



Book Review

Colin Buchanan, *Did the Anglicans and Roman Catholics Agree on the Eucharist? A Revisit of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission's Agreed Statements of 1971 and Related Documents* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018), pp. xxx + 193. ISBN 978-1532633836. RRP £21.00 or US\$27.00.
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Colin Buchanan is one of the foremost authorities in the world on the subject of Anglican liturgies of the Eucharist. His publications are legend and provide exhaustive accounts of the development of eucharistic liturgies across the Anglican Communion over more than 50 years. He has also published widely in the area of liturgy through the Grove series of small books and many other publications. Colin Buchanan is a retired bishop of the Church of England and has served on General Synod and the Liturgy Commission of that church for many years, developing an exhaustive knowledge of and intimate engagement with liturgy and its development in the Church of England and beyond. His knowledge and experience of liturgical matters is large since he was involved in all the major liturgical developments in the Church of England over many years. He maintains a close interest in these matters in retirement.

His latest book, *Did the Anglicans and Roman Catholic Agree on the Eucharist?*, published in 2018 is a goldmine of documents and analysis on the negotiations between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church on the Eucharist since the nineteenth century right up to the present day. It is a great gift of scholarship and useful to any discussion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics related to the Eucharist. He brings a vast experience and knowledge of events and contacts to the task and what he has produced is without doubt the most complete set of discussions on this topic available at present. The collection of all the documents from various discussion between the two churches in one place and with expert analysis is the strength of this book.

Buchanan initially answers the question he asks in the title with a definite 'No'. More about this answer will be considered later. It is his initial thesis that the Anglicans and Roman Catholics did not agree on the Eucharist in a number of important discussions between the two churches. His book sets out his reasoning for this answer. He acknowledges right from the beginning that the story of Anglican and Roman Catholic agreement on the eucharistic doctrine 'is regularly told as broadly a success story' (p. xiii); however, he presents a picture which suggests that there is sufficient variance between the telling of the story and the reality of any agreement to warrant his study and indeed his negative answer. He states that he follows 'a particular method' (p. xiii) in presenting his argument and that argument seems to be based firmly on the lens of Reformation theology.

His 'particular method' begins with some reflections on the distinction between Roman Catholic and Reformed positions, immediately placing Anglicans in the Reformed position by arguing that 'it is a given feature of Anglicanism that its sixteenth-century formularies stood close to reformed models, not least those of Calvin, and that those formularies have been the charter for evangelicalism with the Communion' (p. xvii). For Buchanan those he calls 'the children of the Reformation' (p. xix) stood farthest from the position of Rome and in so doing adhered 'to the doctrine of the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer' (p. xix) and so a clear statement of the beliefs of that group is needed in relation to the question of agreement on the Eucharist. He acknowledges a broadening of Anglicanism into traditions other than evangelical but maintains that evangelicalism is the *de facto* form of Anglicanism. Not all Anglicans would agree with this but it is good to have Buchanan's credentials as an evangelical squarely front and centre as he begins his task. At the same time Buchanan points to what he sees as the futile pursuit of seeking agreement on behalf of whole denominations, especially when these denominations, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, include such divergent traditions within themselves.

From the start the book examines the question of agreement through the lens of a Reformed Anglican understanding of eucharistic doctrine. This is good to know as you begin the book and it does not in any way lessen the usefulness of this book, even though others (perhaps myself included, as Buchanan amusingly acknowledges me in the book as 'by no means an evangelical'!, p. 147) might take a different view in relation to Anglicanism in general, sacramental theology and the question of agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics on the Eucharist. Buchanan's view of reformed doctrine of the Eucharist is a 'conveyancing' view where the benefits of Christ's passion to the recipient function like title deeds in that they 'convey' a valuable property to the right recipient, without having intrinsic value of their own (p. xx). This Reformation view is maintained by some evangelicals in the present but stands in contrast to those within Anglicanism who argue for a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the idea of eucharistic sacrifice or memorial. Buchanan uses this lens of conveyancing to argue that the Reformers rejected the notion of a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist spatially within the elements or coterminous with them (p. xx). Buchanan applies the same Reformed analysis to the question of eucharistic sacrifice, an issue raised in many of the discussions between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Here he argues that 'the Reformers ... laid their whole emphasis upon the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ upon the cross as the sole grounds of our forgiveness and acceptance by God' (p. xxii). This question is much debated in Anglicanism with varying views expressed.

