

The Council for Christian Unity: Faith and Order Advisory Group

International Commission for the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

The Church of the Triune God

Briefing Paper for members of the General Synod¹

At the end of January 2007 the third agreed statement of the International Commission for the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD) was launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams and Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch, at a ceremony at Lambeth Palace, followed by a liturgy of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey. The completion of ‘the Cyprus Agreed Statement’ *The Church of the Triune God*, in 2005 at the Monastery of Kykos, concluded the third phase of the Anglican-Orthodox international theological dialogue. Its principal theme is the doctrine of the Church, but it includes also a study of the ordained ministry of the Church, and deals with the thorny question of who may be ordained to it. It ends by examining the two related topics of heresy and schism, and the nature of ‘reception’. This paper is intended to help members of General Synod to put the Report into context and falls into four parts:

Part 1 provides some brief background on the history, theology and practice of the Orthodox Church.²

Part 2 summarizes the history of Anglican-Orthodox relations and the immediate background to *The Church of the Triune God*.

Part 3 consists of a commentary on the text of the Agreed Statement.

Part 4 offers a brief assessment or evaluation of the report.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Who are ‘the Orthodox’?

The Church of the Triune God is an Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue. ‘Orthodox’ here corresponds to that communion of Churches commonly denoted (though not formally by themselves) as ‘Eastern Orthodox,’ that is, those in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of

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² No attempt is made to cover more ‘remote’ history here, e.g. the discussions between Anglican non-Jurors and certain Orthodox in eighteenth-century England. For this, see e.g. G. Williams, *The Orthodox Church of the East in the Eighteenth Century* (1868).

Constantinople. The ‘Eastern Orthodox’ must be distinguished from the other great ‘family’ of Eastern Christians, the so-called ‘Oriental Orthodox.’³ As well as the three other ancient Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, nine other self-governing (‘autocephalous’) churches are in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, of which the largest numerically, by many millions, is the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by the Patriarch of Moscow.⁴ Other churches within Eastern Orthodoxy – e.g. the Finnish Orthodox Church⁵ – are described as ‘autonomous’ rather than ‘autocephalous,’ that is, they are self-governing in most respects but do not possess full independence. Most Orthodox Christians in western Europe, the Americas and Australasia look jurisdictionally to one of a number of the ancient Patriarchates or autocephalous churches, and the pattern on the ground is one of a number of overlapping jurisdictions within the same geographical territory.⁶ While the territories of the four ancient Patriarchates fall politically into several different countries, most (but not all) of the autocephalous and autonomous churches correspond, more or less, with the boundaries of particular nations. This should not, however, be taken as an indication that Orthodoxy formally embraces the concept of the ‘state church,’ however much, as a matter of history and politics, there has frequently arisen a very close relationship between a local Orthodox church and a sovereign state or ethnic group within such a state: this is particularly true of in the history of eastern Europe in the twentieth century. This is a complex feature of Orthodox life, and, increasingly, Orthodox theologians will agree that one of the challenges for Orthodoxy is precisely that wrestling with the relationship between church, state and national or ethnic identity. These challenges are further sharpened as the Orthodox ‘diaspora’ in the United States and western Europe expands rapidly as a result of immigration from the traditional ‘heartlands’ of Orthodoxy. The Orthodox constitute, after the Roman Catholic Church, the second largest Christian communion, with perhaps 250 – 300 million adherents worldwide.

³ The ‘Oriental Orthodox’ consist of the ‘non-Chalcedonian’ churches – the Syrian Church of Antioch, the Syrian Church in India, the Coptic Church in Egypt, the Armenian Church, and the Ethiopian Church. A third ‘family’ or group of churches are known together as the ‘Church of the East:’ sometimes also as the ‘Assyrian,’ ‘Chaldean’ or ‘East Syrian’ churches. Owing to their refusal to accept the decrees of the Council of Ephesus in 431, these churches – who consider it incorrect to call the Virgin Mary *theotokos*, the God-bearer – are sometimes known also as ‘Nestorians,’ although many both within and without the Churches of the East would dispute such a designation. Christians belonging to the Church of the East are to be found chiefly in Iran and Iraq, but also in India and elsewhere in small numbers. For the purposes of this paper only ‘Orthodox’ hereafter corresponds to ‘Eastern Orthodox.’

⁴ The others are the Churches of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria (each headed by a *Patriarch*), Georgia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland and Albania.

⁵ Not to be confused with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. (Each has the legal status of a recognised national Church.)

⁶ A useful guide to the situation in Great Britain is given in Gillian Crow, *Orthodoxy for Today* (London, 2008), pp. 28-9. It is important to recognize that, owing to the vastly increased opportunities for immigration from the east, owing first to the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War, and then the expansion eastwards of the EU, large, vibrant and growing Orthodox communities now exist in many parts of western Europe. One estimate, for example, puts the number of Romanian Orthodox in Italy at over 1,000,000.

A brief history of Orthodoxy

For the Orthodox themselves, the Orthodox Church is simply the Church of Jesus Christ on earth – the Church of the Apostles, the Church of the Seven Councils (of which more below), the Church of the Fathers. The history of the separate development, and eventual separation, of the Orthodox east from the Latin west, is a complex one – too long to be recounted in detail here. It is inseparable from the story of the breakdown of the unity of the Mediterranean world, and, especially, the division of the Empire into two parts, one still centred on Rome, the other on ‘New Rome’ (Byzantium or Constantinople), a process which can be traced from the end of the third century, and can be said to be entrenched by the time of the coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day in 800. Culturally (not least linguistically), as well as politically, east and west were now on distinct trajectories; ecclesiastically speaking, the west was distinguished by the possession of just one apostolic See, that of Rome, which rapidly became *the* undisputed seat of authority and power, while the east continued to be formed by a sense of collegiality and equality among a number of ancient, apostolic churches. It was – in shorthand – the specific matter of the Papal claim to jurisdiction over the *whole* Church (rather than simply the church in the west, claims with which the Byzantines had no difficulties), together with the disputed doctrinal question of the *filioque*,⁷ which led to the ‘drifting apart’ of the two main parts of Christendom becoming formalised when the papal Bull of excommunication was placed on the altar of the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople in the summer of the year 1054. Even this – the traditional date of the ‘Great Schism’ between east and west – is more of a staging-post than a *terminus* in the story of the division of Christendom which, to be properly understood, has to include the tale of the Crusades, and, especially, the sack of Constantinople by the Crusades in 1204. From that moment ‘there can be no doubt that Christian east and Christian west were divided in two.’⁸

In the second Millennium, the story of Orthodoxy includes both that of the survival of the faith in the Ottoman Empire following the fall of Constantinople in 1453; and the great expansion of Orthodoxy into Russia following the conversion of Grand Prince (Saint) Vladimir (reigned 980 – 1015). No understanding of Orthodoxy in modern times can fail to take into account the fact that for most of the twentieth century, Orthodox not only in Russia, but in all the counties of the Soviet Union and east of the ‘iron curtain,’ were effectively living under persecution and in a state of siege.⁹ It is too soon to judge

⁷ *filioque*: ‘and the Son.’ First interpolated by the Spanish Church into the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople at the third Council of Toledo (589), the Greek Church came to oppose the *filioque* both because it represented a unilateral alteration to the text of the Creed without the authority of an ecumenical council; and secondly because of fears that distorts the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, by imperiling the monarchy of the Father and confusing the persons of the Father and the Son. *Some* Orthodox see Western adherence to the *filioque* as being responsible for a mistaken ecclesiology, which results in an over-emphasis on the visible and juridical model of the Church at the expense of the mystical, sacramental and conciliar.

⁸ Timothy (Kallistoyos) Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (new edition, London, 1997), p. 60. See also Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (London & Oxford, 1981). More advanced introductions are Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge, 1991) and *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (New York, 2001).

⁹ Patterns of persecution, and of church-state co-operation, varied considerably from country to country and decade to decade. See Ware, ch. 8, for a thorough survey.

what the longer-term legacy of the Communist years will be for the church in these Orthodox 'heartlands.'

How is the Orthodox Church structured?

The Orthodox Church is best characterised as 'a family of self-governing churches.'¹⁰ The Ecumenical Patriarch exercises a primacy of honour, analogous with that of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Anglican Communion. There is no equivalent within Orthodoxy to the office of the Papacy within the Roman Catholic Church; not even the Ecumenical Patriarch claims jurisdiction over another church within the Orthodox family. Orthodox ecclesiology is essentially *conciliar*. The difference of emphasis between the Western (Roman) understanding of the Church and that of the Orthodox has been described like this:

For Rome the unifying principle in the Church is the Pope whose jurisdiction extends over the whole body, whereas Orthodox do not believe any bishop to be endowed with universal jurisdiction. What then holds the Church together? Orthodox answer, the act of communion in the sacraments. The Orthodox theology of the Church is above all else *a theology of communion*. Each local church is constituted...by the congregation of the faithful, gathered around their bishop and celebrating the Eucharist; the Church universal is constituted by the communion of the heads of the local Churches, the bishops, with one another. Unity is not maintained from without by the authority of a Supreme Pontiff, but created from within by the celebration of the Eucharist. The Church is not monarchical in structure, centred around a single hierarch; it is collegial, formed by the communion of many hierarchs with one another, and of each hierarch with members of his flock.¹¹

As the final sentence of the above quotation makes clear, Orthodoxy is *hierarchical* as well as *collegial*. The teaching office of the Church is that of the bishops. The role of the episcopate in Orthodoxy has been very well described like this:

The ecclesiastical authors, St Ignatius of Antioch, St Irenaeus, St Cyprian, admonish believers to gather around their bishops, and the teaching of the bishop is considered the norm of the truth of the Church, the criterion of tradition. This special authority of judgement, allied to his office, belongs to a bishop as such, and even more rightly to the head of a particular Church, joined with him in unity of life and grace, of love and thought...In other words, the right to voice the doctrine of the Church belongs to the bishop, as someone not above but in the community of which he is the head. In the same way the assembly of bishops, the episcopate of a church ecumenical or local, united in special council...does not

¹⁰ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 7.

