Lutheran formulations of the Augsburg and Württemberg Confessions. The Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent was not directed against the Anglican formularies, which had not yet been compiled. Anglican theologians reacted to the decree in a variety of ways, some sympathetic, others critical at least on particular points<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless in the course of time Anglicans have widely come to understand that decree as a repudiation of their position. Since the sixteenth century, various debates on the doctrine of justification and on related issues (such as predestination, original sin, good works, sanctification) have been pursued within each of our Communion.

3. In the area of the doctrine of salvation, including justification, there was much agreement. Above all it was agreed that the act of God in bringing salvation to the human race and summoning individuals into a community to serve him is due solely to the mercy and grace of God, mediated and manifested through Jesus Christ in his ministry, atoning death and rising again. It was also no matter of dispute that God's grace evokes an authentic human response of Faith which takes effect not only in the life of the individual but also in the corporate life of the Church. The difficulties arose in explaining how divine grace related to human response, and these difficulties were compounded by a framework of discussion that concentrated too narrowly upon the individual.
4. One difficulty concerned the understanding of the faith through which we are justified, in so far as this included the individual's confidence in his or her own final salvation. Everyone agreed that confidence in God was a mark of Christian hope, but some feared that too extreme an emphasis on assurance, when linked with an absolute doctrine of divine predestination, encouraged a neglect of the need for justification to issue in holiness of life. Catholics thought that this Protestant understanding of assurance confused faith with a subjective state and would actually have the effect of undermining hope in God. Protestants suspected that Catholics, lacking confidence in the sufficiency of Christ's work and relying overmuch on human efforts, had lapsed either into a kind of scrupulosity or into a mere legalism and so lost Christian hope and assurance.
5. A second difficulty concerned the understanding of justification and the associated concepts, righteousness and justice. Fearing that justification might seem to depend upon entitlement arising from good works, Reformation theologians laid great emphasis on the imputation to human beings of the righteousness of Christ. By this they meant that God declared the unrighteous to be accepted by him on account of the obedience of Christ and the merits of his passion. Catholics took them to be implying that imputed righteousness was a legal fiction, that is, a merely nominal righteousness that remained only external to the believer. They objected that this left the essential sinfulness of the individual unchanged, and excluded the imparted, or habitual and actual, righteousness created in the inner being of the regenerate person by the indwelling Spirit. Anglican theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw imputed and imparted righteousness as distinct to the mind, but indissoluble in worship and life. They also believed that, while we are made truly righteous because we are forgiven, we know ourselves to be in continuing need of forgiveness.
6. A third difficulty concerned the bearing of good works on salvation. Reformation theologians understood the Catholic emphasis on the value of good works and religious practices and ceremonies to imply that justification in some degree depended upon them in such a way as to compromise the sovereignty and unconditional freedom of God's grace. Catholics, on the other hand, saw the Reformation's understanding of justification as implying that human actions were of no worth in the sight of God. This, in their judgement, led to the negation of human freedom and responsibility, and to the denial that works, even when supernaturally inspired, deserved any reward. The Anglican theologians of the Reformation age, taking "by faith Alone" to mean "only for the merit of Christ", also held good works to be not irrelevant to salvation, but imperfect and therefore inadequate. They saw good works as a necessary

demonstration of faith, and faith itself as inseparable from hope and love.

7. Although the sixteenth-century disagreements centered mainly on the relationship of faith, righteousness and good works to the salvation of the individual, the role of the Church in the process of salvation constituted a fourth difficulty. As well as believing that Catholics did not acknowledge the true authority of Scripture over the Church, Protestants also felt that Catholic teaching and practice had interpreted the mediatorial role of the Church in such a way as to derogate from the place of Christ as "sole mediator between God and man" (1 Tim 2:5). Catholics believed that Protestants were abandoning or at least devaluing the Church's ministry and sacraments, which were divinely appointed means of grace; also that they were rejecting its divinely given authority as guardian and interpreter of the revealed Word of God.
8. The break in communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics encouraged each side to produce caricatures of the other's beliefs. There were also extremists on both sides whose words and actions seemed to confirm the anxieties of their opponents. The renewal of biblical scholarship, the development of historical and theological studies, new insights gained in mission, and the growth of mutual understanding within the ecumenical movement enable us to see our divisions in a new perspective. We have explored our common faith in the light of these shared experiences and are able in what follows to affirm that the four areas of difficulty outlined above need not be matters of dispute between us.

