

Founding of Fulcrum

Fulcrum Newsletter, August 2006

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Dear Fulcrum friends,

Mark Chapman, in his recent perceptive [Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction](#), gives a very short introduction to Fulcrum:

A new group, 'Fulcrum', was set up in 2003, to provide a forum for more open evangelicals.¹

Well, where did we come from and how were we founded? Many people have been asking for a history of Fulcrum so far and this newsletter will attempt to outline such a narrative. A [shorter version](#) is also available.

In any historical writing, the concept of 'critical distance' is important, both in time and space. It has to be admitted that we are still close to the events of three years ago, and that affects our perspectives, and that our involvement in them influences both the shaping and the choice of material presented. With this 'qualifier' in mind, it still seems worth attempting...

A. Proto-Fulcrum

In some ways, the restrictive nature of the planning for the Fourth National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC4) in September 2003 in Blackpool, and the sharp reaction of some conservative evangelicals to the appointment of Rowan Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury, form the important background to the gathering of what may be called 'proto-Fulcrum'.

1. Planning for NEAC4: pressing for a third theme of Mission

At the Anglican Evangelical Assembly (AEA) in May 2001, Paul Gardner, the chair of the [Church of England Evangelical Council](#) (CEEC), announced that the themes of NEAC4 would be Bible and Cross with a tone of 'back to basics' and an emphasis on 'inerrancy' and 'penal substitution'. I, and various others, spoke about the need to be outward looking in mission: as well as considering the themes of the Bible and the Cross, we needed a third theme of Mission.

At the 2002 meeting of Wisdom in Mission, an annual gathering of mission executives and mission scholars organised by the [Henry Martyn Centre](#), Cambridge, Tim Dakin, the General Secretary of the Church Mission Society, and I discussed the lack of response to my plea for mission as a third theme of NEAC4. We, together with George Kovoov (Principal of the CMS training college in Birmingham) and Chris Wright (Principal of All Nations Christian College, Ware), organised an email letter from about forty senior evangelical Anglicans stressing this need. Eventually, CEEC agreed to the extra theme and to the suggestion that Chris Wright should edit an extra third section of the pre-conference book, *Fanning the Flame: Bible, Cross and Mission*.²

2. Reaction to Rowan Williams from Reform, Church Society and CEEC

When the appointment of Rowan Williams to be Archbishop of Canterbury was announced, a fierce reaction, led by some conservative evangelicals, was set in train. [Reform](#) and [Church Society](#) made press statements and a defence of their position was written in a letter to *The Times*, on 4 October 2002, by the chair of CEEC and the chair of AEA.³

I had heard, from open evangelical Anglicans and from friends in both the charismatic evangelical Anglican networks of [Alpha](#) and [New Wine](#), that this fierce reaction did not represent open and charismatic evangelicals in the Church of England. I was asked for a comment by Ruth Gledhill, religious correspondent of *The Times* and she quoted me the next day, 5 October 2002, in her article on the response to the appointment of Rowan Williams:

Within the contemporary evangelical movement there are three traditions: conservative, open, and charismatic. The latter two have given a generally warm welcome to the appointment of Rowan Williams while still disagreeing with some of his views.

The central areas of Christian belief include the Trinity and the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Rowan Williams is thoroughly orthodox in all of these. To raise sexuality into this central sphere of Christian doctrine is to buy into the very Post-Modern culture that Reform and the Church Society claim influences Rowan Williams.

There are many more passages on the subject of poverty in the Bible than on sexuality and it may be that some members of Reform and the Church Society are less biblical than Rowan Williams is on this issue.⁴

The quotation was discussed on that week's [Sunday](#) programme on Radio 4.⁵

At the same time, Francis Bridger, principal of Trinity College, Bristol, was organising a [letter](#) to *The Guardian* supportive of Rowan Williams, which was also signed by Tim Dakin, Antony Thistelton, David Atkinson, and Nick Baines. It read:

Archbishop Rowan Williams was right to resist recent attempts to force him to agree to particular forms of words to define Christian ethical teaching (Archbishop-in-waiting rejects resignation call, October 2).