¹¹ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 246. The author stresses, here and elsewhere in his book, that the temptation to caricature the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches by simple opposition should be resisted: certainly a full account of the ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church must include the place of conciliarity as well as monarchy.

possess the necessary supreme authority to expound doctrine except in union with the Church and in harmony with it. The episcopate neither legislates for, nor commands the church independently of that organisation, but is its specially endowed representative. The authority of the bishop is fundamentally the authority of the Church; as the latter is constituted hierarchically it expresses itself by the mouth of the episcopate.¹²

The reference to ‘tradition’ in the first sentence of the quotation above leads us on to the next point for consideration.

Orthodoxy: Sources for the Faith

It is impossible to understand the basis for the Orthodox approach to the Christian faith without reference to ‘Tradition.’ ‘Tradition’ – capital ‘T’ – must be carefully distinguished from ‘traditions:’ adherence to Tradition is not the same as the simple repetition, or preservation, of (for example) every incidental detail in liturgical worship, or every clause in canon law. Gillian Crow has written, ‘When the Orthodox Church talks about Tradition, she means that body of written and oral revelation and knowledge that has been handed down to us from the Apostles and their successors, like a precious family heirloom to be cherished.’¹³ More specifically, Tradition can be said to be found in the totality of the Scriptures¹⁴; the Creeds; the definitions and decrees of the Councils (especially the first seven Ecumenical Councils concluding with Nicaea II in the year 787)¹⁵, the writings of the Fathers more generally; and also in the church’s Liturgy and Canons. Nor, of course, can the place of the veneration of Icons (upheld at Nicaea II and reinforced on the first Sunday in Lent in the year 843 by the Empress Theodora – commemorated ever after as the Sunday known as the ‘Triumph of Orthodoxy’) be excluded from any account of Tradition as the Orthodox understand it. As Kallistos Ware again has written, for the Orthodox: ‘An icon is not simply a religious picture designed to arouse appropriate emotions in the beholder; it is one of the ways whereby God is revealed to us.’¹⁶

Orthodox Liturgy and Worship

It is fair to say that for the majority of Anglicans, their knowledge and understanding of Orthodoxy will be bound up with a sense of the particular characteristics of Orthodox liturgy and worship, and the ways in which Orthodox worship is most obviously distinguished from the liturgical and ritual ‘ethos’ of Western Christianity, be that Roman

¹² Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (New York, 1998), p. 55.

¹³ Crow, p. 31.

¹⁴ Orthodoxy has the same New Testament as the rest of Christendom. Its Old Testament – being based on the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the *Septuagint* – includes those Deutero-Canonical books which Anglicans will know as ‘The Apocrypha,’ together with some other texts, e.g. 4 Maccabees.

¹⁵ A brief reminder of the dates, places and major concerns of each of these may be very accessibly found in Crow, pp. 18-22. Anglicans have generally accorded a higher status to the Councils of the first five centuries (concluding with that of Chalcedon in 451) than to those at Constantinople in 533 and 680-1 and Nicaea in 787.

¹⁶ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 206.

Catholic, Anglican or Reformed. The story is famously told of how Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, while still a pagan, sent his followers around the countries of the known world to discover which was the true religion. Eventually, attending the Divine Liturgy in the great Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, they were moved to report back in these words: ‘We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendour or beauty anywhere upon earth.’ That sense of the earthly Liturgy as in some sense a copy – an ‘icon’ – of that of heaven remains at the heart of the Orthodox approach to worship. For the Orthodox, both the arrangement of the church building, and the ceremonial of the Divine Liturgy will speak throughout the celebration of the ‘commerce’ between heaven and earth which is effected via the celebration of the Eucharist.

Nevertheless, awareness – obvious to anyone who has ever participated in Orthodox worship – of the differences between Eastern and Western forms of celebration, should not lead to an exaggerated emphasis on what distinguishes one from the other. Gillian Crow notes: ‘An Orthodox Liturgy is not so different in outline from a traditional Roman Mass or Anglican Eucharist. the bones of the service are much the same: Epistle, Gospel, sermon, Eucharistic Prayer, Lord’s Prayer, Communion, prayers of thanksgiving and dismissal ... However, around this structure there are additions which are peculiarly Orthodox; and certainly the overall impression that a visitor receives is one of unaccustomed ritual and atmosphere.’¹⁷ This is not the place to enter into a detailed examination of Orthodox liturgy; but we might note that, especially in the west, there is now a debate – and a diversity of practice – among Orthodox over issues such as liturgical language and the place of the vernacular in worship, the length of liturgical services, and the role of women in the liturgical assembly. All of these matters raise issue for Orthodox theologians and liturgists of the need to distinguish between Tradition – which is unchanging – and ‘traditions,’ and thus to explore whether every detail of Orthodox worship is as *essential* to the practice of Orthodoxy as it may once have seemed.

What is beyond question is the place of the Communion of the Saints in Orthodox liturgy and worship. Orthodox have a strong sense of the unity of the whole Church, including both the living and the departed. They pray for the dead, and ask for their prayers, while, in public worship, confining themselves in most circumstances to asking the prayers only of those whom the Church has officially declared to be saints. Among the saints, a unique place is occupied by the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom Orthodox ‘reverence as the most exalted among God’s creatures’¹⁸, and who, in liturgical celebrations, is almost invariably invoked under her full title: ‘Our All-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorified Lady, Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary.’ She is *theotokos* (God-bearer, or Mother of God, the title assigned to her at the Council of Ephesus in 431); *aeiparthenos* (Ever-Virgin, assigned at the Council of Constantinople in 553); and *panagia*, or All-Holy, a title accepted by all Orthodox, though never dogmatically defined.

¹⁷ Crow, p. 128.

¹⁸ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 257.

The Sacraments and the Church

Orthodox theology is fundamentally Eucharistic, as well as Trinitarian. In the words of the aphorism shared by both the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, and the Roman Catholic Henri de Lubac, ‘the Eucharist makes the Church.’ Among Orthodox theologians whose work is familiar in the West, Alexander Schmemmann is notable for his insistence that, for the Orthodox, the Eucharist is not simply something which the church ‘does,’ it is rather the means by which the Church manifests what it *is*: ‘The Eucharist is *the* Sacrament of the Church, i.e., her eternal actualisation as the Body of Christ, united in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Eucharist is not only the ‘most important’ of all the offices; it is also the source and goal of the entire liturgical life of the Church.’¹⁹

If Orthodox theology – and this encompasses of course Orthodox ecclesiology, Orthodox theology of the Church – is fundamentally Eucharistic, then we should note also that the Orthodox additionally recognise as such the same sacraments as the western Catholic tradition: baptism, chrismation or confirmation (always for Orthodox an integral part of the baptismal rite), holy unction, repentance, ordination, marriage. There are differences, in practice, in the way in which many of these sacraments are celebrated liturgically, between the eastern and western traditions: for example, Orthodoxy will encourage individual, sacramental confession in the main body of the church building, in other words ‘publicly,’ rather than in the more private setting of the traditional western ‘confessional.’ (In addition, different branches of Orthodoxy will take a more or less rigorous approach to the requirement for individual sacramental confession before the reception of Holy Communion.) There are differences too, of course, in the canons which govern and regulate the sacramental economy: Orthodoxy permits divorce and remarriage, while encouraging penitence as part of the marriage rite where one of the couple still has a former partner living. (The Orthodox marriage service will have a very different ‘feel’ from its western counterpart). Orthodoxy restricts, of course, the ordained ministry of bishop, priest and deacon to males. Married men may be ordained as deacons and priests; bishops are monastics, and therefore unmarried. As both the theological and ecclesiological questions surrounding the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion – and whether such ordinations should be considered as ‘heretical’ and therefore communion-breaking – are given extensive treatment in *The Church of the Triune God*, further comment is unnecessary here.²⁰

As a final point in commenting on Orthodoxy and the sacraments, it should be noted that the ‘definition’ of seven sacraments came relatively late into the life of the Orthodox Church²¹, and then very much owing to the influence of the Western tradition. Orthodoxy retains a lively sense of an extensive diversity of liturgical rites and blessings – from the funeral rite to that of anointing a monarch – as ‘sacramental.’ ‘The whole Christian life must be seen as a unity, as a single mystery or one great sacrament, whose different

¹⁹ Alexander Schmemmann *The Eucharist: Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (New York, 1987). p. 20. See also his *For the sake of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (New York, 1973).

²⁰ See especially sections VI, VII and VIII.

²¹ The pan-Orthodox Council of Jerusalem of 1672 declares there to be seven Sacraments.

aspects are expressed in a great variety of acts, some performed but once in our life, others perhaps daily.’²²

PART 2: ANGLICAN – ORTHODOX DIALOGUE

Preparation for Dialogue

The Cyprus Agreed Statement needs to be seen in its historical context. Official discussions between Anglicans and Orthodox began in the 1920s, and were pursued in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. It was in 1962 that Patriarch Athenagoras I and Archbishop Michael Ramsey agreed to take the first steps towards setting up a joint commission to examine doctrinal agreements and disagreements between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches. Each Church nominated its representatives, who in 1966 began meeting separately, at the wish of the Orthodox, to determine what topics should be on the agenda of the Anglican/Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions (A/OJDD).

In the course of the earlier talks from the 1920s onwards a number of topics had emerged as outstanding between the two Churches. These were included in a list, drawn up by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which also contained matters to be examined at the beginning of the dialogue. These included Anglican intercommunion with the Old Catholics. Anglicans wished the *filioque* and the Anglican understanding of comprehensiveness to be added, as well as pastoral, liturgical and spiritual issues. Such preparation for the dialogue took six years, and it was only in 1973 that the first full meeting of A/OJDD took place in Oxford.

