

5. Criticism has been evoked by the statement that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ in the eucharist. (Windsor 10). The word 'become' has been suspected of expressing a materialistic conception of Christ's presence and this has seemed to some to be confirmed in the footnote on the word 'transubstantiation' which also speaks of 'change'. It is feared this suggests that Christ's presence in the eucharist is confined to the elements, and that the Real Presence results from a physical change.

In order to respond to these comments the Commission recalls that in the Windsor Statement it was affirmed that:

1. It is the glorified Lord himself whom the community of the faithful encounters in the eucharistic celebration through the preaching of the word, in the fellowship of the Lord's supper, in the heart of the believer, and, in a sacramental way, through the gifts of his body and blood, already given on the cross for their salvation (Windsor 7).
2. His body and blood are given through the action of the Holy Spirit, appropriating bread and wine so they become the food of the new creation already inaugurated by the coming of Christ. (Windsor 10 and 11).

'Becoming' does not here imply material change. Nor does the liturgical use of the word imply that the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood in such a way that in the eucharistic celebration his presence is limited to the consecrated elements. It does not imply that Christ becomes present in the eucharist in the same manner that he was present in his earthly life. It does not imply that this 'becoming' follows the physical laws of this world. Here we are indicating a sacramental presence in which God uses realities of this world to convey the realities of the new creation: bread for this life becomes the bread of eternal life. Before the Eucharistic Prayer, to the question: What is that, the believer answers: It is bread. After the Eucharistic Prayer, to the same question he answers: It is truly the body of Christ, the Bread of Life.

In the sacramental order the realities of faith become present in visible and tangible signs, enabling Christians to avail themselves of the fruits of the once-for-all redemption. In the eucharist the human person encounters in faith the person of Christ in his sacramental body and blood. This is the sense in which the community, the Body of Christ, by partaking together of the sacramental body of the risen Lord, grows into the unity God intends for his Church. The ultimate change that God intends is the transformation of human beings into the likeness of Christ. The bread and wine become the sacramental body and blood of Christ in order that the Christian community may become more truly what it already is, the Body of Christ.

6. This transformation into the likeness of Christ requires that the eucharistic gifts be received in faith. In the mystery of the eucharist we discern not one but two complementary movements within an indissoluble unity: Christ giving his body and blood and the communicants feeding upon them in their hearts by faith. But some traditions have placed a special emphasis on the association of Christ's presence with the consecrated elements: others have emphasized Christ's presence in the heart of the believer through reception by faith. In the past acute difficulties have arisen when one or other of these emphases has become almost exclusive. In the opinion of the Commission neither emphasis is incompatible with eucharistic faith, provided the complementary movement emphasized by the other position is not denied. Eucharistic doctrine must hold together these two movements, since in the eucharist, the Sacrament of the New Covenant, Christ gives himself to his people so that they may receive him through faith.

7. The practice of reserving the sacrament for reception after the dispersal of the congregation is known to date back to the second century (Justin Apology I, 65 and 67). Insofar as it maintains the complementary movements of which we have spoken, as for example, when Communion is taken to the sick, this practice clearly accords with the purpose of the institution of the eucharist. But later there developed a tendency to stress the veneration of Christ's presence in the ~~elements~~ consecrated elements. In some places this tendency became so pronounced that the original purpose of reservation was in danger of becoming totally obscured. Wherever this is wholly dissociated from the eucharistic celebration of the community it contradicts the true doctrine of the eucharist.

In discussing the question of reservation, we need to clarify further our understanding of the eucharist. Adoration in the celebration of the eucharist is first and foremost offered to the Father. It is to lead us to the Father that Christ unites us to himself through our receiving of his body and blood. While we also adore Christ in the eucharist, it is Christ glorifying his Father whom we adore. The movement of all our adoration is to the Father, through, with, and in Christ, in the power of the Spirit.

The whole eucharistic action is a continuous movement in which Christ offers himself in his sacramental body and blood to his people and in which they receive him in faith and thanksgiving. Consequently Communion administered from the reserved sacrament to those unable to attend the Eucharistic celebration is rightly understood as an extension of that celebration. Differences arise between those who would practise reservation for this reason only, and those who would also regard it as a means of eucharistic devotion.

For the latter, adoration of Christ in the reserved sacrament should be regarded as an extension of eucharistic worship, even though it does not include sacramental reception, which remains the primary purpose of reservation. (Eucharistiae Sacramentum, 1973, para 5). Any dissociation of this devotion from its ultimate purpose, which is communion in Christ of all his members, is a distortion of eucharistic practice.

8. In spite of this clarification, others still find any kind of adoration of Christ in the reserved sacrament unacceptable. They believe that it is in fact impossible in such a practice truly to hold together the two movements of which we have spoken: and that this devotion can hardly fail to produce such an emphasis upon the association of Christ's sacramental presence with the consecrated bread and wine as to suggest a too static and localised presence that disrupts the movement as well as the balance of the whole eucharistic action (cf Article 28).

That there can be a divergence in matters of practice and in theological judgements relating to them, without destroying a common eucharistic faith illustrates what we mean by 'substantial' agreement. Differences of theology and practice may well co-exist with a real consensus on the essentials of eucharistic faith - a fact that is true of both our communions.

9. Concern has been expressed that we have said nothing about inter-communion, though claiming to have attained a substantial agreement on eucharistic faith. The reason is that we are agreed that a responsible judgment on this matter cannot be made on the basis of the Agreed Statement on the Eucharist alone, because inter-communion also involves issues relating to authority and to the mutual recognition of ministry. There are other important issues, such as the eschatological dimension of the eucharist and the relation of the eucharist to Liberation Theology, which we have ~~not~~ either not fully developed or explicitly treated. These are matters which call for the common attention of our Churches, but they are not a source of division between us and are therefore outside our mandate.