Buchanan begins his analysis of the discussion between Roman Catholics and Anglicans on the Eucharist with reference to Leo XIII and his encyclical *Apostolicae curae* in 1896 in which the Pope rejected Anglican orders on the basis of the Reformation ordinal and the Anglican theology of the Eucharist. The interaction between the two churches continued when the two English Archbishops (Canterbury and York) published a reply to the encyclical in 1897 entitled *Saeptius Officio*. For Buchanan, while the Archbishops clearly put a view that includes the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and eucharistic sacrifice, thereby agreeing with the Pope's agenda and assuming they could speak for the whole Anglican Communion, he sees

this as incapable of indicating agreement between the two churches and within Anglicanism itself. Many within the Anglican Communion do not accept these perspectives, with others from the seventeenth century onwards in the work of theologians like Lancelot Andrewes or Edward Pusey affirming both the real presence of Christ and eucharistic sacrifice in a moderate realist (that is not fleshy) sense.

The book continues with an analysis of the Malines Conversations (1921–25) where a group of Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics met to discuss theological issues relating to orders and the Eucharist. The fact that these meetings were principally between Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics suggests to Buchanan that these conversations are questionable in terms of a complete Anglican Communion response and cannot therefore function as a basis for any agreement between two churches which contain wide diversity.

The work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) occupies much of the rest of the book. The analysis here is very thorough and like earlier sections historical documents are presented in full so that readers can access all the material in one place. This is a very useful gift to scholars who may be interested in this area. Buchanan sets out the background to ARCIC in the processes of Vatican II and moves on to the establishment of the commission between the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsay and the Pope, Paul VI in 1966. The various reports are shown in full with helpful commentary and a broadening of the responses to include the Lambeth Conferences and at a later time the Anglican Consultative Council. Chapter 4 moves to an excellent analysis of the first ARCIC agreed statement in 1971 called *The Windsor Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine* which was eventually more widely distributed with an *Elucidation* on eucharistic doctrine and other statements on ministry, ordination and authority in what was called *The Final Report* and published in 1982. Buchanan's analysis is rich and well informed with personal communications from people who were involved. His comments are incisive, acknowledging the commission's conclusion that there was 'substantial agreement on the doctrine of the eucharist' between the two groups, noting that this was acceptable in part to evangelicals, more than they could have ever imagined. Buchanan is scrupulously fair in his assessments, despite his own commitments, clarifying matters such as eucharistic sacrifice where the commission was keen to admit there was never any repetition of Christ's sacrifice intended in the discussion on the Eucharist. Controversial aspects remained, such as reservation and adoration, and again careful analysis along with an even-handed understanding of different traditions is presented.

Chapter 6 looks at the Anglican response to *The Final Report* from both official Anglican sources such as the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council while Chapter 7 examines the official Roman Catholic response in a document called *Observations* in 1991. Whereas there was some welcoming support from the Anglicans, the Roman Catholic official response was less enthusiastic, causing some Anglican participants to think they had wasted their time. A further official *Response* from the Roman Catholics revealed that the Roman Catholics doubted that there had been 'substantial agreement' on the Eucharist, thereby casting some gloom over the process of ARCIC. The Roman Catholic official *Response* insisted on traditional teaching and so had substantial criticism for the position adopted by

ARCIC in regard to the Eucharist and cast doubt on any agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