The First Phase of the Dialogue

The first phase of the dialogue nevertheless made some progress, despite a sense among some on the Anglican side that the dialogue was not viewed by the Orthodox as one between equals. Three sub-commissions worked on topics agreed to be priorities, and produced documents which were submitted to the full Commission in Moscow in 1976. Statements on ‘The Knowledge of God’, ‘The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture’, ‘Scripture and Tradition’, ‘The Authority of Councils’, ‘The Filioque Clause’, ‘The Church as Eucharistic Community’, and ‘The Invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist’, were revised, agreed, and published in the Moscow Agreed Statement of that year. Among the fruits of this first phase – in which the different emphases in the theological traditions of east and west were much to the fore – was that the Anglican members of the Commission agreed at Moscow to recommend to their churches the removal of the clause from the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed when they next undertook liturgical revision. They did so, however, for historical and ecumenical reasons, and were careful to pass no judgment on the Trinitarian theology involved in the debate.

²² Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 276.

The Moscow Agreed Statement registered a good deal of agreement on the topics discussed. It also noted areas of difference. 'The Knowledge of God' spoke of divine self-revelation and human communion with God. It noted that the Orthodox Church 'draws a distinction between the divine essence, which remains for ever beyond man's comprehension and knowledge, and the divine energies, by participation in which man participates in God.' Anglicans, it also noted, do not normally use this distinction, although believing that 'God is at once incomprehensible, yet truly knowable by man.' Nor do Anglicans normally speak of salvation as *theosis*, divinization by grace, although the doctrine that term seeks to express is to be found in liturgical texts and hymnography. On 'The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture' and 'Scripture and Tradition', both sides agreed that that the two are correlative rather than separate sources of revelation. Scripture is the criterion of authentic Tradition, which completes Scripture in the sense of safeguarding the integrity of the biblical message. Both sides agreed too that Holy Tradition is 'the entire life of the Church in the Holy Spirit.' While in broad agreement about 'The Authority of the Council', Anglicans pointed out that their tradition distinguished the first four Council from the last three of the ecumenical seven, and that they accepted the seventh in so far as it defends the incarnation. But while 'they agree that the veneration of icons as practiced in the East is not to be rejected, do not believe that that it can be required of all Christians.' In 'The Church as the Eucharistic Community' and 'The Invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist' there was agreement on the role of the Spirit in the eucharistic action, as in the whole life of the Church, and on the Church as community which becomes fully itself in celebrating the Eucharist, which in turn actualizes the Church.

But if the Moscow Agreed Statement was a positive achievement, there was a cloud on the near horizon. The Commission had agreed at Moscow to continue its work, still in sub-commissions, though meeting in the same place: in the first phase sub-commissions met separately. Three topics had been identified for study: 'The Church and the churches', 'The Communion of Saints and the departed', and 'Ministry and priesthood'. But the Orthodox were aware of Anglican debates on the ordination of women, and a resolution was passed, drawing attention to the existence of a grave problem: 'The Orthodox members of the Commission wish to state that if the Anglican Churches proceed to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, this will create a very serious obstacle to the development of our relations in the future. Although the Anglican members are divided among themselves on the theological principle involved, they recognize the strength of Orthodox convictions on this matter and undertake to make this known to their Churches.'

The Ordination of Women

The second phase of the dialogue began the following year, when the Commission met in Cambridge. The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop John Howe, reported on the present state of the ordination of women in the several provinces of the Communion. It came as a shock to the Orthodox members, sometimes more aware of the Church of England than of the Anglican Communion as a whole, to learn that the ordination of women was already a fact in the life of some Anglican churches. Some of

the Orthodox wished to bring the dialogue to an immediate end, others wondered what meaning it could now have if it continued. It was agreed that a special meeting of the Commission should be held in 1978 'before the Lambeth Conference, in order, by expounding the Orthodox position, to enable their Anglican brethren to come to what, in their view, would be a proper appreciation of the matter. For the Orthodox the future of the Dialogue would depend on the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference.'

In 1978 the Commission duly met in Athens. For much of the time the two sides met separately, working on statements of their respective positions. The Anglican section of the Report recorded the variety of Anglican positions on the issue: there were those who believed that it is 'in no way consonant with a true understanding of the Church's catholicity and apostolicity, but rather constitutes a grave deformation of the Church's traditional faith and order'; there were others who saw it as 'a proper extension and development of the Church's traditional ministry, and a necessary and prophetic response to the changing circumstances in which some churches are placed'; and there were those who 'see no absolute objection to it' but 'regret the way the present action has been taken and believe that the time was not opportune nor the method appropriate for such action'.

There was only one Orthodox position; and in view of the discussion of this issue in 'The Church of the Triune God', the following quotations from the Orthodox section of the Athens Report are worth noting:

We see the ordination of women, not as part of the creative continuity of tradition, but as a violation of the apostolic faith and order of the Church...By ordaining women Anglican would sever themselves from continuity in apostolic faith and spiritual life.

The ordination of women to the priesthood is an innovation, lacking any basis whatever in Holy Tradition. The Orthodox Church takes very seriously the admonition of St Paul, where the Apostle states with emphasis, repeating himself twice: 'But if we, or an angel from heaven, preaches to you anything else than what we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we have already said, so I say to you now once more: if anyone preaches to you anything else than what you have received, let him be anathema' (Gal.1: 8 – 9).

It was the lowest point in the dialogue.

The Second Phase of the Dialogue

The Lambeth Conference of 1978 took account of Orthodox objections to the ordination of women, but recognized the right of individual Anglican Churches to make their own decision on the matter. The Orthodox members of the Commission were agreed that the dialogue should continue. In the light of the decision of the Lambeth Conference, some thought the status of the dialogue should be changed, and continue only 'as an academic and informative exercise, and no longer as an ecclesial endeavour aiming at the union of the two churches.' Others thought it could continue as before. At a Steering Committee

meeting in 1979 it was agreed that the dialogue should continue, but with a different approach to its work:

The ultimate aim remains the unity of the Churches. But the method may need to change in order to emphasise the pastoral and practical dimensions of the subjects of theological discussions. Our conversations are concerned with the search for a unity in faith. They are not negotiations for immediate full communion. When this is understood the discovery of differences on various matters, though distressing, will be seen as a necessary step on the long road towards that unity which God wills for His Church.

That decision relieved the Commission of the necessity of trying to solve the question of the ordination of women and other outstanding problems as a condition of continuing the dialogue. As a consequence the second phase of the dialogue, as the Introduction to the Dublin Agreed Statement said, was 'more free to explore together and understand better the faith we hold and the ways in which we express it.' The first paragraph of the Statement observed that the Joint Commission had tried in its discussion to keep in mind the link between theology and sanctification through prayer, and between doctrine and the daily life of the Christian community.

The Dublin Agreed Statement (1984) contained three main sections, 'The Mystery of the Church', 'Faith in the Trinity, Prayer and Holiness', and 'Worship and Tradition'. The first section looked at New Testament images of the Church, and at its four credal marks of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. With regard to unity it acknowledged that 'our divisions do not destroy but...damage the basic unity we have in Christ'. It went on: 'Anglicans are accustomed to seeing our divisions as within the Church: they do not believe that they alone are the one true Church, but they believe that they belong to it. Orthodox, however, believe that the Orthodox Church is the one true Church of Christ, which as his body is not and cannot be divided.' The Orthodox conceded, however, that 'at the same time they see Anglicans as brothers and sisters in Christ who are seeking with them the union of all Christians in the one Church.'

That paragraph highlights a fundamental issue in all dialogues between the Orthodox and other Churches. One of the objections of many Orthodox to the World Council of Churches was precisely the use of the word 'Churches' in the plural: for to them there is only one Church. 'The Mystery of the Church' dealt at some length with another ecclesiological issue, the question of primacy. This is a crucial question in all dialogues involving the Roman Catholic Church. In the Dublin Agreed Statement Anglicans and Orthodox agreed that primacy, or seniority, should be understood in terms not of coercion but of pastoral service. A Primate, at whatever level, had no right 'to intervene arbitrarily in the affairs of a diocese other than his own.' They pointed out that neither the Ecumenical Patriarch nor the Archbishop of Canterbury claims a primacy of universal jurisdiction within their respective families of self-governing national or regional Churches. On this point it was felt in some quarters that the Anglican members of A/OJDD were taking a rather different line from their colleagues on the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.

'Faith in the Trinity, Prayer and Holiness' linked trinitarian doctrine with participation in the grace of the Holy Trinity, and went on to consider the nature of Christian prayer – one of the few dialogues perhaps to do so. A section on the filioque included a reaffirmation of the 1978 Anglican recommendation to exclude it from the creed, and noted that some Anglican Churches had already acted on it. 'Worship and Tradition' included an affirmation of the inseparability of faith and worship, and stated that 'all the saving truths of the faith are doxologically and liturgically appropriated'. There was a fine sub-section on 'The Communion of Saints and the Departed'; and with regard to icons another sub-section included the statement that 'in the light of the present discussion the Anglicans do not find any cause for disagreement in the doctrine as stated by St John of Damascus.' This represented a remarkable development in Anglican thinking: the Lambeth Conference of 1888 had said that it would be difficult for Anglicans to have closer relations with the Orthodox so long as the latter maintained their use and veneration of icons.