We are concerned about the tactics being employed. Our thinking is informed by three factors. First, no pressure group should expect a bishop or archbishop to subject himself to tests that go beyond the canons of the church. This would set a precedent that would be morally unacceptable.

Second, it is unseemly and contrary to biblical thinking to exert pressure by means of public confrontation rather than by private persuasion. Disputes among Christians should be settled in private in a spirit of charitable reconciliation.

Third, if we believe that God is sovereign over the processes leading to the choice of Dr Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury, then we should respect this. We may not always agree with him, but that does not erode the validity of his appointment or the calling that God has laid upon him.

Archbishop Williams will bring many gifts to his new role, including the ability to win the respect of a wide public and command a hearing for the Gospel. Even if we believe that there are theological and ethical issues to be discussed, evangelicals should offer him support rather than act in ways that will undermine him.⁶

At the CEEC meeting on 10 - 11 October 2002, Christina Rees, a General Synod representative on CEEC, [resigned](#) as a member over its attitude to Rowan Williams.⁷

In response to Ruth Gledhill's article, Andrew Goddard, tutor in ethics at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, emailed me his positive [article](#) on the theology of Rowan Williams.⁸ As an *Anvil* journal trustee⁹, I had been asked to write an article on NEAC4 for *Anvil*. On 3 September 2002, with some other trustees of *Anvil*, I met with the NEAC planning group and stressed the importance of inviting Rowan Williams, following the precedents of invitations issued to earlier NEACs to Michael Ramsey, Donald Coggan and Robert Runcie. This proposal was met with a flat refusal.

3. Background Meetings

It seemed right to gather together these various people who were supportive of the appointment of Rowan Williams for further discussion, rather than just continue with one to one conversations. We planned originally to meet in St Mary's Vicarage, Islington, but due to lecture timetables met at Twyford, near Reading at the home of Tim Dakin on 24 October 2002.¹⁰

It was agreed that Francis Bridger and Christina Rees should write an article for *The Church Times*, putting the case for Rowan Williams being invited to NEAC4¹¹ and that Tim Dakin and I should write a letter to *The Church of England Newspaper* on a similar theme, encouraging open evangelicals to attend the conference.¹² Both were published. Rod Green, community development manager at St Mary Islington, was also present and his letter, defending the orthodoxy of Rowan Williams against the critique by Garry Williams, was published in *The Church Times*.¹³

We had further meetings of 'proto-Fulcrum' in Islington in November, February, April and July 2003, which discussed, amongst other things, the issue of Jeffrey John's appointment as Bishop of Reading and whether to remain as an informal network or to launch as an organisation.

B. Founding and Launches

1. Founding

On 3 September 2003, two and a half weeks before NEAC4, we met in St Mary's vicarage, Islington and decided to launch at NEAC4. Francis Bridger was appointed chair, Elaine Storkey (present for the first time) and Tim Dakin as vice chairs, myself as Theological Secretary, Rod Green as Administrator and John Martin as Press Officer. It was Rod Green who came up with the name of Fulcrum and the strap line of 'renewing the evangelical centre'.¹⁴

In early September, *Anvil* published my [article](#) 'Canal, River and Rapids: Contemporary Evangelicalism in the Church of England'¹⁵ and the 'committed and open' [statements](#) of open evangelicalism, in that article, were printed on the publicity cards for the launch at NEAC4.

