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INTRODUCTION

1. Our two Communion~~s~~ have been separated for ^{over} 400 years. This separation, that arose from serious doctrinal differences, has been aggravated by mutual intolerance and theological polemics. Nevertheless, although our unity has been impaired through separation, it has not been destroyed. Many bonds still unite us: in particular we share the same faith in the same Lord, we have received the same Spirit, we have undergone the same baptism, and we preach the same Christ.
2. Controversy between our two communions has centred on the ~~E~~ucharist, and the nature and exercise of ministry and authority in the Church. Although our two Churches remain unable as yet to receive Holy Communion together, what the Commission has done has convinced us that substantial agreement ~~in~~ these divisive issues is now possible.
3. In proclaiming the three Statements, we have been concerned not to evade the difficulties but rather to avoid the controversial language in which they have sometimes been expressed. We have taken seriously the issues that have divided us, and then sought a solution by re-examining our common inheritance, particularly the Scriptures (cf. Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey, 22nd March 1966). The subjects which we were required to consider as a result of the Preparatory Commission all relate to the true nature of the Church.
4. The basis of our three Agreed Statements is the concept of Koinonia (communion). In the early Christian tradition both the ~~communion~~ ^{comprehension} and the experience of Koinonia opened the way to the understanding of the mystery of the Church. Although Koinonia is never equated with 'Church' in the New Testament, nor do we ever find the two words directly related to each other, it is the concept that most aptly expresses the mystery underlying the various New Testament images of the Church. When, for example, the Church is called the people of the New Covenant or the Bride of Christ, the context is primarily ~~one~~ of communion. Although such images as the Temple, the New Jerusalem, or the holy priesthood may contain institutional overtones, their primary purpose is to depict the Church's experience as a partaking in the salvation of Christ. When the Church is described as the Body of Christ, the household of God or the holy nation, emphasis is placed upon the mutual relationships between its members as well as with Christ, its head.

5. Union with God in Christ Jesus is the heart of Christian Koinonia. Although the term Koinonia is used in various ways in different New Testament contexts, in our use of it we mean a relation between persons resulting from participation in one and the same reality (cf. 1 John 1:3). God in Christ shared our human nature and we are able to receive the Spirit of God's Son, who makes us so truly members of the Body of Christ that we too are able to call God 'Abba, Father' (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Moreover, sharing in the same Holy Spirit whereby we are members of the same Body of Christ and sons of the same Father, we are also bound to one another in a completely new relationship. Koinonia with each other necessarily follows from our Koinonia with God in Christ. This is the mystery of the Church.

6. This theme of Koinonia runs through our three Statements.

In the Windsor Statement the Eucharist was seen as the sacrament of Christ by which he builds up and nurtures his people in the Koinonia of his Body. Thus all the baptized are brought into communion with the source of Koinonia. For he is the one who destroyed the walls dividing humanity (Eph 2:14); he is the one who died to gather in unity all the children of God his Father (cf. Jn 11:52; 17:20ff).

In the Canterbury Statement it was made clear that episcopate exists only to serve Koinonia. The minister presiding at the Eucharist is the sign of Christ gathering his people and giving them his body and blood. The Gospel he preaches is the Gospel of unity. Through the ministry of word and sacraments the Holy Spirit is given for the building up of the body of Christ. It is the responsibility of those exercising episcopate to enable all the people to use the gifts of the Spirit which they have received for the enrichment of the common life of the Church. It is also their responsibility to keep the community under the law of Christ in mutual love and in concern for others; for the reconciled community of the Church has been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18).

When in the Venice Statement the Commission discussed primacy, it saw primacy as the necessary link ^{between} all those exercising episcopate within the Koinonia. All ministers of the Gospel need to be in communion with one another; for the One Church is built up out of local communities. They also need to be united in the apostolic faith; primacy, as a focus of Koinonia, helps to provide assurance that what they teach and do is in accord with the faith of the apostles.

7. The Church as Koinonia requires visible expression. It is the sign that God's purpose in Christ is being realised in the world and that grace is

already at work. It is also the instrument for the accomplishment of this purpose. The life of the Church must be the demonstration of the truth of its preaching, because it is through the same Holy Spirit that the Church preaches the Gospel of Christ and becomes the mystery which it preaches. The community preaches what it is called to become. Koinonia, local and universal, is thus part of the preaching of the word of God. Accordingly, as sign and instrument the Church in its Koinonia is the 'sacrament' of God's saving work.