The second phase of the dialogue had done useful work. An Epilogue to the Dublin Agreed Statement summed up achievements as well as issues still to be resolved. Prominent among the latter was the ordination of women. The Epilogue noted:

We have failed to reach agreement concerning the possibility, or otherwise, of the ordination of women to the priesthood. The Orthodox affirm that such ordination is impossible, since it is contrary to Scripture and tradition. With this some Anglicans agree, while others believe that it is possible, and even desirable at the present moment, to ordain women as priests. There are however many related issues that we have not so far examined in any detail, particularly the following: how we are to understand the distinction within humanity between man and woman; what is meant by sacramental priesthood, and how this is related to the unique high priesthood of Christ and to the royal priesthood of all the baptized; what, apart from the sacramental priesthood, are the other forms of ministry within the Church. (Epilogue IV 103 (h))

If the ordination of women was prominent among the issues still to be resolved, there was another on which it seemed agreement would be hard to achieve. It concerned, as the Epilogue put it, 'the account to be given of the sinfulness and division which is to be observed in the life of Christian communities. For Anglicans, because the Church under Christ is the community where God's grace is at work, healing and transforming sinful men and women; and because grace in the Church is mediated through those who are themselves undergoing such transformation, the struggle between grace and sin is to be seen as characteristic of of, rather than accidental to, the Church on earth. Orthodox, while agreeing that the human members of the Church on earth are sinful, do not believe that sinfulness should be ascribed to the Church as the body of Christ indwelt by the Holy Spirit' (Epilogue IV 99 (d)).

The Epilogue expressed the view that none of the points of disagreement it mentioned 'is to be regarded as insoluble, but each is to be regarded as a challenge to this

Commission...to advance more deeply in its understanding of the truth.’ It was a challenge taken up by the third phase of the dialogue.

An Interlude

After the publication of the Dublin Agreed Statement there was a hiatus in the dialogue. An Executive Committee was set up to consider the direction in which the dialogue should continue. The ordination of women and the alleged doctrinal vagaries of some Anglicans continued to provoke strong feelings among the Orthodox and warm discussion among members of the Committee. A planned meeting of the full Commission in 1987 was postponed by the Orthodox: the dialogue was in danger, it seemed, of running into the sands.

But on both sides there was a desire to continue the dialogue, and both sides saw its goal as unity in faith and the restoration of unity. The Lambeth Conference of 1988 passed a resolution on Anglican-Orthodox relations. It ‘encouraged the work of the Commission towards the restoration of that unity for which Christ prayed, particularly noting its intention to address the question of ecclesiology which it is hoped will include the increasingly significant concept of ‘reception’, the issue of ecclesial diversity and the inter-relationship between faith and culture in which it is expressed, believing that these are pressing issues which affect both our Communion...’ (Resolution 6.4).

The Third Phase of the Dialogue

The full Commission met again in 1989 at New Valaamo. In the interval since 1984 it had been re-constituted, and provided with new co-chairmen. Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon had been appointed for the Orthodox, and Bishop Mark Dyer for the Anglicans. With these changes came a fresh approach and a changed atmosphere. That new start was symbolized in the new name given to the Commission: the International Commission of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD). The continuation of the dialogue was agreed, and by the time of the next full meeting in Toronto in 1990 the two co-chairmen were able to present a programme for the Commission’s work for the next few years. It was decided to study together the doctrine of the Church, including a consideration of Christ and humanity and Christ and culture, and within that context to study the ministry of the Church, including lay ministries, and the relation of the ordained ministry to the high priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of all the baptized. Two related issues, that of heresy and schism and that of reception of new ideas and practices in the Church, would conclude this new phase of the Commission’s work. In 1991 the new Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I gave his support to the dialogue, expressing his intention ‘to continue with faithfulness the long tradition of fraternal relations with the Anglican Church’. He expressed too his ‘desire to promote our theological dialogue until we achieve the unity of faith.’

Throughout this third phase of the dialogue there was a sense, lacking perhaps in the previous two phases, that Anglicans and Orthodox were studying questions of common concern together. In their Preface to the published Statement the co-chairmen quote the

view of a member of the Commission, who said of its work: ‘Now it is a conversation of delight and illumination. Like all true conversations, it has had its moments of surprise and strangeness...But then it is good to be drawn into a conversation which engages in profound and sustained reflection on what it is that makes the Church the Church and to affirm the hidden life of the Trinity at the heart of our communities.’

PART 3: COMMENTARY ON THE STATEMENT

All three statements have noted considerable agreement, ‘a surprising degree of consensus’²³ in theological matters, but there remain areas of divergence, less to do with the mystery of the Triune God than to do with some aspects of priesthood and more seriously the possibility that the differences in this area may relate to matters of faith. The statement was warmly welcomed by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations at its meeting in 2006 and is due to be considered by the Lambeth Conference later this year.

The statement has nine sections and we shall now look at each of these in turn. In the analysis below the numbers in brackets refer to the section and paragraph numbers in the statement.

The Trinity and the Church (I)

The statement begins with a discussion of the mystery of the Trinity and the Church. Both the Trinity and the Church have been the occasions of divergent views between the East and the West. The Church “reflects the communion that is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity.” This life is her “model, basis and ultimate goal” (3). All theology of the Church presupposes the eternal priority of the Triune life (4).

An analogy is suggested between the life of the three persons of the Trinity and the life in communion of the Church. The weaknesses of both social and psychological models for interpreting the mystery of the Trinity are noted. The Persons of the Trinity are “irreducible hypostatic realities”, but not individuals. It is noted that an individual and a person are not the same. Unlike an individual, “the person exists not in possession of its own nature in opposition to others, but in giving itself wholly into the life of others.” (4) The Church is created by the Holy Spirit to be a communion of persons, “an image of the life in the Triune God”, living in anticipation of the day when all creation will be renewed (10).

The *doctrine* of the Trinity did not drop down from heaven; rather the Church has been led to formulate the doctrine in response to the Trinitarian self-revelation and work of salvation as it is experienced in the sacraments. In the Eucharist there is shown “the way the Church should live if she it to be true to her essential nature”. For a true understanding of the life of the Church, it is necessary to understand God truly. “Unless we try to grasp what kind of God it is who acts in this way towards us, our theology of

²³ VII 25, p. 84.

the Church will be impoverished.”(13). In a later section (II 23) it is noted: “To speak in a particular way of God’s being, on the grounds of God’s action, is to commit ourselves to a particular vision of our calling in the world”. Moreover, while it is not possible for human beings to speak directly of God, whose hidden otherness is such that we cannot know Him (28, 29), through God’s self-revelation in the Spirit and the Word, through the divine “energies,” it is possible to speak of Him if we are in communion with Him (31). Theology is therefore a corporate experience rooted in the life of the Church rather than an “individualistic enterprise” (32).

The Trinity is the reason why the Church exists at all and to share in the life of the trinity is her ultimate purpose. “We cannot understand the being, the structure, mission, worship, and ministry of the Church apart from God’s trinitarian existence” (21). Reservation is expressed towards the Dublin Agreed Statement of 1984 with respect to the implications of the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity, allegedly found in Maximus and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, for Orthodox acceptance of the *filioque* clause²⁴ (15). The issue of the double procession is clearly not something on which consensus has been achieved, it would seem.

However, there is rapprochement. Traditional concerns by both sides are noted, namely the Orthodox rejection of the idea that the Son is the source of the “Holy Spirit’s being” (16) and the worry of the West with respect to the idea that the Spirit proceeds ‘from the Father alone’ (19). The Orthodox acknowledge that “in patristic thought the involvement of the Son in the coming forth of the Spirit is not wholly restricted to the level of the economy” (16) and that “we cannot think of the Spirit proceeding from the Father without recognising that the Father is the Father of the Son, just as we cannot forget that the Father who begets the Son is also the one who breathes forth the Spirit” (19). A hope for further explanation and the possibility of reconciliation is noted. The Eastern concern to avoid compromising the full deity of the Son by distinguishing between God’s substance and the Fatherhood of God and the Western worries about the use of language of ‘cause’ with respect to the Father are noted and well-expressed, as are the positive consequences of understanding the language of ‘cause’ and of the role of the Son and Spirit in the immanent Trinity (20).

In a dense section the Statement follows the argument made familiar by the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas that a Trinitarian theology that gives priority to substance over personhood has opened the way to a subordination of the local to the universal Church, “a totalitarian authority over the person” (25). The statement declares therefore that “Orthodox and Anglicans agree in rejecting a single centralised authority in the Church ... for profoundly theological reasons” (25). The priority of the local church over the universal is defended on the basis of the analogy of the communion that exists within the Church on the one hand and within the Trinity on the other; the Catholic church is in each local church, which “is identified with the whole, expresses the whole and cannot exist apart from the whole” (24).

²⁴ The statement that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son found in the Western version of the Nicene Creed.

There follows a discussion of the mystery of God and the nature of the language we use in speaking of God. As has already been noted, the statement declares that God in His essence cannot be known – we cannot know what it is for God to be God. However, He gives Himself to be experienced in the communion of the Church, where His life may be shared. Because of its appropriation by God in the ‘economy’ (God’s activity in the world) the language of the Scriptures, of Christology and pneumatology, becomes accessible to the divine. This is called not metaphor, symbol or analogy but “iconic” language. This language is rooted in divine revelation rather than ordinary human experience and is transparent to the reality of God (36; 39). In this context, the use of the language of ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ to refer to God is iconic, rather than gendered. If we do see these terms as symbols that refer to gender in God, there is the risk of understanding God anthropomorphically. This does not exclude the use of feminine language, which need not be incompatible with the common heritage, but may arise from “a pastoral and missionary imperative” (41).

Christ, the Spirit and the Church (II)

From the Trinity and the Church, the statement moves to a consideration of Christ and the Spirit. The statement notes that the relation of the church and the trinity goes through Christ (I.27) and so there are three sections which treat of Christ. The statement rejects the idea that there is a separate economy of the Spirit in which the Spirit is at work apart from Christ (14;18) and insists that it is impossible to understand Christ in isolation from Trinitarian theology, pneumatology and ecclesiology (III 1;7). An understanding of the Definition of Chalcedon is put forward which claims that it is the relationships with other persons of the Trinity that are the basis of Christ’s personal identity, and consequently it is in virtue of these eternal relations, rather than the incarnation that our salvation is caused (II 1).

