



News Release

Monday 17th October 2005
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Church Society writes to the Vatican about Mary

In a recent letter to the Vatican the Council of Church Society rejected the work of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) on the understanding of Mary in Christian teaching.

Anglican Evangelicals have had no confidence in the ARCIC process which constantly seems to ignore or undermine the historic Anglican teaching which Church Society seeks to uphold. This feeling was underlined by the fact that the co-chairman of ARCIC was until fairly recently Frank Griswold the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the USA. Mr Griswold has been instrumental in the revisionist campaigns which have torn apart the Anglican Communion.

The Roman Catholic teaching on Mary, which is defended by ARCIC, has no basis in Scripture, nor in the teaching of the early Church. This is clear from the report itself when their attempts to defend Roman teaching have to rely constantly on reading meaning into Biblical texts and on what they call 'symbolic and ecclesial reading'. Such teaching about Mary is a late invention.

In writing to the Vatican Church Society is not seeking to open up old wounds but to recognise that the cause of unity will never be served by deceit and misrepresentation. True unity will only be found if churches are willing to reform themselves and their teaching in the light of the plain teaching of Scripture.

A copy of the letter is attached.

Further details about the ARCIC report can be found at www.churchsociety.org

For further information please contact:

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Church Society exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church.

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Cardinal Walter Kasper
President of the Dicastery
Pontifical Council of Promoting Christian Unity
Vatican City

Dear Sir,

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II): Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ (2005).

Church Society, the senior body representing reformed evangelical views in the Church of England, exists to promote biblical truth within the Church of England, the wider church and the United Kingdom.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Church Society has studied the statement of ARCIC II entitled “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ” (2005) and rejects its conclusions relating to the status and role of Mary. The conclusions which have been reached are contrary to Holy Scripture and to the extent those conclusions claim to be based on ancient traditions, then such traditions are likewise contrary to Holy Scripture. The conclusions are also entirely inconsistent with the historic formularies of the Church of England (The Thirty-Nine Articles), which state, *inter alia*, that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation with the consequence that whatever is not read in or capable of being proven from Scripture cannot be demanded from any person to be believed as an article of faith. The conclusions of ARCIC II are incapable of being proven from Scripture.

Accordingly, the conclusions of ARCIC II should not be misunderstood as reflecting the true position of historic biblical Anglicanism which Church Society seeks to uphold.

Yours faithfully,

David Phillips (Revd)
General Secretary on behalf of the Council of Church Society