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Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the Eucharist: Review and Prospects

This article reviews the history of the important dialogue on the Eucharist by the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) underway since the second half of the twentieth century and continuing into the present. Agreed statements from the commission addressing the Eucharist and comments from various bodies of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church are critically reviewed. Prospects for future dialogue are assessed and suggestions made about areas that may be the subject of future dialogue.

Introduction

The Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) owes its origins to a meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Michael Ramsey, on 24 March 1966 at Rome. They recognized the growth of fraternal relations between the two churches, sought to remove the causes of conflict and to re-establish unity on the basis of Christ's command to his disciples to love one another.¹ They established "a serious dialogue" in the hope that it would lead both traditions "to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed."² They also recognized "that serious obstacles stand in the way of a restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life."³ This article is intended not only to review the history of the dialogue between the two churches on Eucharistic doctrine, but also to suggest possible areas for future dialogue.

1. Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, "The Common Declaration by Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rome, Saint Paul Without-the-Walls, 24 March, 1966," in Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), *The Final Report* (London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Catholic Truth Society, 1982), 117–118.

2. Paul VI and Archbishop of Canterbury, "The Common Declaration," 118.

3. Paul VI and Archbishop of Canterbury, "The Common Declaration," 118.

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Eucharistic Doctrine: 1971

The first statement of the ARCIC on the Eucharist was *Eucharistic Doctrine*.⁴ It used realist assumptions, saying that when “people are gathered at the eucharist to commemorate his saving acts for our redemption, Christ makes effective among us the eternal benefits of his victory and elicits and renews our response of faith, thanksgiving and self-surrender.”⁵ It argued that, “in the whole action of the eucharist, and in and by his sacramental presence given through bread and wine, the crucified and risen Lord, according to his promise, offers himself to his people.”⁶ The signs of the Eucharist, the Eucharistic commemoration, and the bread and wine, were seen to instantiate the signified, that is the sacrifice of Christ and the presence of Christ, in a realist⁷ manner.

The historic sacrifice was affirmed at a point in time, that it was a sufficient sacrifice and that it cannot be repeated or added to in any way. At the same time the statement argued that in the Eucharist the atoning sacrifice of Christ was not only proclaimed but made effective in the life of the church. This was called “memorial” or *anamnesis*, where the Eucharist was seen to make effective in the present the past event of Christ’s sacrifice. The Eucharist did not merely involve a calling to mind of a past and completed event, but rather was an effectual proclamation of a past event. The memorial was not restricted to a past time but was a perpetual event in the life of the church in which the church receives the benefits of that past event in a real way. This was an expression of sacramental realism where sign and signified were linked in a real and effective manner.

The statement also discussed the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Here the statement said that, “communion with Christ in the eucharist presupposes his true presence, effectively signified by the bread and wine which, in the mystery, become his body and blood.”⁸ Christ was truly present in the Eucharist and was “effectively” signified by the bread and wine, in such a way that they “become” Christ’s body and blood. The use of the word “become” suggested that there was some sort of change in the bread and wine such that they became the body and blood of Christ in a real and effective manner. An important footnote commented on transubstantiation in the following way:

The word *transubstantiation* is commonly used in the Roman Catholic Church to indicate that God acting in the eucharist effects a change in the inner reality of the elements. The term should be seen as affirming the *fact* of Christ’s presence and of the mysterious and radical change which takes place. In the contemporary Roman Catholic theology it is not understood as explaining *how* the change takes place.⁹

This footnote acknowledged change in the bread and wine, but also argued that in modern Roman Catholic theology, it is not the manner of the “change,”

4. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” in *The Final Report*, 12–16.

5. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 12.

6. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 13.

7. Realism is a theological and philosophical concept which links the signs of the Eucharist to what they signify in a metaphysical and real way, such that the signs, the Eucharistic commemoration, and the bread and wine, instantiate the signified sacrifice and presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

8. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 14.

9. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 14, n. 2.

that is, the “how” that is emphasized, but the fact of the “change.” This was an attempt to maintain the use of the word “transubstantiation” but to distance the scholastic philosophy on which the doctrine of transubstantiation was based; that is, the distinction between substance and accidents and the change in substance with the accidents remaining. The footnote, therefore, affirmed a realist interpretation where the elements were seen to be the body and blood of Christ, where the use of the word “transubstantiation” was accepted in a particular sense and where the idea of a mysterious change in the elements was proposed. Christ’s presence in the Eucharist and in the elements was not seen to be a physical presence of Christ’s body and blood, but the transmission of Christ’s life to the Church, and a uniting of the Church to Christ and to people as well as a presence in the word and the person who presides at the Eucharist.¹⁰

