

# Response to ARCIC I

## LAMBETH CONFERENCE'S RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORT OF ARCIC I

Resolution 8:

This Conference:

1. Recognises the Agreed Statements of ARCIC I on Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination, and their Elucidations, as consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans and believes that this agreement offers a sufficient basis for taking the next step forward towards the reconciliation of our Churches grounded in agreement in faith.
2. Welcomes the assurance that, within an understanding of the Church as communion, ARCIC II is to explore further the particular issues of the reconciliation of ministries; the ordination of women; moral questions; and continuing questions of authority, including the relation of Scripture to the Church's developing Tradition and the role of the laity in decision-making within the Church.
3. Welcomes Authority in the Church (I and II) together with the Elucidation, as a firm basis for the direction and agenda of the continuing dialogue on authority and wishes to encourage ARCIC II to continue to explore the basis in Scripture and Tradition of the concept of a universal primacy, in conjunction with collegiality, as an instrument of unity, the character of such a primacy in practice, and to draw upon the experience of other Christian Churches in exercising primacy, collegiality and conciliarity.
4. In welcoming the fact that the ordination of women is to form part of the agenda of ARCIC II, recognises the serious responsibility this places upon us to weigh the possible implications of action on this matter for the unity of the Anglican Communion and for the universal Church.
5. Warmly welcomes the first Report of ARCIC II, Salvation and the Church (1987), as a timely and significant contribution to the understanding of the Churches' doctrine of salvation and commends this Agreed Statement about the heart of Christian faith to the Provinces for study and reflection.

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Conference has received the official responses to the Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) from the member Provinces of the Anglican Communion. We note the considerable measure of consensus and convergence which the Agreed Statements represent. We wish to record our grateful thanks to Almighty God for the very significant advances in understanding and unity thereby expressed.

In considering the Final Report, the Conference bore two questions in mind:

- (i) Are the Agreed Statements consonant with Anglican faith?
- (ii) If so, do they enable us to take further steps forward?

### ***Eucharistic Doctrine***

The Provinces gave a clear 'yes' to the statement on Eucharistic Doctrine. Comments have been made that the style and language used in the statement are inappropriate for certain cultures. Some Provinces asked for clarification about the meaning of anamnesis and bread and wine 'becoming' the body and blood of Christ. But no Province rejected the Statement and many were extremely positive. While we recognise that there are hurts to be healed and doubts to be overcome, we encourage Anglicans to look forward with the new hope which the Holy Spirit is giving to the Church as we move away from past mistrust, division and polarisation. While we respect continuing anxieties of some Anglicans in the area of 'sacrifice' and 'presence', they do not appear to reflect the common mind of the Provincial responses, in

which it was generally felt that the Elucidation of Eucharistic Doctrine was a helpful clarification and reassurance. Both are areas of 'mystery' which ultimately defy definition. But the Agreed Statement on the Eucharist sufficiently expresses Anglican understanding.

### **Ministry and Ordination**

Again, the Provinces gave a clear 'yes' to the Statement on Ministry and Ordination. The language and style have, however, been a difficulty for some Provinces, especially in the Far East. Wider representation has also been called for from Africa. Though this has now been partially remedied in ARCIC II, there is still currently no representation from Latin America, a subcontinent with very large Roman Catholic populations. An ambivalent reply came from one Province which has traditionally experienced a difficult relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. This seems to reflect the need for developing deeper links of trust and friendship as ecumenical dialogue goes forward. While some Provinces asked for a clarification of 'priesthood' the majority believed this had been dealt with sufficiently together with the doctrine of the eucharist to give grounds for hope for a fresh appraisal of each other's ministries and thus to further the reconciliation of ministries and growth towards full communion.

### **Authority in the Church**

The Responses from the Provinces to the two Statements on Authority in the Church were generally positive. Questions were, however, raised about a number of matters, especially primacy, jurisdiction and infallibility, collegiality, and the role of the laity. Nevertheless, it was generally felt that Authority in the Church (I and II), together with the Elucidation, give us real grounds for believing that fuller agreement can be reached, and that they set out helpfully the direction and agenda of the way forward.

*[The Truth Shall Make You Free. The Lambeth Conference 1988. The Reports, Resolutions & Pastoral Letters from the Bishops (London: The Anglican Consultative Council, 1988) 210-212]*