The role of the Spirit in Christology is highlighted. A doctrine of salvation is developed in terms of ends rather than means (so there is no mention of theories of the atonement), of adoption as sons and daughters (*huiosthesia*), which is put in apposition to the traditional Orthodox notion of *theosis* or ‘divinisation’ (8). We are destined to share in the life of God, “a dynamic, eternal and unending movement of self-giving”. Being saved involves our being drawn into the Son’s relation to the Father. The Father’s gift of the Spirit to us makes the Church a ‘Spirit-bearing’ body (5; IX 18). Such an understanding of salvation is intelligible only in terms of a Christology “within a Trinitarian context” (8).

It is not only Christ’s humanity which is constituted by the Spirit (9:10; 25), but also His identity: “The identity of Christ is determined by the presence and activity of the Spirit” (14). This is an approach which, the statement remarks, with remarkable understatement, “challenges views held by some Orthodox and Anglican theologians” who have viewed the Word rather than the Spirit as the source of Christ’s identity and activity. Because it views the work of Christ and the Spirit as inextricably linked, the statement cautions against the idea that the Spirit is at work in the world whilst Christ is restricted to the Church and against the separation of a subjective and personal Spirit from a historical and

objective Christ (15, 16). Christ is the supreme manifestation of what it is to be a person and the Spirit cannot be separated from what is objective (19). Importantly it is noted that there is no separate economy of the Spirit, but “one economy of the Son in which the Father and the Spirit are actively present” (18).

In paragraphs 20-22 a summary of the relation of Christology and pneumatology is offered, and the threefold distinctiveness of the divine persons in relation to the world is given clear expression. Everything said about Christ is related to the Father, a fact which finds reflection in the practice of the eucharistic prayer (which sums up the saving work of Christ) being ‘normally’ addressed to the Father.

The statement now turns towards humanity. This follows from what has been said about the relation between the Trinity and the Church. “Trinitarian theology has as much to say about humanity as about God”. In God there is perfect receiving as well as perfect giving, so that proper creativity is found by learning to receive from, as well as to give to others (23). In a happily filioquist turn of phrase, it is said that “Jesus Christ is the source from which the Spirit flows to us; he defines the meaning of life in the Spirit and he enables us to live that life” (26). This is a matter of “free co-operation with God’s grace”, a co-operation where the initiative is His²⁵. His humanity does not conform, however, to our humanity, for it passes judgment on it (28).

Forgiveness of sins comes through the giving of the Spirit. Baptism is associated with the forgiveness of sins because here the Spirit is at work. On the cross we see true humanity constituted by the Spirit (28) and this same humanity then overcomes death (30) for the same reason. The humanity of Christ needed to be raised and it is by the Spirit that it was raised: “Without the Spirit, Christ would be just Jesus, whose sacrifice would have to be understood solely in ethical, not in ontological terms”. Because it is constituted by the Spirit, Christ’s humanity is able to open up selfhood for every believer so it may be come personal (31); this opens the way for the statement to endorse the idea of the Church as “corporate personality”.

The Spirit transcends the boundaries of self and subjectivity and enables humanity to meet the other because the Holy Spirit is communion, *koinonia*. In Christ, human nature is truly personalised and the Spirit “creates a personal existence, free for love, mutuality and creativity” (31). These sections give the report a handle on the discernment of spirits and allows some criticism of popular ideas concerning humility, the possibility of moral perfection and spiritual assurance (33-35).

The statement challenges the idea that the Spirit is always accompanied by subjective assurance: “... the Spirit works also in those circumstances where our faithfulness to Christ crucified and risen prompts us to decide and act without clear validation from subjective certainty, or confirmatory wonders” (35). This can mark “an advance in the intimacy between Creator and creature, and so can be understood as the Holy Spirit’s

²⁵ The approaches to the doctrine of grace taken by East and West have been different. Given the sensitivities in the West with respect to the language of co-operation, one misses some amplification of this point.

work in us. The Spirit lives and works in our risks as well as our securities, our hurts as well as our triumphs, in so far as these are signs of our maturity” (36).

Christ is not an individual but a person and it is through His relational personhood that He transcends time (39) and therefore the significance of His being supremely Spirit-filled lies not in His being the supreme example of selfless love or a miracle worker, but in His being the one around whom is gathered the community of God’s sons and daughters (41). This is seen in those who reflect the humanity of Christ through sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Two modern martyrs, one Orthodox and one Anglican, Maria Skobtsova and Janani Luwum, are given as examples.

The section concludes with the view that a Christology shaped by pneumatology may undercut some of the Orthodox worries about the *filioque* clause undermining the distinctiveness of the Spirit and some Western ones about the consequences for the doctrine of salvation of divorcing the Spirit from the Father’s purpose of adopting human beings as His sons and daughters (45-47).

Christ, Humanity and the Church (in two parts) (III-IV)

This leads the statement to consider the relation of social humanity and Christ: culture and Christianity are not in opposition. (It seems that this is the way the statement finds to treat of mission, as that term is currently used in the Church of England.) The creation and re-creation of the world by God entails a positive view of culture (12). Culture (not defined in the statement) finds theological justification in the calling of humanity to engage with their environment with a view to its consecration, which rests on the conviction of faith that God has made human nature to share in every good (10; 11). Humanity cannot reject culture as such; criticism leads to replacement, not to repudiation. However, critique is called for (15; 19): “We must ... face responsibly questions surrounding culture, and realise its limitations as a vehicle for the Gospel, in whose critical light we need to look at any particular culture”. Uncritical identification with a prevailing culture calls for correction and repentance (16).

The statement contends that it is right to attempt to relate Christology to culture and notes that in the early centuries Christians used the language of their culture to express the Gospel and to formulate the dogmas of the faith. This is a matter of relating carefully the Gospel to particular contexts (23). It does not mean that the Gospel is subject to cultural change, but that cultures are capable of offering a *praeparatio evangelica*, an opening to the gospel (24). The New Testament provides the principal illustration of how Christian witness speaks across cultural boundaries, but this is also the case with the Christological definitions of the ecumenical councils (26). Christians from different cultures are enabled to make their own the language of the New Testament and the Fathers of the church; this is the ‘charismatic memory’ of the Church, what the Orthodox call “Holy Tradition” (27). The Gospel has been and continues to be counter-cultural in its effect on culture (28).

‘Inculturation’ is something to be welcomed. The diversity of cultures, which can be perceived as a threat to the unity of the Church, is affirmed “as a unity-in diversity, not as

a begrudged necessity but on the basis of positive conviction” (31). Mutual respect and responsibility to each other are needed; each church should be able to expect thoughtful consideration of the other’s understanding. It would seem that this would allow for new expressions of truths concerning Christ and also for recognition of non-Chalcedonian Christologies to which Orthodox have been less open than Anglicans. Cultures have a role in prompting the Church to hear the gospel in new ways (37).

The Church’s engagement with culture is based on the soteriological and eschatological role of Christ in the Church and on communion in the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. The Church’s mission is to open up every human situation to the possibility of transfiguration through Christ and the Spirit to the glory of the Triune God (38).

The second part moves to a particular issue in the contemporary culture, namely the questions posed by gender.

Part 2 begins with an important section on the incomprehensibility of God and the mystery of humanity: “When we consider the use of gender-specific language in relation to God, we must remember that we are dealing with not one, but two profoundly mysterious realities” (IV. 3), God and humanity. God is beyond gender and the often neglected truth is noted that this applies to the names of the first and second persons of the Trinity (6). ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ are not metaphors or symbols, but ‘iconic’ terms, whose full significance is realised within the theology of the worshipping community (8). There is a succinct treatment of the humanity assumed by the Son, as a humanity that is common to both men and women rather than exclusively male and it is stressed that “there is not the slightest hint that any distinction is to be drawn between the way in which women and men share in Christ’s new humanity, and so enter into the life of the divine communion” (12).

This principle extends to the glorified human nature of the Son and this is discussed in relation to the glory of the Risen Christ. There was continuity between the historic and the glorified body of Christ, but His historic body was also transfigured and the view of some Greek Fathers that human sexual polarity disappeared as part of this transfiguration is cited with approval, but with the observation that this does not entail “the destruction of human nature in its gendered form” (14).

The Section ends with a slightly disconnected series of paragraphs on the Risen Christ and the sending of the Apostles with respect to the reign of God. There is no discussion of the ascension and heavenly session of Christ. From the beginning the Church has understood herself to be the eschatological people of God, gathered with the Twelve. The Eucharist is celebrated as the Messianic banquet, in which we are renewed as a missionary people. In a statement involving the Orthodox the relative lack of treatment of Pentecost is notable.

Episcope, Episcopos and Primacy (V)

The agreement on the practice of primacy in the Dublin Agreed Statement is taken up, giving priority to the local church and declining to see the senior bishop, whether the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Ecumenical Patriarch, as a centre from which churches radiate outwards or which confer ecclesial life and ministry from on high (V 1). For the statement, the local church is that which is centred on the bishop: the bishop of Durham is the centre of the church in the diocese of Durham. Many Anglicans will regard the local church as the church they go to on Sunday, but the theological reality is something slightly different.

An account of the history of the office of *episcope* in the early church is given; though elements of the historic pattern are noted, the treatment is free of a focus which suggests that the key question is that of the historic episcopate with regard to the place of the bishop in the understanding of the Church. In contrast to many reports in which Anglicans have been co-signatories, the statement's emphasis falls on the Christological and pneumatological role of the bishop in communion, though the questions of history and historical theology are discussed. Though not cited, the thesis of the Orthodox co-chair, John Zizioulas, originally published in 1965, is clearly influential in the argument²⁶. The report endorses the view that in the earliest centuries the normal president of the eucharistic assembly was the bishop. This raises questions for both communions and the need for further work on the relation of the bishop and the presbyter is noted (17). The development of the office of the bishop is agreed to be a development in which the Spirit has a guiding role and how the past should be used is for both churches is an important issue. Neither the Anglicans nor the Orthodox claim that the New Testament gives "a blueprint for a subsequent church order" (6) (the teaching of the Anglican ordinal of 1662 is given one-sidedly; it is also in the 1550 ordinal)²⁷. The Patristic era has given us the model for our two churches and is said to have been succeeded by a decline (11-12). The extent of this decline is described with little reference to actual churches and the length of the decline is unspecified, but the decline seems to have included late antiquity and the Middle Ages, and to have affected both the Byzantine and the Western churches.