The statement distinguished between a “sacramental body and blood” and Christ’s physical body and blood. Further, the “sacramental body and blood” was said to be “an offering” which was present in the Eucharist and known by those who participate as believers. Believing was seen as an important part of the presence, but this did not seem to lessen the sacramental realism expressed, as the presence did not depend on the faith of the individual, but was a real gift, apart from faith, having not only power “for” believers, but “with” believers as both a sign and a signified presence. The statement also made the point that Christ’s words at the Last Supper, that is, “take and eat; this is my body,” “do not allow us to dissociate the gift of the presence and the act of sacramental eating” because “the elements are not mere signs; Christ’s body and blood become really present and are really given.”¹¹ This linked the sign with the signified in a realist fashion, making the point that “the gift of the presence” cannot be separated from “the act of sacramental eating” and that the sign was effective as the vehicle of gift. The “gift” was more than a past and self-enclosed event which can only be looked back to and remembered without contemporization in the Eucharist with the “act.” Any nominalist interpretation separating the particulars of the Eucharist from what they signify was excluded. Sacramental realism was affirmed such that Christ’s body and blood were seen to be really present and given. The consecratory prayer, the Eucharistic prayer or the *anaphora*, was described as the means by which a “word of faith addressed to the Father” and “the action of the Holy Spirit” resulted in a state of affairs where “the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ . . . so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood”¹² in a real, although not physical, manner.

Elucidation: 1979

The 1979 *Elucidation*¹³ was produced following review of the 1971 statement by both churches. The question of the “once for all” nature of Christ’s sacrifice was raised as some reactions to the 1971 statement *Eucharistic Doctrine*

10. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 15.

11. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 15.

12. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 16.

13. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine: Elucidation”, in *The Final Report*, 17–25.

appear to have been “anxious that the term *anamnesis* may conceal the re-introduction of the theory of a repeated immolation”¹⁴ while “others have suspected that the word refers not only to the historical events of salvation but also to an eternal sacrifice in heaven.”¹⁵ Still others “doubted whether *anamnesis* sufficiently implies the reality indicated by traditional sacrificial language concerning the eucharist”¹⁶ while “some critics have been unhappy about the realistic language used in the Agreed Statement, and have questioned such words as *become* and *change*.”¹⁷

Elucidation treated the word *anamnesis* as both biblical and primitive, being used in Eucharistic liturgies from the earliest period of the Christian church and in both Catholic and Anglican rites up to the present day. The catechism in the 1662 *The Book of Common Prayer* was cited to argue that the Eucharist was ordained “for the continual *remembrance* of the sacrifice of the death of Christ and the benefits we receive thereby.”¹⁸ A realist interpretation of “remembrance” was argued in the comment: “the Commission believes that the traditional understanding of sacramental reality, in which the once-for-all event of salvation becomes effective in the present through the action of the Holy Spirit, is well expressed by the word *anamnesis* . . . It enables us to affirm a strong conviction of sacramental realism and to reject mere symbolism.”¹⁹

For the commission, the word “remembrance” (*anamnesis*) expressed a sacramental realist theology of Eucharistic sacrifice, denying any fleshy notions of realism, since it affirmed that the event of salvation (Christ’s sacrifice) was a once and for all event. There was no repeated sacrifice intended in the use of the word “remembrance” as *anamnesis*. The commission affirmed realism by use of the terms “sacramental reality” and “sacramental realism” and rejected nominalism by also rejecting “mere symbolism.” The Eucharist was seen as more than a mere bringing to mind of a past event, but as an affirmation of the once and for all event becoming effective in the present; that is, in the Eucharist, through the action of the Holy Spirit. The *Elucidation* also distinguished between the historic and Eucharistic uses of the word “sacrifice.”

The *Elucidation* responded to criticism of the use of the words “become” and “change,” in regard to the bread and wine of the Eucharist “becoming” or being “changed” into the body and blood of Christ. Some critics saw this as suggesting a materialistic conception of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, where Christ’s presence was confined to the elements and where this involved a physical change in the elements.²⁰ The commission argued that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist was not limited to the Eucharistic elements and was also found in the community, the preaching of the word, the fellowship of the Eucharist, the heart of the believer, and in the gifts of Christ’s body and blood given in a sacramental manner. The commission’s use of the word “becoming”

14. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 17.

15. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 17–18.

16. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 18.

17. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 18.

18. *The Book of Common Prayer, 1662* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 295.

19. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 19.

20. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 20–21.

was not meant to imply material change or that Christ was present in the same way he was present on earth. The manner of the presence in the Eucharist was through the action of the Holy Spirit, “appropriating bread and wine so that they become the food of the new creation already inaugurated by the coming of Christ.”²¹ The presence and the becoming were sacramental in nature in that “the bread for this life becomes the bread of eternal life. Before the Eucharistic prayer, to the question: ‘What is that?’, the believer answers: ‘It is bread.’ After the Eucharistic prayer, to the same question the believer answers: ‘It is truly the body of Christ, the Bread of Life.’”²² This meant that, “in the sacramental order the realities of faith become present in visible and tangible signs, enabling Christians to avail themselves of the fruits of the once-for-all redemption. In the eucharist the human person encounters in faith the person of Christ in his sacramental body and blood.”²³ This distinguished between a physical or fleshy presence of Christ in the Eucharist and a sacramental realist presence. Christ was really present in the Eucharist and in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, but not in a physical manner, only a sacramental manner. This involved more than just the elements, as “the bread and wine *become* the sacramental body and blood of Christ in order that the Christian community may *become* more truly what it already is, the body of Christ.”²⁴ The meaning of sacramental presence, therefore, had both a Christological focus (Christ is present in the bread and wine) and an ecclesiological focus (Christ is present in the Church as it becomes more fully the body of Christ).