### ***Salvation and Faith***

9. When we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, we praise and glorify God the Father, whose purpose for creation and salvation is realized in the Son, whom he sent to redeem us and to prepare a people for himself by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This wholly unmerited love of God for his creatures is expressed in the language of grace, which embraces not only the once for all death and resurrection of Christ, but also God's continuing work on our behalf. The Holy Spirit makes the fruits of Christ's sacrifice actual within the Church through Word and Sacrament: our sins are forgiven, we are enabled to respond to God's love, and we are conformed to the image of Christ. The human response to God's initiative is itself a gift of grace, and is at the same time a truly human, personal response. It is through grace that God's new creation is realized. Salvation is the gift of grace; it is by faith that it is appropriated.
10. The gracious action of God in Christ is revealed to us in the Gospel. The Gospel, by proclaiming Christ's definitive atoning work, the gift and pledge of the Holy Spirit to every believer, and the certainty of God's promise of eternal life, calls Christians to faith in the mercy of God and brings them assurance of salvation. It is God's gracious will that we, as his children, called through the Gospel and sharing in the means of grace, should be confident that the gift of eternal life is assured to each of us. Our response to this gift must come from our whole being. Faith, therefore, not only includes an assent to the truth of the Gospel but also involves commitment of our will to God in repentance and obedience to his call; otherwise faith is dead (Jas 2:17). Living faith is inseparable from love, issues in good works, and grows deeper in the course of a life of holiness. Christian assurance does not in any way remove from Christians the responsibility of working out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12-13).
11. Christian assurance is not presumptuous. It is always founded upon God's unfailing faithfulness and not upon the measure of our response. God gives to the faithful all that is needed for their salvation. This is to believers a matter of absolute certitude. The word of Christ and his sacraments give us this assurance. Throughout the Christian tradition there runs the certainty of the infinite mercy of God, who gave his Son for us. However grave our sins may be, we are sure that God is always ready to forgive those who truly repent. For the baptised and justified may still sin. The New Testament contains warnings against presumption (e.g. Col 1:22 ff; Heb 10:36 ff). Christians may never presume on their perseverance but should live their lives with a sure confidence in God's grace. Because of what God has revealed of his ultimate purpose in Christ Jesus, living faith is inseparable from hope.

