

THE EUCHARIST SUB-COMMISSION

GAZZADA, Aug. 27th-30th 1972

REPORT ON THE REACTIONS TO THE WINDSOR AGREEMENT

The following summary covers the reactions which members of the Sub-Commission have received and is limited to these. At the same time, we are aware that there are other reactions not yet published, e.g. from the Southern African Conferences (a formal motion is expected in November), from the Canadian Roman Catholic Conference, from the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., etc., - and these are for the most part favourable.

The Report attempts to classify the reactions under three heads for the purposes of clarity. In the light of these, the Sub-Commission makes various recommendations to the Full Commission.

\*\*\*\*\*

Introduction:- There are several general reactions that do not admit of easy classification. A fairly common reaction, for example, among Roman Catholics is the attitude that any agreement of this kind is a priori impossible because of Anglican "comprehensiveness". Some people, in both Communion, assert that it is impossible to speak of a Eucharistic agreement without speaking about the minister of the Eucharist, whilst others have questioned our whole procedure in even considering the Eucharist before reaching agreement on Ministry. Frequently, one is closely questioned as to the authority of the Commission itself. Similarly, the claim that the Statement is "consonant with biblical teaching and the tradition of our common inheritance" is regarded with some suspicion because the vagueness and ambiguity of the latter phrase raises questions in the minds of many about the criteria for determining Christian faith.

However, it is evident that most of the reactions amount to either a rejection of the Agreement, a qualified and critical welcoming of it, with the implication that some doubts still remain of its acceptability as it stands, or, finally, its warm acceptance.

1. REJECTION

- (a) A priori rejection within both Communion - which was predictable!
- (b) A studied rejection on the Roman Catholic side because the "traditional" position was not expressly stated; on the Anglican side because certain 'Roman errors' were not proscribed - particularly in the areas of sacrifice and presence, especially transubstantiation. In fact, some felt that the Statement, in discussing presence, still sounded materialistic overtones. The dynamic, spiritual presence of Christ was not sufficiently stressed.

## 2. QUALIFIED AND CRITICAL WELCOME

### (1) Sacrifice

- (a) Inadequacy of reference to Resurrection.
- (b) No explicit affirmation that the Eucharist is a sacrifice.
- (c) Exiguous reference to Christ's offering to his Father.
- (d) Scarcely any reference to the Church's participation in the offering of the Eucharist.
- (e) Inadequacy of the explanation of sacrifice in terms of "Memorial-meal".
- (f) Feeling among some Anglicans that the safeguards written into the XXXIX Articles have been obscured, even though the majority welcome the clarification of the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist which the Statement contains.

### (2) Presence

- (a) Permanence of Christ's presence is not stated, an anxiety felt by Roman Catholics and those Anglicans who are accustomed to reserve the sacrament.
- (b) Some Evangelicals are concerned with the realist language of the Statement, exemplified by the four instances of the use of the word 'become'.

### (3) Transubstantiation

- (a) For some Roman Catholics the Note represents an unacceptable distinction which appears to curtail the full doctrine of Transubstantiation.
- (b) An uncertainty among some Anglicans as to whether the Document contains a cryptic endorsement of Transubstantiation.

## 3. FAVOURABLE REACTIONS

These have been received from:-

- (1) Many whose welcome of the Agreement is based on non-theological factors, among whom are those who would always welcome an agreement just because it is an agreement.
- (2) Many who have been prepared for the document by their ecumenical involvement in joint prayer and study.

- (3) Those who find in the Statement a more positive and comprehensive expression of the meaning of the Eucharist, and welcome the assurance that this is a shared Eucharistic faith already lived in our two Communion.
- (4) Those who welcome its freshness of approach, its clarity and conciseness.

\*\*\*\*\*

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend:-

- (1) that this is not the time to amend the text in the light of criticisms received.
- (2) that some public reaction, nevertheless, should be forthcoming from the Commission.
- (3) that our response should take the form of a brief explanation and justification of our procedure, and be directed primarily to the Christian public.

The appended Statement is submitted to the Commission for their approval.

\*\*\*\*\*