

Donald Bolen & Gregory Cameron (Ed)
Mary, Grace and Hope in Christ
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The introduction to this edition of the 2005 Seattle Statement; the 5th statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), points out the hope that the document "would be an instrument through which Anglicans and Roman Catholics could come together in ecumenical encounter, and a means of strengthening and encouraging their Christian faith and understanding."

Towards this end, alongside the full text of the Seattle Statement, this edition also includes detailed commentaries by Timothy Bradshaw (Anglican) and Jared Wicks SJ (Roman Catholic), and supporting essays by Charles Sherlock (Anglican) and Sara Butler (Roman Catholic). This edition also includes an excellent series of six study sessions, designed specifically for group discussion. These sessions, like the Statement itself, are grounded in Scripture and the traditional teachings of the Church.

Study of this document reveals that as Christians, we have a heritage with much more in common, than that which divides us. Mary is encountered as a focus for the Grace and Hope that becomes manifest in Jesus; Mary's proximity to Christ draws us closer to him also. In a world where mistrust and division so often lead to conflict, this document, as with all those of the ARCIC, remind us that despite our Christian history, with its theological diversity, Christ is our shared centre. Mary's "Yes", was the pivotal moment in our salvation history, when this shared centre came to be. How appropriate then are the concluding words of Timothy Bradshaw's commentary,

"Mary herself, whatever her present role in heaven, must be saddened to know she is a focus of disagreement, and has been used as a badge of division between Christians. She surely will be rejoicing that efforts are being made to remedy this."

Maximilian SSF