Following this broadly historical section, the next section addresses ecclesiological questions which are prompted by the previous historical analysis. Apostolic succession is seen in terms of successions of churches represented by their bishops (15), very much in line with the treatment of succession in the Porvoo agreement. It is a succession of the Church in which "the local bishop with his community" is "the primary expression of church life" (20). There is an intrinsic relation of the bishop and the local church, expressed primarily, but not exclusively, in the liturgy. In the local church "the

²⁶ John Zizioulas *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: the Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop during the First Three Centuries* Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001

²⁷ The Ordinal of 1550/1662 begins "It is evident unto all men, diligently readinge holye scripture, and auncient aucthours, that from the Apostles tyme, there hath bene these orders of Ministers in Christes church, Bisshoppes, Priestes, and Deacons," is surely more than an assumption that the threefold order originated in the time of the apostles (V 6). It is surely also a case of teaching.

eschatological community is present in its fullness” (8). “The bishop is a constitutive element of the church, around whom the local church gathers” (13). “The clear eschatological note” in the early church should be allowed to challenge both the present local church and the way *episcopate* is exercised within it (16). (There is no reference to the role of the bishop in mission, which has begun to feature in recent years in reflections in the Church of England.)

On these matters, Anglicans and Orthodox agree. Where they differ is over the role of the laity. Anglican laity have a proper place in synods whereas for the Orthodox it is the bishop in synod who represents his church. The material difference in their respective approaches is not spelt out and it is noted that this matter requires further consideration to see “whether it can be regarded as a secondary matter about which there can be legitimate diversity” (18).

The section on primacy discusses the primacy of Peter and includes some unfortunate remarks that seem to be directed against the Roman Catholic Church, a church that did not participate in these conversations or even have an observer at them. A statement such as “The historic claim of the Roman primacy to embody the Primacy given to Peter has been shown on many grounds to be decreasingly tenable” is not good English and its meaning is unclear. Anglican and Roman Catholic – Orthodox treatments of the primacy of Rome are noted, but they are noted in paragraphs and their teaching is not explained.

The important question of the criteria by which the development of the primacy of Rome is to be judged as a human or divine institution is not noted. A proper balance between conciliarity and primacy is, however, noted as something on which Anglicans and Orthodox are agreed. A future for the primacy is envisaged, however, not of an individual, but of the bishop of a local church²⁸ (21). The view that primacy should belong to the bishop of a local church follows on from what has previously been said about the relation of the bishop to the local church community.

Section V sees little or no significant dissent, apart from the role of the laity in synodical government. It is worth noting that for two churches so diverse to agree on such a significant area of disagreement in the ecumenical world is a cause for remark. There is a concluding remark which calls on the churches to take seriously “the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as of the utmost importance in developing appropriate models and structures of episcopacy and primacy” (29).

Priesthood, Christ and the Church (VI)

The presentation in this section once again reflects the Christo-pneumatological approach that has shaped previous sections. Priesthood belongs to Christ, first and foremost (2),

²⁸ in other words, the primacy of the *Church* of Rome, a nice if unacknowledged tribute to J-M Tillard’s *The Bishop of Rome*.

then to the baptised, to the communion of the church and then to the ordained²⁹. On the basis of the Christologies of the New Testament writers, a relation between priesthood and Christ is claimed, such that one can speak of an ontological incorporation into His ministry: “our perception of the historical Jesus and his ministry determines our view of priesthood” (7). “It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ’s priestly work is present in the life of the Church, and the priestly character of the Church is related in the Spirit to the priesthood of Christ” (9) Priesthood is of divine, and specifically Trinitarian, origin (10).

In a phrase echoing the ARCIC agreement on the Eucharist it is said that “the whole Church is taken into the movement of Christ’s self-offering and his eternal praise to of the Father” (11). The life of the church can be called eucharistic because it shares in the self-offering of Christ, in a near quotation from the prayer of oblation in the Book of Common Prayer the statement declares: “We offer ourselves and present to God ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice” (12). The whole people of God is thus priestly.

As far as those ordained are concerned, they, like the bishop, are never to be viewed apart from the church. “The communal character of ordination rites reflects the understanding of priesthood as a ministry within a specific community”. The assent in the ordination rite is not just a ritual, but “a responsible expression of ecclesial approval” (15).

Ordination to the episcopate involves calling someone ‘to the relational ministry of a Catholic person who is placed within the community as a living image of the ecclesial unity to which he bears witness’ (16). The people of God constitute the basis for ordained ministry; so the Eucharist should be seen as “springing from the community itself.” The Eucharist is not the action of an ordained individual, but that of a community; it is celebrated by priest and people together (18). In the context of the Eucharist the bishop or the presbyter stands for Christ in a particular way; in the liturgy the priest is configured to Christ in the Last Supper.

A very Eastern view of the eucharistic presence is given, but in a way which allows the particularity of the presence to receive expression. Priesthood, no less than the episcopate, cannot exist “apart from the church” and is therefore intrinsically related to the eucharistic offering. The word “iconic” is used to describe the relation of the priest to Christ, a term more familiar to the Orthodox than to the Anglican (19). Because of this, communities find unity in their priest. “Priesthood is intrinsically related to the eucharistic offering” (20). In a short paragraph, an attempt is made to articulate the priestly nature of those ordained to the presbyterate by arguing that “through the epiclesis and the coming of the Holy Spirit in ordination” they are given the gift of sharing in the priesthood of Christ (21).

²⁹ *Elucidation* (1979), para 2.

There is a rejection of the idea of priestly *character*. Since this follows a treatment of priesthood that is often given in connection with the language of character, it is strange that there is no further discussion³⁰ (22).

In the final paragraph of the section the denial of apartness and of priests being in any objective or fundamental way different from the laity is stated again: 'priesthood is in no way a ministry which involves division or classification within the ecclesial body' (25)³¹. What is needed, it is argued, is a 'relational' view of ordination in which the ordained are those who are given the vocation through the Spirit of ministering 'the sacrament of ecclesial unity' on behalf of the community as a whole (25).

Women and Men, Ministries and the Church (VII)

In this section there is a treatment of the role of "ministries" in the church, a word not familiar to Orthodox if perhaps rather over so to Anglicans. The variety of ministries is briefly described. It is surprising to learn that the sub-diaconate (viewed here as a lay office, rather than how it was viewed in Roman Catholicism) has been officially revived in Anglicanism!

There is a good discussion of the roles which women take in the Orthodox church and also of the diaconate; the diaconate as a permanent order is valued by both churches. Points previously made regarding the use of gendered language to refer to God and the equal access of both men and women to the life of God on the basis of Christ's common humanity are reiterated and the question of the ordination of women to the threefold order is raised.

There is a recommendation that both churches "recognise the diaconate as a distinctive order" (18). Moves to open the diaconate to women in the Orthodox church are noted (19). Deacons and deaconesses are seen as equivalent, a not uncontroversial statement. However, the importance of the role of 'ministries' exercised by women in both churches is affirmed.

Almost half the section is devoted to the difference of view between the respective churches with respect to the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate. Neither side acquits itself very well with respect to making clear its views; both proponents and opponents of the ordination of women to priestly order would have little difficulty in making a stronger case. Indeed this part of the section is not as well laid out as other sections.

³⁰ This is not the strongest section of the statement. The language of priestly character is found in Canon C 2 of the present canons of the Church of England and is reflected in ARCIC I Ministry (1973), para 15. In many writers the 'character' denotes a 'configuration' to the passion or person of Christ, in others a deputation to the worship, to the presiding at the eucharist. The argument of VI 22 to the effect that the doctrine of indelible character means that the priesthood is "absolutised" does not seem to reflect much understanding of the content of the doctrine and the theology underlying it. It is unfortunate that the Anglican members of the Commission neglected to give better account of their own tradition.

³¹ This does not seem to be saying quite the same as ARCIC I, *Ministry* (1973), para 13.

The statement is not arguing about the question itself. Each side believes that it has been faithful to Scripture and Tradition (23). “Our initial task is neither to prove nor disprove each other’s position but to commit ourselves to the more difficult task of asking whether our differences in theology and practice are sufficiently serious to divide us as churches” (24). Does the ordination of women have such weight that it can be a reason for division in the body of Christ?

After a summary of the agreement on trinitarian ecclesiology, Christology, pneumatology, priesthood, the humanity assumed in the incarnation (treated at some length (29-31)) and the eschatological equality of the sexes (34), there is a clear and extensive presentation by the Orthodox of why, these agreements notwithstanding, they reject the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate.

The view from the Anglican side is set out in paragraph 36 with greater brevity with and less clarity. There is an exposition of the relation of humanity and the human nature assumed in the Incarnation and the participation of the church in the priesthood of Christ (28-34). There is no exposition of the “compelling theological reasons” for ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, beyond a general reference to “the transformation of gender in the new life of the kingdom”. It is possible to imagine what they might be, but the reader is left to infer these from the paragraphs 28-34.

The Orthodox position, less well known, is set out in paragraph 37; it is not without its surprises. I summarise without evaluation.