Christopher Took, who had set up the website of the Anglican Communion Office, created a basic website and on it were published Andrew Goddard's [article](#) on Rowan Williams, my [article](#) 'Canal, River and Rapids', and Francis Bridger's introductory [letter](#), which included the words:

We deliberately seek to create a space in which genuine debate can take place in a spirit of non-defensiveness and gracious disagreement, which acknowledges that the clash of ideas can be creative and worthwhile rather than threatening or destructive. We want to affirm that orthodoxy is both generous and nourishing.¹⁶

The Church Times edition in the week of NEAC4 published an edited version of my *Anvil* article and entitled it '[The Nature of Living Water](#)'¹⁷ and *The Church of England Newspaper* edition for NEAC4 published Andrew Goddard's article, '[A Defining Moment for Anglican Evangelicals](#).'¹⁸

2. Informal Launch at NEAC4, September 2003

Back in April 2003, I had booked the Galleon Bar at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool for informal talk back meetings each evening of NEAC4. Three days before the conference, I emailed the CEEC leaders about the formation of Fulcrum. Cards were distributed at the entrance to the NEAC area advertising the evening meetings.

Speakers at the evening meetings included Francis Bridger, Tom Wright, Christina Baxter, Christopher Cocksworth, Graham Cray, Simea Meldrum, Andrew Goddard and myself. Many people signed up as members, including [Simon Cawdell](#), who later became our treasurer and [Stephen Kuhrt](#), who later became our administrator.

Pat Ashworth, in her [article](#) in *The Church Times* on NEAC4, reported on these evening meetings:

Anything really controversial was on late. The launch of Fulcrum - a bid to renew the evangelical centre - had to go underground, so there was something of a left-wing feel to the nightly and increasingly well-attended meetings in the Galleon Bar. The declared concern of the grouping - "a mobile force rather than a standing army" - was to model an orthodoxy that was "generous and nourishing and willing to listen"; to speak for the disenfranchised; to emphasise that the conservative view was not the only defining view of the evangelical and to ensure it was not always the "noisy voices on the edge" that were speaking for mainstream Evangelicals.

Bishop Tom Wright was one of the speakers at the first evening, bizarrely punctuated by the strains of 'Que Sera, Sera' and 'Love, love me do' pumping out from the Victoria Bar in the background. "We live in times when all kinds of things have been put into the melting pot and stirred," he said. "If we of all people can't be somewhere out in the front, exploring new ways of what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century, then we ought to be ashamed of ourselves." ¹⁹

As well as *The Church Times*, the BBC Radio 4 [Sunday](#) programme covered the informal launch²⁰ and so did *The Church of England Newspaper*.²¹ Later, in January 2004, *The Church Times* reported on 'the minutes from a "post-mortem" meeting of the NEAC4 steering group, and a paper from a separate meeting of representatives from the Church Society, the Fellowship of Word and Spirit, and Reform', which were colourfully critical of aspects of NEAC4, including the informal launch of Fulcrum.²²

3. Official Launch at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham, November 2003

The website was developing and it was decided to invite Tom Wright to speak at an official launch of Fulcrum on 5 November 2003. Holy Trinity Church, Clapham was suggested to make the link with the 'Clapham Sect', who attended there at the turn of the 19th century, including William Wilberforce, John Venn, Charles Grant, James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, Lord Teignmouth and Henry Thornton. They led the abolition of slavery movement and founded CMS (in 1799) and, with others, the British and Foreign Bible Society (in 1804). They published a journal, *The Christian Observer*, which was wide ranging in its interests and influence, covering evangelical, Anglican and wider intellectual issues of the day.

Tom Wright and I spoke at a press conference in the morning of 5 November; in the afternoon he was inducted into the House of Lords and in the evening he [preached](#) at Holy Trinity on 'God's Richly Varied Wisdom'.²³ Andrew Rumsey read a poem, Elisabeth Goddard led the service with the band of the Church of the Ascension, Balham and Karowei Dorgu played African drums. The question and answer session on Fulcrum was curtailed due to the fireworks on Clapham Common...

C. Developments

Fulcrum is an online community which meets on the website and at an annual conference.

1. Website

The website continues to develop and now has three main aspects to it: regular [original articles](#); daily [newswatch links](#); and daily [forum discussions](#). A subject index for the articles page will soon be published.