## ***Salvation and Justification***

12. In baptism, the "sacrament of faith" (cf. Augustine Ep. 98,9), together with the whole Church, we confess Christ, enter into communion with him in his death and resurrection, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit are delivered from our sinfulness and raised to new life. The Scriptures speak of this salvation in many ways. They tell of God's eternal will fulfilled in Christ's sacrifice on the cross, his decisive act in overcoming the power of evil and reconciling sinners who believe. They also speak of the abiding presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, of his present gifts of grace, and of our continuing life and growth in this grace as we are transformed into the likeness of Christ. They also speak of our entry with all the saints into our eternal inheritance, of our vision of God face to face, and of our participation in the joy of the final resurrection.
13. In order to describe salvation in all its fullness, the New Testament employs a wide variety of language. Some terms are of more fundamental importance than others: but there is no controlling term or concept; they complement one another. The concept of salvation has the all-embracing meaning of the deliverance of human beings from evil and their establishment in that fullness of life which is God's will for them (e.g. Lk 1:77; John 3:16-17; cf. John 10:10). The idea of reconciliation and forgiveness stresses the restoration of broken relationships (e.g. 2 Cor 5:18 ff; Eph 2:13-18). The language of expiation or propitiation (hilasterion etc.), drawn from the context of sacrifice, denotes the putting away of sin and the reestablishment of right relationship with God (e.g. Rm 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10). To speak of redemption or liberation is to talk of rescue from bondage so as to become God's own possession, and of freedom bought for a price (e.g. Mk 10:45; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18 ff). The notion of adoption refers to our new identity as children of God (e.g. Rm 8:15-17.23; Gal 4:4 ff). Terms like regeneration, rebirth and new creation speak of God's work of re-creation and the beginning of new life (e.g. John 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17; 1Pet 1:23). The theme of sanctification underlines the fact that God has made us his own and calls us to holiness of life (e.g. John 17:15ff Eph 4:25 ff; 1 Pet 1:15 ff). The concept of justification relates to the removal of condemnation and to a new standing in the eyes of God (e.g. Rm 3:22 ff, 4:5, 5:1 ff; Acts 13:39). Salvation in all these aspects comes to each believer as he or she is incorporated into the believing community.
14. Roman Catholic interpreters of Trent and Anglican theologians alike have insisted that justification and sanctification are neither wholly distinct from nor unrelated to one another. The discussion, however, has been confused by differing understandings of the word justification and its associated words. The theologians of the Reformation tended to follow the predominant usage of the New Testament, in which the verb dikaioun usually means "to pronounce righteous". The Catholic theologians, and notably the Council of Trent, tended to follow the usage of patristic and medieval Latin writers, for whom justificare (the traditional translation of dikaioun) signified "to make righteous". Thus the Catholic understanding of the process of justification, following Latin usage, tended to include elements of salvation which the Reformers would describe as belonging to sanctification rather than justification. As a consequence, Protestants took Catholics to be emphasising sanctification in such a way that absolute gratuitousness of salvation was threatened. On the other side, Catholics feared that Protestants were so stressing the justifying action of God that sanctification and human responsibility were gravely depreciated.
15. Justification and sanctification are two aspects of the same divine act (1 Cor 6:11). This does not mean that justification is a reward for faith or works: rather, when God promises the removal of our condemnation and gives us a new standing before him, this justification is indissolubly linked with his sanctifying recreation of us in grace. This transformation is being worked out in the course of our pilgrimage, despite the imperfections and ambiguities of our lives. God's grace effects what he declares: his creative word imparts what it imputes. By pronouncing us righteous, God also makes us righteous. He imparts a righteousness which is his and becomes ours<sup>2</sup>.
16. God's declaration that we are accepted because of Christ together with his gift of

continual renewal by the indwelling Spirit is the pledge and first instalment of the final consummation and the ground of the believer's hope. In the life of the Church, the finality of God's declaration and the continuing movement towards our ultimate goal are reflected in the relation between baptism and the eucharist. Baptism is the unrepeatable sacrament of justification and incorporation into Christ (1 Cor 6:11; 12:12-13; Gal 3:27). The eucharist is the repeated sacrament by which the life of Christ's body is constituted and renewed, when the death of Christ is proclaimed until he comes again (1 Cor 11:26).

17. Sanctification is that work of God which actualizes in believers the righteousness and holiness without which no one may see the Lord. It involves the restoring and perfecting in humanity of the likeness of God marred by sin. We grow into conformity with Christ, the perfect image of God, until he appears and we shall be like him. The law of Christ has become the pattern of our life. We are enabled to produce works which are the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Thus the righteousness of God our Savior is not only declared in a judgement made by God in favor of sinners, but is also bestowed as a gift to make them righteous. Even though our acceptance of this gift will be imperfect in this life, Scripture speaks of the righteousness of believers as already effected by God through Christ: "he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6).
18. The term justification speaks of a divine declaration of acquittal, of the love of God manifested to an alienated and lost humanity prior to any entitlement on our part. Through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, God declares that we are forgiven, accepted and reconciled to him. Instead of our own strivings to make ourselves acceptable to God, Christ's perfect righteousness is reckoned to our account. God's declaration is sometimes expressed in the New Testament in the language of law, as a verdict of acquittal of the sinner. The divine court, where the verdict is given, is the court of the judge who is also Father and Saviour of those whom he judges. While in a human lawcourt an acquittal is an external, even impersonal act, God's declaration of forgiveness and reconciliation does not leave repentant believers unchanged but establishes with them an intimate and personal relationship. The remission of sins is accompanied by a present renewal, the rebirth to newness of life. Thus the juridical aspect of justification, while expressing an important facet of the truth, is not the exclusive notion in the light of which all other biblical ideas and images of salvation must be interpreted. For God sanctifies as well as acquits us. He is not only the judge who passes a verdict in our favor, but also the Father who gave his only Son to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. By virtue of Christ's life and self-oblation on the cross we are able with him to say through the Holy Spirit, "Abba, Father" (Rm 8:15; Gal 4:6).