The first argument adduced by the Orthodox begins: “The eucharistic president acts *in persona Christi*”. The language *in persona Christi* is language more typical of Roman Catholic argumentation. It is also used in various ways in arguments concerning the ordination of women to priestly order, some stronger than others. In a report seemingly wary of concepts more typical of the Western church, it is surprising to find it here. In the section on priesthood, there had been no discussion hitherto of *in persona Christi*. The language of iconicity was used instead. The fact that Christ is male is not irrelevant to the ministerial service of the church, not least because it pertains to His identity. The Orthodox holds that the phrase “in Christ there is neither male nor female” in Gal 3:28³² refers to the overcoming of “division and conflict” between the sexes rather than to any ultimate elimination of the distinction between them.

Secondly, though the Church needs to listen to society, ordination is properly decided by “theological and ecclesiological considerations”: “sociological considerations are not in themselves sufficient to justify innovations pertaining to the ministry of the Church” (37). Because ordination does not involve the exercise of a power of domination but rather a specific service, no injustice is done to women in not ordaining.

³² This is the translation given in the Statement. The NRSV gives ‘there is no longer male and female’. Employing the text in support of the ordination of women to the priesthood, the Anglicans use the same (mis)translation at VII, 27. The Anglicans talk of the priest as the “guarantor of the Church’s identity in Christ, in whom there is neither...male nor female”.

Thirdly, the criticism included in the first argument, that the Anglicans did not consider adequately the theology and the ecumenical implications of the ordination of women, is developed into a rejection of the pastoral rationale for the step. “The cost of schism or of the perpetuation of division is too high” for pastoral benefits to justify the innovation.

However, it would seem that the Orthodox view taken here is a moderate one, in comparison with the reaction earlier in the dialogue between the two churches. There is no appeal to ‘tradition’, for example. The remarkable thing is that this has been the matter of dialogue, as if the question were not closed. It “deserves further and deeper consideration and study in ecumenical dialogue” (37).

The section ends with a list of issues to be taken further: (i) the extent to which culture influences the respective positions of the churches; (ii) reflection on the theological reasons (taken up again at IX 25) and the place of canon law; (iii) the status of the difference: is it heretical or not? (iv) if not, is it possible to consider the effect of the difference on communion with one another (38)

Heresy, Schism and the Church (VIII)

It is possible that in Orthodox eyes the innovation of ordaining women to the priesthood and episcopate is heretical. This prompts a section regarding schism and heresy.

There is an agreement that “both terms are too often misused and abused”. The discussion focuses closely on these terms; there is nothing on the status of “error” as a concept or on whether “error” (material as opposed to formal) might play a paradoxical role in the theologian’s search for truth. The statement sets itself two tasks, to define the two terms and then to identify criteria and competence to judge (2). The argument moves from a consideration of heresy and schism together, a unity in diversity, to the criteria for applying the term heresy and the discernment of the same.

Heresy begins as a departure from the apostolic faith within the Church, “that which denies, distorts or undermines the original witness and teaching of the apostles” (3). Schism is a separation and a departure from the eucharistic communion of the Church. There is less space given to the treatment of schism and none to the criteria for discerning it (possibly due to disagreements among the Orthodox on how to regard their ecumenical partners?).

While recognising that the heresy and schism are distinct, the report notes that they are related, because it is not possible to understand the self-revelation of God apart from the community in which it is received. Heresy as a denial of the faith is a betrayal of the existential reality of the Church (7). “Teachings which attack the existential reality of the Church’s life are unequivocally heretical in every sense of the word.” Moreover, such teachings deny, distort and undermine “the very existence of the Church itself” (8).

The discernment of heresy belongs not to individuals but to the Church. This further presupposes that the community is of a kind that makes the charism of reception as important as that of teaching or rejection (taking up what has been said earlier about receiving and giving). The discernment of heresy is closely linked with the ongoing process of new things being brought in for the sake of actualising the gospel (10). In a particularly dense paragraph, it is said that discernment begins as an exercise of oversight, involving the local bishops and ultimately an ecumenical council (the only body that can declare teaching to be heretical). Because the bishop as pastor and teacher of the faith is bound up with the liturgical expression of the unity of the local church in the Eucharist, the Eucharist may be seen as the criterion for determining of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, right and false praise (11).

The section ends by posing the question of what it means when one church is out of communion with one another, when there is no formal condemnation of heresy or departure from the apostolic faith, something which it describes in words taken from the Dublin Agreed Statement as “an abnormal situation” (13).

Reception in Communion (IX)

The reflection on the discernment of heresy leads into a consideration of the reality of reception. This section must rate as one of the most sustained considerations of this concept yet attained in ecumenical exchange.

‘Reception’ is widened beyond its customary home of the reception of teaching. Boldly, it is rooted in the acceptance of humanity by the triune God, so that the subsequent presentation of the concept emerges naturally as a conclusion to what was said on the Trinity and the Church in the first section of the statement.

Reception, a basic concept in ecumenical endeavour, originally took for granted a united church. Now, however, it is not only a matter of teachings being received, but there is also a call for churches to receive one another through mutual ecclesial recognition (4). This is a development of the classical concept. Furthermore, this process needs to be understood in the light of communion.

Both churches know themselves to be challenged to consider, to receive and to reject innovations; those which are to be received are gifts from God and therefore “always that of God’s love” (5).

A Trinitarian basis for reception is described (8). The Church is ‘received’ by God and it is from God that she receives. The Church is also received by the world and receives from the world: “As a distinct community within the world, the Church exists in dialogue with the non-ecclesial realm, in her effort to persuade the world to receive the incarnate Christ. What is called mission should rather be understood as reception.” (6). Reception is ultimately the reception of the gift of God’s love. “Reception is no dry technical term; it goes to the heart of the Christian experience of salvation” (7). “In the Church we receive a person rather than ideas”, which has implications for the understanding of

reception. Doubt is raised about the appropriateness of imposing dogmatic formulations that do not have serious existential consequences (10). Reception is borne by the Spirit and it takes place in communion, the eucharistic community of the church (13).

The statement offers a development of what it calls the “classical” understanding of reception: acceptance is not reception until something is accepted in the context of the Eucharist. The subject of reception is the community, not the individual; under the oversight of the bishop the people receive through the ‘Amen’ of the Eucharist which is also the ‘Amen’ to the bishop in council³³. Reception is both local and universal, and it therefore involves the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. Reception implies inculturation and so it passes through the local church (13).

The statement then makes four remarks regarding the present ecumenical situation: (i) the reception of scripture and Tradition needs to take place with attentiveness to the cultural context; (ii) the Eucharist is the proper context of reception and reception is not complete without the achievement of eucharistic communion; (iii) the question of the authority of the past is one over which differences still exist, but it is a hopeful sign that this issue is being acknowledged and discussed; (iv) the office of bishop poses the greatest immediate difficulty for the ecumenical movement, but two hopeful signs are that episcopally ordered churches now realise that the episcopate needs to be exercised “in union with the whole community” and that some non-episcopal churches are now looking afresh at the office of bishop as “an essential instrument of ecclesial unity.” The related issue of the ministry of the bishop of Rome is seen as potentially resolvable if put in the right theological perspective (14).

In the light of this the statement adds four new features of reception: reception is a matter of churches and people as much as texts; all churches need to re-receive their own tradition in relation to the original apostolic community; the decision is one made by churches, whose structures must be for the sake of communion and it belongs to their communion; reception is an open process, “... receiving and re-receiving is a process which is never finished” (15).

Paragraphs 16-26 take up the themes of inculturation and reception from earlier sections, not least the interpretation of the past. The Church is called to actualise the Gospel in every age and culture and this involves some kind of change in the expression of the faith (17, 18). “Revelation is Tradition and becomes Tradition within the Church ... because it was transmitted (*paredothe*) in Christ and the Holy Spirit. It becomes Tradition because the Church preserves it throughout her history, as the power of her life.” Tradition is not necessarily conservative; “it is a charismatic, not a historical principle” (18).

Faced with the challenge to continuity posed by innovation, six conclusions are drawn from the Fathers: the new needs to be based on the old so there is no innovation in absolute sense; reception through time is not a progression as if the gospel needed to improve; a distinction needs to be made between the formal and essential content of teachings; only an ecumenical council could determine the truth of an issue concerning

³³ This echoes the working of ‘reception’ in *The Gift of Authority*.

salvation and so complete the process of reception; reception addresses whether a teaching in response to a cultural imperative contradict what has been received as the rule of faith and whether a change arises in response to genuine human needs or from motives not in accord with the gospel; all must seek the guidance of the Spirit and none must claim the authority of the Spirit for rejecting or accepting the new teaching until the process of reception is completed (19).

The statements in this paragraph seem to be in contradiction with what has been said about the openness of the process of reception (15), though this contradiction *may* be only apparent in the light of the distinction between the meaning of reception as the formal process by which the Church comes to a mind and the constant receiving of scripture and tradition in life and worship (21)³⁴. As scripture and tradition require interpretation, communion does not exclude “competing theological expressions of its faith” (20). An example is provided from the discussions of Galatians 5.17 (22-23). Reception does not allow for total indeterminacy; differences may be major, but the common understandings may be greater (24). “True dialogue requires the expression of contrary views for its progress and development.” Is the issue of the subject of ordination one where partners to dialogue might cease to talk with each other? Is this an issue where essential Christian wisdom is at stake or where a new consensus may be hoped for? The partners do not wish to close the debate.

The last part of the final section treats of ‘the reception of ministry in communion’ or what is often termed ‘recognition of ministries’. It is noted that in the early church mutual reception of churches presupposed unity and identity of structure (27). Two kinds of innovation in structure are identified, those which are not basic, such as monasticism (though asceticism of which it is an institutional expression would be), and those whose structures are, such as the Roman primacy. “Ecclesial reception presupposes identity of basic ecclesial structures” (28). Such issues affect reception in an immediate way (28; 29). Though the Anglicans have said that there is no difference between the theological questions to be posed in ordaining women to the priesthood and episcopate, the consequences posed for reception are not the same because churches receive each other through the bishop. Though the issue of women priests may be the theme of extended reflection, that of women bishops is of a different order. The Report ends with a note of urgency, an Orthodox echo of the pleas already made by Cardinal Kasper and the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales with regard to the proposal to ordain women bishops in the Church of England.