The “givenness” of the gift of Christ’s body and blood and the role of faith were also examined. The *Elucidation* argued that, “in the mystery of the eucharist we discern not one but two complementary movements with an indissoluble unity: Christ giving his body and blood, and the communicants feeding upon them in their hearts by faith.”²⁵ There was a givenness about the gift, such that it existed beyond the faith of the communicant, but at the same time this gift was recognized by faith. Givenness of gift suggested that the gift existed apart from the enquiring mind and so there was a denial of any nominalist interpretation while at the same time an affirmation of realism. The gift of Christ’s body and blood was linked to the bread and wine of the Eucharist and identified with the elements, as it was instantiated in the elements, and also met by the response by faith. The *Elucidation*, at the same time, recognized that some traditions, both Catholic and Anglican, have emphasized “the association of Christ’s presence with the consecrated elements,”²⁶ suggesting a sacramental realist identification of sign and signified in the Eucharist, while other traditions have emphasized “Christ’s presence in the heart of the believer through reception by faith.”²⁷ Whilst the *Elucidation* recognized that neither of these emphases was incompatible with Eucharistic faith, it also

21. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 21.

22. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 21.

23. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 21–22.

24. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 22.

25. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 22.

26. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 22.

27. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 22.

argued that problems had arisen when one of these emphases became the exclusive position. Where the relationship between Christ's presence and the elements was emphasized, the sign was too closely associated with the signified and the danger of fleshy realism became the chief difficulty. Where the relationship between Christ's presence and the heart of the believer was emphasized, the sign was not associated closely enough with the signified and the danger of a nominalistic separation of sign and signified became the chief difficulty. The *Elucidation* argued, therefore, that Eucharistic doctrine must hold together these two movements since in the Eucharist, the sacrament of the new covenant, Christ gives himself to his people so that they may receive him through faith. This argument was remarkably similar to the position taken in Article XXVIII of the Anglican *Thirty Nine Articles*, where it is argued that: "the Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith."²⁸ Article XXVIII affirmed that the body of Christ was given as a gift apart from the faith of the communicant even though the means by which the body of Christ was received and eaten was faith; that is, as a response of faith by the communicant. There was givenness of gift asserted, independent of the faith of the communicant, whilst at the same time balancing this with the idea that the body of Christ was received and eaten by faith.

Anglican Reaction

Anglican reaction to the 1971 statement *Eucharistic Doctrine* and the 1979 *Elucidation* was various. At the official level the response was generally one of agreement. The 1978 Lambeth Conference welcomed the work of ARCIC and recognized what was described as "a solid achievement" which would provide "a basis for sacramental sharing between our two Communion" and expressed the view that in these statements "we can recognise the faith of our Church."²⁹ The 1988 Lambeth Conference passed a resolution which stated that both the *Eucharistic Doctrine* and the *Elucidation* were "consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans."³⁰ In an explanatory note on the resolution it was stated that "the Provinces gave a clear 'yes' to the statement on *Eucharistic Doctrine*" and while some asked for more information on *anamnesis* and the idea of the bread and wine "becoming" the body and blood of Christ, "no Province rejected the Statement and many were extremely positive."³¹ While some within the Anglican Communion expressed anxiety concerning the area of "sacrifice" and "presence," the conference was clear that these anxieties "do not appear to reflect the common mind of the Provincial responses" and the

28. Article XXVIII, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1662.

29. *The Report of the Lambeth Conference 1978* (London: Church Information Office Publishing, 1978), 50.

30. *The Truth Shall Make You Free. The Lambeth Conference 1988. The Reports, Resolutions and Pastoral Letters from the Bishops* (London: Church House Publishing, 1988), 210.

31. *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 211.

Eucharistic Doctrine and the *Elucidation* “sufficiently expresses Anglican understanding.”³² The Lambeth Conference of 1998 also commented on the work of the ARCIC and while recognizing that there were still areas to be addressed, stated that the agreed statement resulted in “the ‘real though imperfect communion’ already existing between the churches of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.”³³ The conference recognized *Eucharistic Doctrine* and the *Elucidation* “as ‘consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans’ and urges the provinces to receive them into their life.”³⁴ These three Lambeth Conferences of the bishops of the Anglican Communion recognized the work of the agreed statements of the ARCIC as affirming the position of Anglicanism in regard to the Eucharist. The substantial agreement, in that no province has dissented from the agreed statements, indicates that at the official level, Anglicanism affirms the sacramental realist understanding of Eucharistic presence and sacrifice, as expressed by the ARCIC, as acceptable.