Chapters 8 and 9 of Buchanan's book devote much space to the ARCIC II document released in 1994 and called *Clarifications*. This document represented an attempt to respond to the official criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church. Once again Buchanan helpfully includes the documents so that they are easily available to readers. The situation was one where Anglicans had broadly agreed with the ARCIC I statements but the Roman Catholics, at the official level, while acknowledging progress had raised significant criticisms relating to traditional Roman Catholic doctrines of the Eucharist, especially the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and eucharistic memorial. Buchanan addresses important issues here in an objective and scholarly manner. First, he asks whether the document *Clarifications* was an ecumenical breakthrough. He concludes it was not since the discussions were abandoned and even buried. There was no alteration in either church as a result of ARCIC. Second, he considers how *Clarifications* addressed the Vatican's concerns, concluding that *Clarifications* used language more readily understood by Rome but in so doing, used language mostly unacceptable to some sections of the Anglican Communion concerning issues of eucharistic presence and sacrifice. Third, Buchanan argues that *Clarifications* was never brought before Anglican bodies, so while it had a low visibility for Anglicans it greatly strengthened matters for the Roman Catholics, suggesting that no real agreement was reached.

Buchanan concludes his book with a definite 'no' to the question he asks as a title. For Buchanan the Anglicans and Roman Catholics have not agreed on the Eucharist. Further, he suggests that both churches were unsure that they knew they did not agree. The process for dealing with agreements is in Buchanan's view very suspect and so no definite positive agreement can be made in relation to agreement on the Eucharist. No convergence of views has been demonstrated between the two churches on the basis of the documents. All we have is the statements without any agreement. Admittedly some of the statements, especially *Clarifications*, begin to use a new language but there has been little or no response or agreement. Buchanan concludes that perhaps there is a need for an extended listening program between the two churches, which seeks less agreement and more listening, and where Anglicans and Roman Catholics can engage in a commission that hears the viewpoint of each other but which reserves the right to disagree with what is heard. Such a process of reception is adult but inevitably difficult, as the Anglican Communion is discovering in its own internal ructions. Buchanan sees some hope in this listening process but at the same time firmly believes that there cannot be any creeping undermining of the convictions of either communion, especially for those whose convictions are furthest away from those of Roman Catholics. Presumably for him this means his own commitment to a Reformed understanding of Anglicanism. For him the task must now become 'godly scholarship, divine discernment, patience in the Spirit, and love for those from whom we differ' (p. 155). This is a grown-up approach and highly commended. And so the book ends with a definite 'no'. This is not a 'no' of blind party spirit, although we know of course where Buchanan stands, quite legitimately, in the Anglican scheme of things. This is a 'no' which suggests not yet on the basis of what has come before in the various conversations and discussions since the end of the nineteenth century. Buchanan is too scholarly to rest in

blind conviction alone, although he never retreats from his own evangelical commitments. The answer may be 'no', up to this point, but the book shows there may be hope in the future if commitment to a process of reception is real. This is where Buchanan goes in his last chapter, added right at the last minute as the book was going to print.

Chapter 13 brings the discussion right up to the present day by looking at the latest ARCIC document – *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church – Local, Regional, Universal* – from ARCIC III and released in early 2018. This is a comprehensive statement surveying ARCIC I and II and pointing ahead to ecclesiology but also discussing baptism and the Eucharist. Buchanan's analysis of this chapter points to a shift in the statements. Instead of earlier statements which affirmed the presence of Christ in the consecrated elements, talked about ontological change in the elements, spoke of reservation and adoration of Christ in the Eucharist, associated the celebration with the sacrifice of Christ and attributed a propitiatory value to the Eucharist, this new statement sits squarely in ecclesiology. In *Walking Together*, Buchanan notes, we now see language which speaks of the Eucharist constituting and building up the communion of the church, sees the Eucharist as the place where Christ meets the Church and where the Church is disclosed to itself and views the Eucharist as a celebration of communion and a deepening of a desire for communion. All this suggests that 'substantial agreement' may be possible and so Buchanan concludes by reflecting on his original question, *Did the Anglicans and Roman Catholic agree on the Eucharist?* by asking another question, *Could the Anglicans and Roman Catholics Agree of the Eucharist?* This is a hopeful place to end the book.

Colin Buchanan deserves congratulations for producing a book of scholarship which practises what he preaches and never surrenders his legitimate and firmly held convictions. The amount of material gathered here in one place by an expert handler of this material will hopefully serve both the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics in any future discussions and perhaps agreements. In the end it is a book of hope and light.

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