Part 4: ASSESSMENT OF THE STATEMENT³⁵

³⁴ In the light of IX 28 (on basic structures such as the Roman Primacy, “the choice between reception and non-reception has to be made at once”), I think there is to be work in shewing that this is not contradictory and that the treatment of the concept of reception is consistent.

³⁵ Theological dialogue between Evangelicals and the Orthodox has taken place at both the international level and in Britain. The report of the the British dialogue between Evangelicals and the Orthodox sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance has been published as T. Grass (ed), *Evangelicals and the Orthodox Church* (Paternoster, 2001). It is hoped that the report of the international dialogue between Evangelicals and the Orthodox organised by the WCC will also be published at some point in the future. A new round of

The Church of the Triune God is a notable achievement, a tribute to the efforts of the participants and represents a remarkable convergence. The agreement on the mystery of the church, so long a difficult area between Orthodox and Anglicans, is impressive and deserves a warm welcome. To place the dynamics of culture and mission, church and openness to time and change in the acceptance of us by the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit will repay long and sustained engagement. Some observations of a critical nature might be made, however, and they touch nine areas.

A. The theology of the statement is influenced strongly by the thought of John Zizioulas, one of only four out of 33 Orthodox participants who have been on the Commission since 1989 (perseverance is better on the Anglican side, seven out of 28). The writings of this great theologian have been widely appreciated. To ground the being of the church in the mission of Christ and the Spirit and so in the Trinity is something which reflects the best of both churches' theologising; to do so in such a way as to respond to the challenge of changes in culture on the one hand and the interrelated ministries of the church in the eucharist around the bishop on the other, is surely something to be welcomed.

However, Zizioulas' approach has not been without its critics. The Trinitarian approach adopted here reflects an approach to the relation between the Trinity and the Church which has become popular in recent years, almost the house style in the English speaking world, and it has entered Anglican ecclesiology³⁶. Yet the analogy between the life of God and the life of the Church may not be as firmly based as the statement assumes. For example, there is a tension in the between the discussion of God in the statement and the ecclesiological arguments that are based on this Trinitarian analogy. The first acknowledges that God is 'beyond our ken' and that there is therefore a limit to what one can say about the Trinity and the second bases arguments for a way of ordering the Church on the nature of the relations within the Godhead. It is not clear that these two approaches are compatible. Furthermore, there is an order in the persons of the Trinity which finds emphasis in Orthodox trinitarianism, but is less present in Western social models. It might have been appropriate to remark this, given the comparative strangeness to western ears of the 'Father' as the *cause* of the processions. Issues which bear the mark of Zizioulas which may repay examination are: the relational ontology; the extent to which an occasionalism undermines the kind of community/ecclesiology which he and the Report seek to commend; the alleged link between filioquism and medieval decline; the fear of any abiding distinctions within the church.

B. At times, the statement makes judgments about Rome, a common dismissal of what is seen as the Roman Catholic view. There was no Roman Catholic observer to consult. To

dialogue between Evangelicals and Orthodox Christians in this country has now begun under the auspices of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. This dialogue, in which a number of Anglican Evangelicals are taking part, will include theologians and church leaders from a variety of denominations and Orthodox jurisdictions. A personal response from an Anglican Evangelical perspective by Dr Tim Grass to *The Church of the Triune God* is available from the Council for Christian Unity (caroline.kim@c-of-e.org.uk).

³⁶ As in the *Virginia Report*.

put this diplomatically, the judgements do not seem to be nuanced; to put it bluntly, this is gratuitous anti-papal polemic, which should have no place in such a document, if anywhere at all. On the other hand, there is the recognition of the role of the church of Rome in a future united church. These views do not seem to be harmonised and one wonders about the appropriateness of using common fears of an absent third in order to further agreements³⁷.

C. For the statement it is the Spirit who determines the identity of Christ. In II,14 it is conceded that this is an approach that “challenges views held by some Orthodox and Anglican theologians” who have viewed the Word rather than the Spirit as the source of Christ’s identity and activity. This is a considerable understatement, for it seems to put to the side Anglicans such as Hooker or Andrewes in the classical period, Aquinas from an earlier age and Anglican writers of more recent times. In the statement, the Word is hardly if ever spoken in terms which describe it in relation to the Incarnation as active. This *may* be a sustainable view, but it cuts across a wide swathe of Western (and Eastern) Christology. It would be good to have further reflection on this rather important area. St Irenaeus famously compared the Spirit and the Son to the two hands of God³⁸, but it would seem a curious way of correcting this imbalance to untie the left hand of God, only to tie up the right one. It is surely right to treat of the Spirit and the Word as both active *ad extra* in the Incarnation and to recognise that the Spirit has not had such a place in many Western expositions, but the presentation is indeed of the two hands of the Father, but with one tied firmly behind his back.

D. With respect to the glorified humanity of Christ (IV 13, 14), some might wonder at the measure of consistency attained here³⁹. As noted above, the view of some Greek Fathers that human sexual polarity disappeared as part of this transfiguration is cited with approval, but with the observation that this does not entail “the destruction of human nature in its gendered form”. This approach to the person of Jesus Christ has implications for how the goodness of difference and of sexual identity is redeemed. Even allowing for the positive things said about difference here, some might wonder whether a glorified body of Christ beyond the human polarity of gender would be in continuity with the Jesus Christ who lived among us. Some might also ask in what measure is this view of the last things owing to Christologies with inadequate accounts of the true humanity of Christ?⁴⁰

E. The account of the end of the incarnation, of filiation or of *huiosetheia*, is a fitting way of treating that for which Christ came, died and is raised, but in the light of the emphasis put in western Christianity, and in particular Protestant, on the atonement, the lack of a treatment of the nature of Christ’s work for our salvation and our need of the cross is something which needs to be remedied. Although it is not right to look for everything a

³⁷ As one finds in the *Agreed Statement on Christology by the Anglican - Oriental Orthodox International Commission* (2002) with respect to the absent Assyrians.

³⁸ E.g. *Adversus Haereses* V.xvii

³⁹ There is a sideswipe at the “origenistic belief that the body will be annihilated in the world to come”, but the view that is condemned in 553 is surely that the risen body, of Christ and of the redeemed is ‘ethereal, having the form of a sphere’ (10th Anathema against Origen).

⁴⁰ It is perhaps interesting that neither side use such views of the eschatology of the human body to argue either before or against the ordination of women.

report such as this, it is something which perhaps should have been treated, the more so as the language of the respective traditions can give the impression of wider divergence in substance than is in fact the case.

F. In general, the Anglicans seem to have been loath to cite their own teachers or to use their own tradition (not a new phenomenon among Anglican ecumenists). Almost all the Fathers cited are Eastern; there is one citation of Leo, none of Augustine, Ambrose, Tertullian, Cyprian, still less of St Thomas. This leads into a discounting of positions more typical of the Anglican inheritance and the owning of language and conceptuality more typical of Orthodoxy (e.g. energies, iconicity). These are not familiar to Anglicans as working concepts and they both need further exposition and critique.

G. The presentation of the subject of priestly order is likely to draw eyes away from more fundamental questions and it is important to note that this issue is not one which is discussed in order to move one side to another view, but in order to see whether such an innovation justifies continued division or merits rejection as heretical. As noted, the presentation of arguments is not the strongest part of the report, but not much should be made of this as it is not the point of the discussion. Some Anglicans will find it hard to hear the Orthodox side; some Anglicans will find it hard to hear their own side, and the same, to a very different degree will apply to the Orthodox. It is important that the present disputatiousness of the Anglican communion on this issue does not detract – significant differences notwithstanding – from the remarkable meeting of minds between the two parties on this issue, where before there was something approaching condemnation.

H. Running through the statement is a mode of presentation in which a positive assertion is qualified by a denial of a generality without any concrete example. This runs the risk of lending the argument an appearance of authority that it may not possess, or at least leaving it as master of the battlefield. A good example of this is the treatment of the apostolic succession. Apostolic succession is seen in terms of successions of churches represented by their bishops, “rather than as a succession of individuals with power and authority to confer grace apart from their communities” (15). Such a phrase seems unhelpful. No specific theologian or view is identified, and though there has been a view of a linear succession of ordination through time as a sufficient condition for the existence of the church, this would be an eccentric one, even for an Anglo-Catholic, especially for a Roman Catholic. It risks minimising the role of sequential ordination in the apostolic tradition or suggesting that it is less important than it is. Clarification of this issue should have been included in the report, not least in the light of the caution in this regard from well-disposed Orthodox commentators to the Porvoo process⁴¹.

⁴¹ Peter Bouteneff *The Porvoo Statement An Orthodox Response* in O. Tjorhom *Apostolicity and Unity: Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement* (World Council of Churches, 2003), pp. 231-244. This is a contrasting view to that presented at V 15: “..the Anglican-Lutheran Porvoo Common Statement recognised the succession of bishops as a necessary aspect of ecclesial life, but insufficient by itself without the succession of local ecclesial communities”.

I. Such a way of presenting the argument means that an opportunity is lost to give a narrative to how we have come to be different and apart. How we have come to be who we are is not incidental to our lives as members of the Church, indeed to being the churches we are and a narrative might have avoided the contentious presentation of mediaeval decline from a golden patristic age. It would also have allowed the Orthodox to expand on how their bishops, in the diaspora Orthodoxy of western Europe, fulfil the missionary role of the bishop, a role which is passed over in the statement. This is also the environment in which Orthodox are most likely to come across Anglicans and vice versa.

These reservations do not stand in the way of welcome to this report. The Orthodox have dealt with us as a 'church', without saying so. Until recently, there were only a few signposts which Anglicans and Orthodox could use together, and use them we did, but now a map has been found which both can read and understand. Let us hope that it will be well used.