### ***Salvation and Good Works***

19. As justification and sanctification are aspects of the same divine act, so also living faith and love are inseparable in the believer. Faith is no merely private and interior disposition, but by its very nature is acted out: good works necessarily spring from a living faith (Jas 2:17 ff). They are truly good because, as the fruit of the Spirit, they are done in God, in dependence on God's grace. The person and work of Christ are central to any understanding of the relation between salvation and good works. God has brought into being in the person of his Son a renewed humanity, the humanity of Jesus Christ himself, the "last Adam" or "second man" (cf. 1 Cor 15:45, 47). He is the firstborn of all creation, the prototype and source of our new humanity. Salvation involves participating in that humanity, so as to live the human life now as God has refashioned it in Christ (cf. Col 3:10). This understanding of our humanity as made new in Christ by God's transforming power throws light on the New Testament affirmation that, while we are not saved because of works, we are created in Christ for good works (Eph 2:8 ff). "Not because of work" nothing even of our best achievement or good will can give us any claim to God's gift of renewed humanity. God's recreating deed originates in himself and nowhere else. "For good works": good works are the fruit of the freedom God has given us in his Son. In restoring us to his likeness, God confers freedom on fallen humanity. This is not the natural freedom to choose between alternatives, but the freedom to do his will: "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

has set me free from the law of sin and death ... in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rm 8:2, 4). We are freed and enabled to keep the commandments of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live faithfully as God's people and to grow in love within the discipline of the community, bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit<sup>3</sup>. Inasmuch as we are recreated in his "own image and likeness", God involves us in what he freely does to realise our salvation (Phil 2:12 ff). In the words of Augustine: "The God who made you without you, without you does not make you just" (Sermons 169,13). Thus from the divine work follows the human work: it is we who live and act in a fully human way, yet never on our own or in a self-sufficient independence. This fully human life is possible if we live in the freedom and activity of Christ who, in the words of St Paul, "lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

20. To speak thus of freedom in Christ is to stress that it is in Jesus Christ that the shape of human life lived in total liberty before God is decisively disclosed. Our liberation commits us to an order of social existence in which the individual finds fulfilment in relationship with others. Thus freedom in Christ does not imply an isolated life, but rather one lived in a community governed by mutual obligations. Life in Christ sets us free from the demonic forces manifested not only in individual but also in social egotism.
21. The growth of believers to maturity, and indeed the common life of the Church, are impaired by repeated lapses into sin. Even good works, done in God and under the grace of the Spirit, can be flawed by human weakness and self-centeredness, and therefore it is by daily repentance and faith that we reappropriate our freedom from sin. This insight has sometimes been expressed by the paradox that we are at once just and sinners<sup>4</sup>.
22. The believer's pilgrimage of faith is lived out with the mutual support of all the people of God. In Christ all the faithful, both living and departed, are bound together in a communion of prayer. The Church is entrusted by the Lord with authority to pronounce forgiveness in his name to those who have fallen into sin and repent. The Church may also help them to a deeper realisation of the mercy of God by asking for practical amends for what has been done amiss. Such penitential disciplines, and other devotional practices, are not in any way intended to put God under obligation. Rather, they provide a form in which one may more fully embrace the free mercy of God.
23. The works of the righteous performed in Christian freedom and in the love of God which the Holy Spirit gives us are the object of God's commendation and receive his reward (Mt 6:4; 2 Tim 4:8; Heb 10:35, 11:6). In accordance with God's promise, those who have responded to the grace of God and consequently borne fruit for the Kingdom will be granted a place in that Kingdom when it comes at Christ's appearing. They will be one with the society of the redeemed in rejoicing in the vision of God. This reward is a gift depending wholly on divine grace. It is in this perspective that the language of "merit"<sup>5</sup> must be understood, so that we can say with Augustine: "When God crowns our merits it is his own gifts that he crowns" (Ep 194,5.19). Christians rest their confidence for salvation on the power, mercy and loving-kindness of God and pray that the good work which God has begun he will in grace complete. They do not trust in their own merits but in Christ's. God is true to his promise to "render to everyone according to his works" (Rm 2:6); yet when we have done all that is commanded we must still say: "We are unprofitable servants, we have only done our duty" (Lk 17:10).
24. The language of merit and good works, therefore, when properly understood, in no way implies that human beings, once justified, are able to put God in their debt. Still less does it imply that justification itself is anything but a totally unmerited gift. Even the very first movements which lead to justification, such as repentance, the desire for forgiveness and even faith itself, are the work of God as he touches our hearts by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