The Church of England Faith and Order Advisory Group on the Final Report of ARCIC I³⁵ published a report in 1985 commenting on *Eucharistic Doctrine* and the *Elucidation*. These comments welcomed the affirmation that there is no repetition of or addition to the sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross, but also affirmed a sacramental realist interpretation of what happens in the Eucharist, by approving of *anamnesis* in the sense of making Christ’s atoning work present and proclaimed in the Eucharist.³⁶ The group also argued that the notion of *anamnesis* is biblical and stated that: “we believe that in using *anamnesis* to describe the Eucharistic sacrifice ARCIC is consonant with the faith of Anglicans as witnessed to in our liturgical texts.”³⁷ The Faith and Order Advisory Group saw no substantial area of disagreement between the two churches and argued that the 1971 *Eucharistic Doctrine* and the 1979 *Elucidation* expressed the Anglican understanding of the Eucharist, especially as this related to Eucharistic presence and sacrifice.

This level of acceptance was not, however, shared by all Anglicans. The Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion in *An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion*, published in 1988,³⁸ expressed some reservations and anxieties concerning the *Eucharistic Doctrine* and the *Elucidation*. The *Open Letter* argued that in matters of theology “the ‘principle’ or criterion of a true comprehensiveness is Holy Scripture, since those doctrines which are demonstrably taught by Scripture (and only

32. *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 211.

33. Lambeth Conference 1998, “Resolution IV:23 The Roman Catholic Church,” in *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998* (Harrisburg, PA: Moorehouse, 1998), 415–16.

34. Lambeth Conference 1998, “Resolution IV:23,” 416.

35. “Church of England Faith and Order Advisory Group on the Final Report of ARCIC I (1985),” in *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, edited by C. Hill and E. Yarnold (London: The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge and Catholic Truth Society, 1994), 111–52.

36. “Church of England Faith and Order Advisory Group,” 112.

37. “Church of England Faith and Order Advisory Group,” 113.

38. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion (1988),” in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics*, 283–97.

those) must be regarded as primary and essential.”³⁹ It was, therefore, argued that, “the ARCIC documents do not express this perspective with sufficient clarity.”⁴⁰ For this group the “main criticism of the ARCIC I statements, therefore, was that they are not radical enough. That is, they do not subject our Anglican and Roman inheritance to a sufficiently rigorous *biblical* scrutiny.”⁴¹ While agreeing that the ARCIC understanding of *anamnesis* or memorial does not compromise the once-for-all nature of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, in that there is a clear distinction between the historic event and the sacramental action, the *Open Letter* shared “the misgivings expressed by some provinces. For the Commission’s use of the word is controversial; it is made to bear a weight which is not justified by Scripture.”⁴² For this group, the ARCIC statements failed the test of “rigorous biblical scrutiny” and as such did not form part of what were considered “essential matters” and so must be part of “matters indifferent.”

The writers of the *Open Letter* saw offering as response only and saw no way in which the communicants could offer themselves simultaneously with Christ’s offering or as part of it. This was a denial of sacramental realism in that it did not accept any linking or identification of the self-offering of the communicant with the offering of Christ, as such self-offering could only, it was argued, be in the form of response. The *Open Letter* argued that to identify self-offering with Christ’s offering “obscures the fundamental fact of the uniqueness of Christ’s sacrifice”⁴³ such that “the distinction between Christ’s sacrifice and ours must be preserved, lest the perfect and the tainted, the atoning and the Eucharistic, the divine initiative and the human response be confounded with one another.”⁴⁴ The *Open Letter* was also concerned about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist as it was expressed in the ARCIC statements. The *Open Letter* went on to “strongly affirm that at every Eucharist Jesus is himself personally and objectively present, ready to make himself known to us through the breaking of bread and to give himself to us so that we may ‘feed on him in our hearts by faith’” but at the same time they “reject any notion of substantial change in the elements themselves” and “affirm that such a change is not necessary for the full reception of Christ.”⁴⁵ Despite acknowledging that the ARCIC *Eucharistic Doctrine* and *Elucidation* stated that there was no material change in the elements and that Christ’s presence was not limited to the elements, the *Open Letter* was unable to accept “the simple,

39. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 284.

40. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 284.

41. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 284–85.

42. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 286.

43. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 288.

44. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 288.

45. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, “An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion,” 288.

unexplained statement that before the Eucharistic prayer there is merely 'bread,' while afterwards there is 'truly the body of Christ.'"⁴⁶ The problem appeared to be one of philosophical underpinnings. The ARCIC *Eucharistic Doctrine* and *Elucidation* used sacramental realism as the basis of Eucharistic theology while the *Open Letter* used a nominalist separation of sign and signified. Whereas the ARCIC argued for the use of ordinary things to convey realities in a sacramental manner, the *Open Letter* rejected this type of thinking and argued that Christ can only be present by faith. Any notion of real presence, argued the *Open Letter*, which departed from this teaching and adopted a teaching of "substantial change . . . lays itself open to the cultus related to the consecrated elements, especially Adoration and Benediction."⁴⁷ Any theology of "substantial change" was firmly rejected, including the form of sacramental realism which the ARCIC put.

Roman Catholic Reaction

The first official reaction of the Roman Catholic Church to ARCIC I — *The Final Report* came in 1982 in a document issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith⁴⁸ entitled *Observations*. *Observations* gave full recognition to the positive aspects of the work of ARCIC I, acknowledging the quality of the patient and exacting dialogue,⁴⁹ but at the same time set out what it called "negative aspects." *Observations* pointed out that the ARCIC had not updated the original statements in light of the various elucidations and suggested this led to a lack of harmony and homogeneity, which could lead to different readings.⁵⁰ *Observations* also pointed to what it saw as ambiguity relating to the phrase "substantial agreement" since some of the agreement on *Eucharistic Doctrine* was not yet complete.⁵¹ This led *Observations* to comment that there was the possibility of a twofold interpretation of the texts due to a lack of perceived clarity which could produce contrasting and ultimately incompatible readings and diverse interpretations. This was seen to be particularly so in relation to certain Anglican documents, such as the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and *The Anglican Ordinal*, which *Observations* saw as incompatible with the ARCIC I texts and so leading to the possibility of uncertainty about the exact meaning of the texts.⁵² *Observations* argued that the ARCIC texts did not set out the nature of Eucharistic sacrifice clearly enough, nor do they make clear the propitiatory value that Catholic dogma attributed to the Eucharist.⁵³ While acknowledging affirmations of the real presence of

46. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, "An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion," 288.

47. Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion, "An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion," 288.

48. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The *Observations* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Final Report of ARCIC I," in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics*, 79–91.

49. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The *Observations*," 79.

50. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The *Observations*," 80.

51. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The *Observations*," 80–81.

52. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The *Observations*," 81.

53. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The *Observations*," 82.

Christ in the ARCIC I texts, *Observations* also noted that there was an inadequate treatment of transubstantiation such that there was no definite statement regarding a change in the substance of the bread and wine following the Eucharistic prayer. *Observations* made the point that the ARCIC I texts suggested that “the bread and wine remain such in their ontological substance, even while becoming the sacramental mediation of the body and blood of Christ,”⁵⁴ and as such argued that the so-called agreement needed additional clarification.

In 1985 the Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales responded to ARCIC I.⁵⁵ The bishops acknowledged the fruitful dialogue and commended its dedication, scholarship, and integrity. They recognized that in *The Final Report* of ARCIC I there was much to affirm the Catholic faith and argued that “the basis laid in the statement gives a very rich and dynamic view of the Eucharist and allows us to explore areas of past controversy with a practical sense of the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.”⁵⁶ In regard to Eucharist as sacrifice the bishops argued that in the ARCIC I texts “the identity of Christ and his Church in offering sacrifice is secured both by the concept of *koinonia*: ‘we are his members,’ and by the use of the notion of memorial (*anamnesis*) in its strong and traditional sense: ‘his sacrifice recalled and proclaimed is made effective here and now.’”⁵⁷ This statement allowed the bishops to affirm the unique, once-and-for-all character and the absolute sufficiency of the historic sacrifice of Jesus and the sacramental and mysterious manner of that sacrifice in the Eucharistic celebration. “This,” they said, was “a true expression of Catholic Faith.”⁵⁸ The bishops also felt that the ARCIC I texts clearly maintained the real and true presence of Christ in the Eucharist and that:

The substantial nature of the change of the bread and wine is clearly asserted by the repeated use of the word “become” as in the statement that “they become his body and blood,” by reference to the transforming action of the Spirit, by use of the language of change in the footnote on transubstantiation, and by careful description of the role of faith within the individual.⁵⁹

The bishops were also able to say that “we accept this statement as an expression of Catholic faith in the real presence.”⁶⁰ The bishops did, however, find some elements of the text too passive and wanted more forceful expressions of offering of the Eucharist to the Father by the whole Christ, head and

54. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “The *Observations*,” 83.

55. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I,” in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics*, 94–110.

56. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 98.

57. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 99.

58. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 99.

59. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 99.

60. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 99.

members, in the power of the Spirit.⁶¹ They also found there to be insufficient treatment of the resurrection of Christ in the discussion of the Eucharist and wanted more emphasis on this point rather than reference to an historical point in time, with more definite linking of the power of the resurrection to the celebration of the Eucharist.⁶² They also wanted the Commission to revisit the matters of reservation and adoration in light of some Anglican Evangelical objections. Finally, they wanted to see the discussion of transubstantiation incorporated in the text rather than being relegated to a footnote. This was seen as important since it was here that the language of change was used. Importantly, the bishops, contrary to *Observations*, said that “we do not insist on the language of transubstantiation nor advocate any one theological/philosophical attempt to explain it,”⁶³ but they did want further examination of the notion of transubstantiation which they believed was begun in the *Elucidation*.

In 1991 an official response from the Roman Catholic Church was published.⁶⁴ *The Official Roman Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I* welcomed the work of ARCIC I but also stated that “it is not yet possible to state that substantial agreement has been reached on all the questions studied by the Commission.”⁶⁵ The official response, nonetheless, acknowledged that “the most notable progress toward a consensus”⁶⁶ was achieved in relation to Eucharistic doctrine, noting the affirmation that the Eucharist is a sacrifice in the sacramental sense without repetition of the historic sacrifice and “areas of agreement are also evident in respect of the real presence of Christ.”⁶⁷ The official response was able to say that “the Catholic Church rejoices that such common affirmations have become possible”⁶⁸ but sought certain clarifications assuring that these affirmations conformed to Catholic doctrine. Specifically the official response sought that the commission would affirm “that in the Eucharist, the Church, doing what Christ commanded his Apostles to do at the Last Supper, makes present the sacrifice of Christ”⁶⁹ and “that the sacrifice of Christ is made present with all its effects, thus affirming the propitiatory nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which can be applied also to the deceased.”⁷⁰ The official response affirmed the texts of ARCIC I saying that the Eucharist was the real gift of Christ’s self to the church and that the bread and wine “become” the body and blood of Christ, and that this was in conformity with Catholic

61. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 99.

62. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 99–100.

63. Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report,” 100.

64. “The Official Roman Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I,” in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics*, 156–66.

65. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 156.

66. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 157.

67. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 157.

68. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 157.

69. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 162.

70. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 162.

faith.⁷¹ At the same time, however, it argued for removal of ambiguity regarding the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, as this related to the change of substance in the bread and wine. The mode of the real presence was specified by the official response, saying that: “The Catholic Church holds that Christ in the Eucharist makes himself present sacramentally and substantially when under the species of bread and wine these earthly realities are changed into the reality of his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.”⁷²

There was a distinct difference in tone between the official response and the response of the bishops of England and Wales. The bishops of England and Wales saw the texts as affirming Catholic Eucharistic doctrine relating to both Eucharistic sacrifice and presence, without insisting on particular theological and philosophical interpretations, such as the metaphysical and scholastic language relating to a change of substance in the traditional doctrine of transubstantiation. They were of the view that the ARCIC I had expressed the notion of “change” in the elements as affirming Catholic doctrine.

In a similar way the French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity⁷³ in responding in 1992 to the official response, made the observation that, conformity to the Catholic faith in the official response seems to mean “expressions of faith of the Catholic Church as they have been formulated after the Councils of Trent and Vatican I.”⁷⁴ This suggested that for the French Episcopal Commission the official response was too concerned with requiring affirmation of a particular theological/philosophical scholastic and metaphysical position rather than seeking a wider view of Eucharistic theology. The French Episcopal Commission specifically cited comments in the official response referring to “propitiatory sacrifice” and “substantial change” as less useful than those comments made in various documents of Vatican II, papal statements, Eucharistic congresses, and the writings of individual theologians. The clear implication of the French Episcopal Commission is that the treatment of the ARCIC I *Final Report* in the official response is less in harmony with modern Roman Catholic Eucharistic doctrine than the interpretation given in the official response. Such frank and critical assessment of the official response may well explain why “the practice of publishing the responses from Episcopal Conferences was eventually suspended at Rome’s request.”⁷⁵ The response of the bishops of England and Wales and the French Episcopal Commission’s comments were published before the suspension of such reports by Rome and so are on the public record.

71. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 162.

72. “The Official Roman Catholic Response,” 163.

73. French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, “Concerning the Holy See’s Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I,” in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics*, 171–184.

74. French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, “Concerning the Holy See’s Response to the Final Report,” 178.