Particular articles that have been important have included:

- Fulcrum [submission](#) to the Lambeth Commission
- Oliver O'Donovan's [article](#) on the Windsor Report
- Tom Wright's [elucidations](#) on the Windsor Report
- [article](#) on the Church of Nigeria deleting a reference to Canterbury in her constitution (written for *The Church Times*)
- the start of the series of Fulcrum [newsletters](#)
- [article](#) and [newsletter](#) on the Surbiton Irregular Ordinations
- Fulcrum [transcript](#) of Simon Mayo's interview with Rowan Williams
- Oliver O'Donovan's monthly [series](#) of seven Fulcrum web sermons

2. Conferences

If the website aims to reflect the breadth of interest of *The Christian Observer*, our annual conference, which is open to all, aims to build on the foundation of the Islington Clerical Conference. This was founded in 1827 by Daniel Wilson, vicar of St Mary Islington, and was held from 1827-1983.²⁴

Our first conference was held on 29 April 2005, '[Inciting Insight: the Holy Spirit](#)', at St Mary Islington. Tom Wright, Bishop of Durham, spoke on [The Holy Spirit in the Church](#), and Jane Williams, visiting lecturer in theology at King's College, London²⁵ on [The Holy Spirit in the World](#). *The Church Times* published the [texts and photos](#) on 27 May 2005.

Our second conference²⁶, '[Gospel in Context](#)', was on 28 April 2006 at St Mary's. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, spoke on [Gospel in Context: among many cultures](#) and David Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge, spoke on [Gospel in Context: among many faiths](#). Kirsteen Kim, chair of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, [summed up](#), and responded to, the whole day. A [report](#) on the conference is on the Fulcrum site; the BBC Radio 4 Sunday programme of 30 April 2006 included an [interview](#) with John Sentamu; and *The Church Times* published an edited version of David Ford's [text with a photo](#) on 12 May 2006.

Our third annual conference is currently being planned.

D. Conclusion

So, we have seen that Fulcrum has indeed developed into a forum for open evangelical Anglicanism, with the aim of renewing the evangelical centre.²⁷

For many years, we have been resourced by a quarterly journal, [Anvil](#), and a monthly mail order series of booklets, [Grove Books](#). Both editors, Andrew Goddard and Ian Paul respectively, are on the Fulcrum leadership team. Now there is third theological resource: a web journal, [Fulcrum](#), and we pray that all three will continue to interweave and flourish.

Our first chair, Francis Bridger, is now Visiting Professor of Practical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, California and we thank him for all his encouragement and insight. We welcome as our new chair, Elaine Storkey, our former vice chair, who is Senior Research

Fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and President of Tearfund. Elaine will be writing next month's Fulcrum newsletter: watch this space...

Yours in Christ,

Graham Kings

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¹ Mark Chapman, *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p72

² Paul Gardner, Chris Wright and Chris Green (eds), *Fanning the Flame: Bible, Cross and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondovan, 2003)

³ Paul Gardner (chair of CEEC) and Chris Green (chair of AEA), letter to *The Times*, 4 October 2002. Later Garry Williams, a lay tutor at Oak Hill Theological College, wrote a booklet [The Theology of Rowan Williams: An outline, critique and consideration of its consequences](#) (London: Latimer Trust, 2003), which, amongst other things, claimed that Rowan Williams's theology put 'souls at the risk of perishing.' For a discussion about the booklet, listen again to the BBC Radio 4 [Sunday](#) Programme, 27 October 2002 and for Rod Green's letter to *The Church Times* about it, see end note 13 below

⁴The article by Ruth Gledhill was in *The Times*, 5 October 2002. The context shows that the last two words, 'this issue', refers to the subject of poverty

⁵ BBC Radio 4 [Sunday](#) Programme, 6 October 2002

⁶ [Letter](#) to *The Guardian* by Francis Bridger et al, 8 October 2002

⁷ Christina Rees was interviewed about her resignation from CEEC over its attitude to Rowan Williams on BBC Radio 4 [Sunday](#) Programme, 13 October 2002. See also her article 'Why I resigned', *The Tablet*, 19 October 2003

