

9.1.80
4.10 p.m.

ARCIC 217/A/4

1. Christ's will and prayer are that his followers should be one. Christians, who have received in Christ the same truth, cannot without disobedience to him acquiesce in a state of separation. Unity is therefore of the essence of the Church, and that unity should be visible. Our two communions, however, have been separated for 400 years, and our separation has been aggravated by mutual intolerance and theological polemics. Nevertheless, in spite of separation, our unity although impaired has not been destroyed, and many bonds already unite us. In particular we have received the same Spirit, shared the same faith in the same Lord, and undergone the same baptism.

2. Controversy between our two communions has principally centred on the doctrine of the Eucharist, the ordained ministry, and the nature of authority in the Church. Our Statements represent our conviction that substantial agreement in these three matters is now possible. Nevertheless for various reasons we remain unable as yet to receive Holy Communion together. Since the Reformation Rome has not recognised the validity of Anglican ordinations and celebrations of the Eucharist and has denied full ecclesial status to the Anglican Communion; Anglicans for their part have not acknowledged the primacy, authority and jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, nor any obligation to be in communion with him. The full organic unity which is our goal cannot be restored without mutual acceptance of ordained ministers and of the validity of their sacraments, together with the common recognition of a universal primacy within a complementary pattern of conciliarity (V.23).

3. Underlying our agreements and our conviction that remaining disagreements can be resolved is our understanding of the nature of the Church, the Body of Christ as koinonia.