75. C. Hill, “The Scope of this Book,” in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics*, 4.

Clarifications of Certain Aspects of the Agreed Statements on Eucharist and Ministry: 1994

In 1994 the ARCIC published *Clarifications of Certain Aspects of the Agreed Statements on Eucharist and Ministry*,⁷⁶ which sought to clarify certain aspects of the agreed statements on Eucharist and ministry as published in *The Final Report* of 1982. *Clarifications* attempted to reaffirm sacramental realism by arguing that “the making present, effective and accessible of the unique historic sacrifice of Christ does not entail a repetition of it.”⁷⁷ While this statement affirmed no repetition of the historic sacrifice in the Eucharist, the wording was problematical in another significant way. *Clarifications* seemed to argue that the historic sacrifice of Christ, rather than its effects, was made present, effective, and accessible in the Eucharist. This failed to distinguish in an adequate way between the sign and the signified and thereby possibly led to an understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice based on fleshy realism. The historic sacrifice and the Eucharistic sacrifice are really both particular instantiations of a more universal event, that is, Christ’s work. It may have been better to argue that the historic sacrifice was an instantiation of Christ’s saving work which was also instantiated in the Eucharist. The 1979 *Elucidation* seemed to express this exact point, saying that the “once-for-all sacrifice,” a universal concept, rather than the “historic sacrifice,” a particular concept, becomes present, effective, and accessible in the present.⁷⁸ In fact “historic sacrifice” restricted the sacrifice to a point in time to a greater degree, separating sign and signified and lessening the universal nature of Christ’s sacrifice and thereby also lessening the sacramental realist thrust⁷⁹ of the agreed statements on Eucharistic doctrine. It also presented the possibility of misinterpretation in a fleshy realist sense.⁸⁰ It must be assumed, however, that *Clarifications* was attempting to support the sacramental realist stance of the agreed statements, since it argued that “the eucharist is truly a sacrifice, but in a sacramental way, is part of the eucharistic faith of both our communions.”⁸¹ Use of words saying that the “historic sacrifice” was present, effective, and accessible, clouded this sacramental realist meaning. *Clarifications* almost realized this itself when it said:

When we speak of the death of Christ on Calvary as a sacrifice, we are using a term to help explain the nature of Christ’s self-offering, a term which is not exhaustive of the significance of that self-offering. However, it has become normative for the Christian tradition because of its intimate relation with the unique propitiatory character of the death of Christ.⁸²

76. ARCIC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Clarifications of Certain Aspects of the Agreed Statements on Eucharist and Ministry of the First Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission Together with a Letter from Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy President Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* (London: Church House Publishing, 1994).

77. ARCIC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Clarifications*, 5.

78. ARCIC, “Elucidation,” 19.

79. As a “non-relational” or “moderate” form of realism.

80. That is, a “relational” or “immoderate” form of realism implying a fleshy sense of presence and sacrifice.

81. ARCIC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Clarifications*, 5.

82. ARCIC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Clarifications*, 5.

This suggested that “Christ’s self-offering” had universal significance of which “the death of Christ on Calvary as a sacrifice” was a particular instantiation, but that over time the historic act, that is, Christ’s death on Calvary, was too closely associated with the more universal idea of Christ’s self-offering. It is important to note that the commission here affirmed that the fact of the death of Christ on Calvary is not exhaustive of the notion of Christ’s self-offering. This accords with the previously expressed idea of a sacramental realist notion of Christ’s sacrifice in the Eucharist⁸³ where the nature of that sacrifice was capable of different instantiations, for example, in a fleshy manner on the cross and sacramentally in the Eucharist without any fleshy realism.

Growing Together in Unity and Mission: 2007

An agreed statement, entitled *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*,⁸⁴ was issued by the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) in 2007 looking back over the achievements of forty years of Anglican–Roman Catholic Dialogue⁸⁵. It went on to describe what was called “The Faith We Hold in Common”⁸⁶ with specific comments on the Eucharist.⁸⁷ These affirmed the earlier agreed statements and argued that “the visible communion of Christ’s body, entered through baptism, is nourished, deepened, and expressed in the Eucharistic communion when believers eat and drink and receive the body and blood of Christ.”⁸⁸ It also affirmed that “when his people are gathered at the Eucharist to commemorate Christ’s saving acts for our redemption, he makes present and effective among us the eternal benefits of his victory” in such a way that “the identity of the Church as Christ’s body is expressed and visibly proclaimed by its being centred in the partaking of Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist.”⁸⁹ These statements not only affirm Eucharistic memorial as *anamnesis*, where the entire work of reconciliation God accomplished in Christ was shown forth, but they also affirm more than a mere calling to mind of what God has done in the past. Instead it was described as “an effective sacramental proclamation, which through the action of the Holy Spirit makes present what has been accom-

83. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 13–14; and “Elucidation,” 18–20.

84. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission. Building on 40 years of Anglican–Roman Catholic Dialogue. An Agreed Statement by the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission*, the Vatican, accessed 6 September 2010, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20070914_growing-together_en.html.

85. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 2–4.

86. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 4–20.

87. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10–11.

88. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10.

89. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10.

plished and promised once-and-for-all.”⁹⁰ The one historical and unrepeatable sacrifice was acknowledged as being offered once only by Christ; however, it was stated that the Eucharistic memorial “makes present this once-for-all sacrifice of Christ” such that in the Eucharist the “fruit of that sacrifice”⁹¹ was available.