⁸ Andrew Goddard, ['English Evangelicals and the Archbishop's Theology'](#), later published in the spring 2003 newsletter of Wycliffe Hall and on Fulcrum in September 2003

⁹ Mark Chapman, in his *Anglicanism: a very short introduction*, mentions the founding of *Anvil*: 'Sometimes there have been messy splits, as with the divisions over the journal *Churchman* in 1982, which led to the setting up of *Anvil* as a more open alternative', p. 72. See also [endnote 26](#) of 'Canal, River and Rapids'

¹⁰ Present were: Graham Kings, Rod Green and Peter Haddock (St Mary Islington); Francis Bridger (Trinity College, Bristol); Christina Rees (writer and broadcaster and chair of Woman and the Church), Tim Dakin, John Martin, and Jenny Taylor (CMS), Andrew Goddard (Wycliffe Hall, Oxford)

¹¹ Francis Bridger and Christina Rees, 'Evangelicalism and a lesson in seismology', *The Church Times*, 8 November 2002. The following are extracts from the article (which is no longer available on *The Church Times* site):

For much of the 19th century, Evangelicals regarded themselves as faithful members of the established Church. In the first half of the last century, however, they increasingly took on the characteristics of a sect. But in 1967 the first National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC) at Keele declared that Evangelicals should be committed members of the Church, giving themselves wholeheartedly to its life and mission and ready to offer themselves to serve at every level. Evangelicalism was placed firmly in the mainstream, and has remained so for 35 years.

The actions of those who oppose Dr Williams's appointment, however, have shown a regression to pre-Keele thinking. By pressing him to stand down, even before he takes office, and by threatening to disown his authority, they have served notice that, as far as they are concerned, Keele is dead. The new Archbishop is to be regarded as tainted, as are the system that chose him and those who welcome him...

...Evangelicalism is much more diverse than once it was. Cracks can now be seen between three distinct groupings: conservative, Open and Charismatic. The first of these has been making the running over the choice of Dr Williams, to the bewilderment of the other two.

It is not too late to build bridges. A great deal more unites Evangelicals than divides them...There is no irresistible historical force that somehow demands the widening of differences into irreconcilable divisions. Diversity within unity is possible and healthy.

If Evangelicals wish to demonstrate their goodwill towards Dr Williams, there is a simple and easy way. Next September, the fourth National Evangelical Anglican Congress will be held in Blackpool. Why not invite him to address the Congress on his vision for the Church? Dr Hope is already booked to appear. Archbishops Ramsey, Coggan and Runcie all spoke to previous NEACs. If we are serious about our commitment to the Church of England, Evangelicals should surely make it possible for Archbishop Williams to do the same.

See also Rachel Boulding, ['Dr Williams to be brief at NEAC'](#), *The Church Times*, 11 April 2003.

¹² Graham Kings and Tim Dakin, letter 'Time to Look Outwards', in *The Church of England Newspaper* 8 November 2002:

Facing outwards in evangelistic mission towards God's world should be the real 'defining' issue for evangelicals today. The new Springboard report, *Hope for the Church*, makes for challenging reading. It highlights a need for a radical change and renewal in the Church of England, focussing on the priority of evangelistic mission. We urge evangelicals to rally around this priority commitment, in fellowship with the majority in the Anglican Communion who are committed to evangelism, in order to develop Christian confidence and a generous theology of the Church for the 21st century.

The recent reaction to the appointment of Dr Rowan Williams by some conservative evangelicals should not be a distraction from this priority. The move by a major London church to withhold stipend payment to the common fund of the London Diocese, and the ungenerous critique of Archbishop Rowan Williams' theology by a tutor at Oak Hill theological college, are both disturbing. We wonder if this oppositional strategy is the best approach to building the Church of Christ, and ask where it is leading if escalated and broadened?