### ***The Church and Salvation***

25. The doctrine of salvation is intimately associated with the doctrine of the Church, which

"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" (ARCIC I, The Final Report, Introduction 8). The Church proclaims the good news of our justification and salvation by God in Christ Jesus. Those who respond in faith to the Gospel come to the way of salvation through incorporation by baptism into the Church. They are called to witness to the Gospel as members of the Church.

26. The Church is itself a sign of the Gospel, for its vocation is to embody and reveal the redemptive power contained within the Gospel. What Christ achieved through his cross and resurrection is communicated by the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. In its life the Church signifies God's gracious purpose for his creation and his power to realise this purpose for sinful humanity. It is thus a sign and foretaste of God's Kingdom. In fulfilling this vocation the Church is called to follow the way of Jesus Christ, who being the image of the Father took the form of a servant and was made perfect by suffering. When for Christ's sake the Church encounters opposition and persecution, it is then a sign of God's choice of the way of the cross to save the world.
27. This once-for-all atoning work of Christ, realised and experienced in the life of the Church and celebrated in the eucharist, constitutes the free gift of God which is proclaimed in the Gospel. In the service of this mystery the Church is entrusted with a responsibility of stewardship. The Church is called to fulfil this stewardship by proclaiming the Gospel and by its sacramental and pastoral life. The Church is required to carry out this task in such a way that the Gospel may be heard as good news in differing ages and cultures, while at the same time seeking neither to alter its content nor minimise its demands. For the Church is servant and not master of what it has received. Indeed, its power to affect the hearer comes not from our unaided efforts but entirely from the Holy Spirit, who is the source of the Church's life and who enables it to be truly the steward of God's design.
28. The Church is also an instrument for the realisation of God's eternal design, the salvation of humanity. While we recognise that the Holy Spirit acts outside the community of Christians, nevertheless it is within the Church, where the Holy Spirit gives and nurtures the new life of the Kingdom, that the Gospel becomes a manifest reality. As this instrument, the Church is called to be a living expression of the Gospel, evangelised and evangelising, reconciled and reconciling, gathered together and gathering others. In its ministry to the world the Church seeks to share with all people the grace by which its own life is created and sustained.
29. The Church is therefore called to be, and by the power of the Spirit actually is, a sign, steward and instrument of God's design. For this reason it can be described as sacrament of God's saving work. However, the credibility of the Church's witness is undermined by the sins of its members, the shortcomings of its human institutions, and not least by the scandal of division. The Church is in constant need of repentance and renewal so that it can be more clearly seen for what it is: the one, holy body of Christ. Nevertheless the Gospel contains the promise that despite all failures the Church will be used by God in the achievement of his purpose: to draw humanity into communion with himself and with one another, so as to share his life, the life of the Holy Trinity.
30. The Church which in this world is always in need of renewal and purification, is already here and now a foretaste of God's Kingdom in a world still awaiting its consummation - a world full of suffering and injustice, division and strife. Thus Paul speaks of a fellowship which is called to transcend the seemingly insuperable divisions of the world; where all, because of their equal standing before the Lord, must be equally accepted by one another; a fellowship where, since all are justified by the grace of God, all may learn to do justice to one another; where racial, ethnic, social, sexual and other distinctions no longer cause discrimination and alienation (Gal 3:28). Those who are justified by grace, and who are sustained in the life of Christ through Word and Sacrament, are liberated from self-centeredness and thus empowered to act freely and live at peace with God and with one another. The Church, as the community of the justified, is called to embody the good news that forgiveness is a gift to be received from God and shared with others (Mt 6:14-15). Thus the message of the Church is not a private pietism irrelevant to contemporary society, nor can it be reduced to a political