Growing Together in Unity and Mission also affirmed the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This was described as “his true presence,”⁹² effectively signified by the bread and wine of the Eucharist which become his body and blood. This was seen as “a sacramental presence in which God uses the realities of this world to convey the realities of the new creation: bread for this life becomes the bread of eternal life”⁹³ in such a way that “Christ’s body and blood become really present and are really given in these elements”⁹⁴ where there was a change from bread to body of Christ and where “the bread and wine become the sacramental body and blood of Christ.”⁹⁵ The statements of *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* concerning the Eucharistic presence and sacrifice were clearly realist, but were at the same time careful to avoid any notions of fleshy realism which might suggest a repetition or addition to the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Calvary or a fleshy presence of Christ’s body and blood.

A response to *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* came from the Roman Catholic bishop Bernard Longley in 2007 and was entitled *A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission*.⁹⁶ This commentary seems to have official status as it is published on the website of the Vatican. Bishop Longley, while acknowledging *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* and the long history of dialogue, also stated that the agreed statement “is less thorough in attending to official or authoritative responses to ARCIC’s work,”⁹⁷ and specifically mentioned the official response, published in 1991 and the document *Observations* produced by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith in 1988. Both of these documents took particular positions regarding Eucharistic presence and sacrifice linked with traditional Catholic Eucharistic doctrine. Such traditional doctrines and the theological/philosophical assumptions were questioned by some within the Roman Catholic Church.⁹⁸ Longley also pointed

90. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10.

91. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10.

92. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10.

93. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 10.

94. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 11.

95. International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 11.

96. B. Longley, *A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission: An Agreed Statement by the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission*, the Vatican, accessed 6 September 2010, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20070615_bishop-longley_en.html.

97. Longley, *A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 6.

98. See Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I”; and French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, “Concerning the Holy See’s Response to the Final Report.”

to the work of *Clarifications* of 1994, and argued that this work “was seen to have greatly strengthened the agreements reached.”⁹⁹ He also expressed his surprise that *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* did not refer to these *Clarifications*. Longley stated that “despite the stated agreement on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist¹⁰⁰ Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist is more specific than what we find expressed in this section of *GTUM*.”¹⁰¹ He specifically noted that *Clarifications* would have helped here and “thus eliminated any possible interpretations which would fall outside of the parameters of Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist.”¹⁰² Unfortunately Longley did not specify the parts of Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist that are better expressions than those presented in *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*. It may be that Longley is pointing to the comments made in *The Official Roman Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I* and *Observations*.

Conclusion

Prospects for future dialogue on the Eucharist between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church may be aided by further consideration of points of agreement and difference between the two churches. At the official level, the Anglican Communion through the Lambeth Conferences and the responses of the provinces has indicated that the ARCIC statements are consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans and sufficiently express Anglican understanding of the Eucharist. Official responses from the Roman Catholic Church, however, have indicated that certain traditional theological and philosophical interpretations of transubstantiation relating to the substance of the bread and wine being replaced by the substance of Christ’s body and blood with the accidents remaining, were obligatory for the acceptance of any ARCIC statement on Eucharistic theology by the Roman Catholic Church. Whilst the ARCIC documents did not present such traditional interpretations of transubstantiation, they nonetheless argued that both churches accepted that the real presence of Christ was to be found in the Eucharist, the Eucharistic elements, and the Eucharistic gathering, and that the doctrine of transubstantiation in modern Roman Catholic thinking referred to the fact of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist rather than a particular technical definition of how Christ was present.¹⁰³ The traditional theological and philosophical interpretations of transubstantiation preferred by the official Roman Catholic responses to the ARCIC documents opted for a substance/accidents metaphysic, whereas the ARCIC documents themselves and some other Roman Catholic commentators did not insist on the traditional interpretations of transubstantiation.¹⁰⁴

99. Longley, *A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 6.

100. Paragraphs 39–44 of International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*.

101. Longley, *A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 11.

102. Longley, *A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 11–12.

103. ARCIC, “Eucharistic Doctrine,” 14, n. 2.

104. See Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I”; and French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, “Concerning the Holy See’s Response to the Final Report.”

Anglican Eucharistic theology has typically presented a variety of views on the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist based on different philosophical assumptions.¹⁰⁵ The traditional Roman Catholic explanation of transubstantiation based on a substance/accident metaphysic, expressed by Thomas Aquinas, the Council of Trent, and more recently in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*¹⁰⁶ has, however, not been one of these views. Further exploration of the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, including the doctrine of transubstantiation, may well be a valuable course for future ARCIC dialogues.

105. These different philosophical assumptions are explored in detail in B. Douglas and T. Lovat, "The Integrity of Discourse in the Anglican Eucharistic Tradition: A Consideration of Philosophical Assumptions," *The Heythrop Journal*, 51 (2010): 841–61.

106. See paragraphs 1373–81 in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, 1994), 346–48. See especially paragraph 1376, p. 347, where the Catechism quotes from the Council of Trent, saying: "by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change in of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly called transubstantiation."