We see next year's fourth National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC4) as a way of harnessing and combining the strength and breadth of the evangelical community. At the Anglican Evangelical Assembly in May 2001, the original presentation for NEAC4 appeared to be somewhat inward-looking. In response to mainstream evangelical representations, the clarification of 'mission' as a third main theme, as well as the original themes of 'Bible' and 'cross', has been very encouraging. We urge members of conservative, open and charismatic traditions in contemporary evangelicalism to attend NEAC4 in order to celebrate, and build together, in our unity and diversity, a renewed Church of England.

¹³ Rod Green, letter in *The Church Times*, 8 November 2002:

I have just finished reading Garry Williams's critique of Rowan Williams's theology (News, 1 November). It outlines three areas for significant criticism. The first is Rowan Williams's "radical apophatic theology...that goes far beyond the catholic consensus."

Garry Williams quotes a number of Latin theologians, including Justin Martyr and Augustine, but fails to mention any Eastern theologians who have a much more comprehensive negative theology. For example, "It is difficult to conceive God, but to define him in words is an impossibility," says Gregory of Nazianzus. Maximus the Confessor says that "negative statements about divine matters are the only true ones."

For Eastern theologians, theology is not about abstract propositions. Rowan Williams's theology is influenced by, and sits well within, this tradition, and provides a necessary warning against rationalistic impulses of some Evangelical theology.

Garry Williams goes on to highlight the distance between the Archbishop's understanding of the atonement and the doctrine of penal substitution. Garry Williams ignores other New Testament models, such as Christ's supernatural defeat of the forces of evil on the cross, or Tom Wright's understanding of Christ as the representative human.

Garry Williams's final critique focuses on Rowan Williams's views on sexuality. Garry Williams articulates a traditional Christian and Evangelical sexual ethic, admittedly something that Rowan Williams does not.

Evangelicals will continue to disagree with Rowan Williams's sexual ethics. However, Garry Williams's attempts to deny the theological orthodoxy of our new Archbishop will, I think, persuade only those who think that a particular brand of conservative Evangelicalism is the one valid expression of historic Christianity.

Such a position does not sit easily with the full biblical revelation, nor the Catholic creeds, nor our historic formularies. I, for one, wonder whether such a view is Anglican.

¹⁴ This was partly influenced by Stanley Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000). Luke Bretherton and Andrew Rumsey were also present at the founding meeting and Luke Bretherton worked with Rod Green in developing the wording for the Fulcrum [roots](#) and aims

¹⁵ Graham Kings, 'Canal, River and Rapids: Contemporary Evangelicalism in the Church of England', *Anvil* Vol 20 No 3, September 2003, pp167-184. On the general acceptance of these three streams of contemporary evangelicalism in the Church of England, see also *The Church of England Newspaper's* pre NEAC4 articles by [Vaughan Roberts](#), [Martin Davie](#) and [Andrew Goddard](#). See also note 22 below

¹⁶ *The Church Times* reported on the new Fulcrum site on 19 September 2003, and '[Thinking Anglicans](#)' on 20 September 2003. For a later discussion of the early design of the site and its launch, and other recent sites, see *The Church Times*, 21 November 2003

¹⁷ Graham Kings, '[The Nature of Living Water](#)', *The Church Times*, 19 September 2003. See also, in the same edition, David Atkinson, '[Gospel and Bible People](#)', the editorial, '[By the Waters of Blackpool](#)' and Bill Bowder, '[Groups vie to represent Evangelical mainstream](#)'

¹⁸ Andrew Goddard, '[A Defining Moment for Anglican Evangelicals](#)', *The Church of England Newspaper*, 18 September 2003. It is worth noting the hint of an empty space, which the article delineates, for an open evangelical group

¹⁹ Pat Ashworth, '[Singing the Old Songs to find the Old Unity](#)', *The Church Times*, 26 September 2003. The article also included mention of Andrew Goddard's seminar on homosexuality

²⁰ BBC Radio 4 [Sunday](#) programme, 21 September 2003, covered NEAC4 and included the launch of Fulcrum, with an interview with Francis Bridger. Also interviewed were Christina Rees, Rod Thomas (from Reform) and Chris Green, vice chair of NEAC4, chair of AEA and a tutor at Oak Hill College. Chris Green was interviewed about the special prayer meeting he attended (with about 19 others) during the welcome of Rowan Williams, which he says was arranged by the conference organisers for those who objected to his presence there.