or social programme. Only a reconciled and reconciling community, faithful to its Lord, in which human divisions are being overcome, can speak with full integrity to an alienated, divided world. and so be a credible witness to God's saving action in Christ and a foretaste of God's Kingdom. Yet, until the Kingdom is realised in its fullness, the Church is marked by human limitation and imperfection. It is the beginning and not yet the end, the first fruits and not yet the final harvest.

31. The source of the Church's hope for the world is God, who has never abandoned the created order and has never ceased to work within it. It is called, empowered, and sent by God to proclaim this hope and to communicate to the world the conviction on which this hope is founded. Thus the Church participates in Christ's mission to the world through the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation by its words and deeds. It is called to affirm the sacredness and dignity of the person, the value of natural and political communities and the divine purpose for the human race as a whole; to witness against the structures of sin in society, addressing humanity with the Gospel of repentance and forgiveness and making intercession for the world. It is called to be an agent of justice and compassion, challenging and assisting society's attempts to achieve just judgement, never forgetting that in the light of God's justice all human solutions are provisional ♦ While the Church pursues its mission and pilgrimage in the world, it looks forward to "the end, when Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24).

### **Conclusion**

32. The balance and coherence of the constitutive elements of the Christian doctrine of salvation had become partially obscured in the course of history and controversy. In our work we have tried to rediscover that balance and coherence and to express it together. We are agreed that this is not an area where any remaining differences of theological interpretation or ecclesiological emphasis, either within or between our Communion, can justify our continuing separation. We believe that our two Communion are agreed on the essential aspects of the doctrine of salvation and on the Church's role within it. We have also realised the central meaning and profound significance which the message of justification and sanctification, within the whole doctrine of salvation, continues to have for us today. We offer our agreement to our two Communion as a contribution to reconciliation between us, so that together we may witness to God's salvation in the midst of the anxieties, struggles and hopes of our world.

## **MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

---

### **ANGLICAN MEMBERS**

The Rt Revd Mark Santer, Bishop of Kensington, London, UK (Co-Chairman)

The Rt Revd John Baycroft, Suffragan Bishop of Ottawa, Canada

The Rt Revd E. D

Cameron, Bishop of North Sydney, Australia

The Revd Professor Henry Chadwick, Regius Professor Emeritus of Divinity, University of Cambridge, UK

The Revd Julian Charley, Rector, St Peter's, Everton, and Warden of Shrewsbury House, Liverpool, UK (unable to attend the final meeting)

The Revd Dr Kortright Davis, Associate Professor of Theology, Howard University Divinity School, Washington, DC, USA; formerly Vice-Principal, Codrington College, Barbados

The Rt Revd, Dr David M. Gitari, Bishop of Mount Kenya East, Kenya

The Revd, Professor Oliver O'Donovan, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology, University of Oxford, UK

Professor John Pobee, Program on Theological Education, WCC, Geneva, Switzerland; formerly Professor of Religious Studies, University of Ghana

Mrs Mary Tanner, Theological Secretary, Board for Mission and Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England, London, UK

The Rt Revd Arthur A. Vogel, Bishop of West Missouri, USA

The Revd Professor Robert J. Wright, Professor of Church History, General Theological Seminary, New York, USA

#### **SECRETARY**

The Revd Canon Christopher Hill, Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs, London, UK

#### **ROMAN CATHOLIC MEMBERS**

The Rt Revd Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, UK (Co-Chairman)