²¹ Andrew Carey, '[New Evangelical Group seeks the Middle Ground](#)', *The Church of England Newspaper*.

²² Rachel Harden, in '[Conservative groups "two-faced" says bishop](#)', *The Church Times*, 9 January 2004, reported on the minutes of two post-NEAC4 meetings, and on comments on them by the evangelical Bishop of Willesden, Pete Broadbent. She wrote:

The minutes from a "post-mortem" meeting of the NEAC4 steering group, and a paper from a separate meeting of representatives from the [Church Society](#), the [Fellowship of Word and Spirit](#), and [Reform](#), are strongly critical of some of the people who attended the conference. Both are dated October 2003, a month after the event.

She continued:

The second paper describes the Archbishop of Canterbury as a "false teacher", saying it was "surely wrong" to applaud him, because it gave the false impression that he was welcome...

Both documents are strongly critical of Open Evangelicals, and in particular Fulcrum, the new group launched at the conference. The minutes of the steering-group post-mortem include a direct attack on Fulcrum, which was described as seeking "to hole NEAC below the water line." The notes suggest that Fulcrum should apologise to NEAC for taking over the Winter Gardens bar at the conference without any prior arrangement.

Under the heading "Where do we go from here?" the second paper also says that future gatherings should not include "open folk", but "must blow out of the water the view that evangelicalism is made up of three strands: open, mainstream and charismatic. Open must be excluded."

The notes also call for "more repentance and more Bible exposition," and say the organisers "must not fete so-called evangelical bishops." Equally, "liberals must not go on the platform." Recommendations include the proposal that the organising committee "consists only of conservatives" and that future gatherings "ensure there is no Rowan Williams or equivalent problem".

She reported:

Bishop Broadbent wrote to all the bishops who attended NEAC4, describing the two documents as "inflammatory". "The document is explicit in asserting what Reform et al have always denied — that there has been a deliberate attempt by the right wing to take over," he writes.

²³ An edited version, no longer available on the web, was published in *The Church Times*, 8 November 2003.

²⁴ Mark Chapman, in his *Anglicanism: a very short introduction* (p. 71), mentions the Islington Clerical Conference of 1967, the year of the first NEAC at Keele. He quotes the chairman, Peter Johnston:

The Church of England is changing. Indeed, it is in a state of ferment – although it remains to be seen whether ferment will result in mature vintage. On the other hand, Evangelicals in the Church of England are changing too. Not in doctrinal conviction (for the truth of the gospel cannot change) but (like any healthy child) in stature and posture. It is a tragic thing, however, that Evangelicals have a very poor image in the Church as a whole. We have acquired a reputation for narrow partisanship and obstructionism. We need to repent and to change. As for partisanship, I for one desire to be rid of all sinful 'party spirit'.

Chapman does not give the reference, but the Johnston quotation may be found, in J I Packer, *The Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem: an analysis* (Oxford: Latimer House, 1978), p. 12 and at the end of ['Canal, River and Rapids'](#).

Day conferences of 'Islington Conversations Eclectics' were held at St Mary's in March 2003 (written up in [Anvil Vol 20 No 3, 2003](#)) and March 2004. At the residential conference of Eclectics in November 2004 at Swanwick, it was decided that Eclectics would no longer continue as an organisation

²⁵ Amongst other roles...

²⁶ The [Fulcrum Conference Liverpool](#), sadly did not take place, but Fran Beckett's text '[Engaging Gospel: the hope of David Sheppard](#)' is available on the site

²⁷ For further discussion of the meaning of 'open evangelicalism' and its relationship with the phrase 'renewing the evangelical centre', see the Fulcrum [forum thread](#) 'Open Evangelical: theology or a mind set'.