The Revd Fr Abraham Adappur, SJ, Staff Member, Lumen Institute, Cochin, India

The Revd Fr Peter Damian Akpunonu, Rector, Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu, Nigeria

The Rt Revd Brian Ashby, Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand (1983-84)

Sister Dr Mary Cecily Boulding, OP, Lecturer in Systematic Theology, Ushaw College, Durham, UK

The Most Revd Peter Butelezi, OMI, Archbishop of Bloemfontein, South Africa

The Revd. Fr Pierre Duprey, Secretary, Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity

The Rt Revd Raymond W. Lessard, Bishop of Savannah, USA

The Revd Brendan Soane, Spiritual Director, Pontificio Collegio Beda, Rome, Italy

The Revd. Fr John Thornhill, SM, Lecturer in Systematic Theology, Catholic

Theological Union, Hunters Hill, NSW, Australia

The Revd. Fr Jean M. R. Tillard, OP, Professor of Dogmatic Theology, Dominican Faculty of Theology, Ottawa, Canada

The Most Revd, Bernard J. Wallace, Bishop of Rockhampton, Australia (from 1986)

The Revd Dr Edward Yarnold, SJ, Tutor in Theology, Campion Hall, Oxford, UK

#### SECRETARY

The Very Revd, Mgr Richard L. Stewart, Staff Member, Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (1983-85)

The Revd. Kevin McDonald, Staff Member, Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (from 1985)

#### WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OBSERVER

The Revd, Dr Günther Gassmann, Director, Faith and Order Commission, WCC, Geneva, Switzerland

[*Information Service* 63 (1987/I) 33-41]

## ENDNOTES

---

1. The Council of Trent's Decree on Justification was issued after seven months' work on 13 January 1547 and should be read as a whole. It is printed in Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum* (=DS) (Herder, Freiburg 1965), DS 1520-1583. English translation in H. Schroeder (ed.), *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Tan Books and Publishers, USA, 1978); extracts in J. Neuner and J. Dupuis (ed.), *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (Collins, 1983) Nos. 1924-83. The principal documents and authors for Anglican consideration of the subject in the period before 1661 are the Thirty-nine Articles (1571); Cranmer's Homily "Of Salvation" (1547), to which Article 11 refers; Richard Hooker's Learned Discourse of Justification (1586); Richard Field, *Of the Church*, III Appendix, chapter 11 (1606); John Davenant, *Disputatio de Iustitia habituali et actuali* (1631, translated by Allport, 1844 as *Treatise on Justification*); William Forbes, *Considerationes Modestae et Pacificae* I (posthumously published 1658, translated 1850 as *Calm Considerations*).  
[Back to text](#)
2. For Richard Hooker, "we participate Christ partly by imputation, as when those things which he did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness; partly by habitual and real infusion, as when grace is inwardly bestowed while we are on earth, and afterwards more fully both our souls and bodies made like unto his in glory" *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V. lvi. 11).  
[Back to text](#)
3. Cf. Article 10 of the Thirty-nine Articles: "we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us (*cooperante*), when we have that good will." This echoes Augustine's language about "prevenient" and "co-operating" grace (*De Gratia et libero arbitrio* 17, 33).  
[Back to text](#)

4. *Simul iustus et peccator* is a Lutheran not a characteristically Anglican expression. It does not appear in Trent's Decree on Justification. The Second Vatican Council (*Lumen Gentium* 8) speaks of the Church as "holy and at the same time always in need of purification" (*sancta simul et semper purificanda*). The paradox is ultimately of Augustinian inspiration (cf. *En. in Ps.* 140, 14 f and *Ep.* 185, 40).

[Back to text](#)

5. Misunderstanding has been caused by the fact that the Latin *mereor* has a range of meanings, from "deserve" to "be granted and "obtain". This range is reflected in patristic and mediaeval Christian Latin usage. By "merit" the Council of Trent (DS 1545) did not mean the exact equality between achievement and reward, except in the case of Christ, but the value of goodness, as being, in the divine liberality, pleasing to God who is not so unjust as to overlook this work and love of the justified (Heb 6:10).