

## SUB-COMMISSION B

1. In the course of the Church's history several traditions have developed in expressing Christian understanding of the Eucharist. (For example, various names have become customary as descriptions of the Eucharist: Lord's Supper, Liturgy, Holy Mysteries, Synaxis, Mass, Holy Communion. The Eucharist has become the most universally accepted term.) An essential preliminary to partial or full communion is a reasonable consensus on the purpose and meaning of the Eucharist. In this document we intend to express the consensus which we have reached. This articulation of the faith and life of our two communions we believe to be in keeping with the doctrine and practice of both.

2. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has reconciled men to Himself, and, in Him, offers unity to all mankind. Our relationship with one another as children of God is inaugurated by baptism into Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and is nurtured and deepened through the Eucharist. This incorporation into Christ, accomplished in the acceptance of the Word, sealed by the sacramental rites, is actualised in a Koinonia which has its place at the level of confession of faith and the level of daily life.

\* 5. We accept Christ's death and resurrection as having taken place once and for all in history. Christ's death on the Cross, the culmination of his whole life of obedience, was the one, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Any attempt to express a nexus between the sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharist must not obscure this fundamental fact of Christian faith. Yet we believe that "The Lord's Supper, a gift of God to His Church, ... is a means whereby the sacrifice of the Cross, which we proclaim, is operative within the Church" (cf. The Bristol Document accepted at Uppsala, 1968). A recourse to the notion of memorial, as understood in the Passover celebration at the time of Christ (i.e. the making effective in the present of an event in the past) opens the way to a fresh understanding of this relationship. For the Eucharistic memorial is not only a calling to mind of what is past, or of its significance, it is the Church's effective proclamation of God's mighty acts. Christ instituted

3. We agree that when His people gather for the Eucharist to commemorate His saving acts for our redemption, Christ makes effective among us the eternal benefits of his victory and elicits and renews our response of faith, thanksgiving and self-surrender. By Christ's activity through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist the life of the Church is built up, its fellowship strengthened and its mission furthered. In the Eucharist the Church becomes most intensely itself. The identity of the Church as the Body of Christ is both expressed and effectively proclaimed by its being centred in, and partaking of, His Body and Blood. In the whole action of the Eucharist, and in and by His presence given through bread and wine, the Crucified and Risen Lord, according to His promise, offers Himself to His people.

4. In the Eucharist we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Receiving a foretaste of the kingdom to come, we should be spurred on to hasten its present realisation on earth. We look back with thanksgiving to what Christ has done for us: we greet his presence among us, we look forward to his final appearing in the fulness of his kingdom when "The Son also himself (shall) be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). By partaking of the one loaf and gathering around the same table in this communal meal at the invitation of the same Lord, we are one in commitment not only to Christ and to one another, but also to the mission of the Church in the world.

the Eucharist as the memorial (anamnesis) of the whole of God's reconciling action in him, and by this communion with Christ the Church participates in that reality (cf. op.cit.)

6. This communion with Christ presupposes his true presence, in a mysterious fashion, effectively signified by the bread which is his body and by the wine which is his blood. In the economy of the new age the gift of the Eucharistic Body and Blood represents the paschal mystery which is the event par excellence of full Salvation. The sacramental presence is the efficacious encounter of the Lord with the community celebrating the memorial and, within that community, with each of the faithful. Since the presence is that of the Lord in the exercise of his Lordship over his Church, it is at the centre of a dynamic process leading towards a welcoming in which, on the believer's side, faith plays the key part.

The real presence of the Lord's Body and Blood can only be understood within the context of the salvific action, whereby the Lord gives himself to his own. The Lord gives Himself to his people so that they may receive communion with the mystery of reconciliation and peace which is Christ himself.

7. The purpose then of the total Eucharistic action is the transmission of the life of Christ, with all the benefits of that life (freely offered sacrificially on the Cross and made universally available through the resurrection and ascension) into the lives of the members of the mystical body. What the members of the Body "have by the Sacrament" is life. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me". (John 6: 57).

8. We cannot truly understand the presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist unless we realise that it is the Lord who through his minister and his Word, invites his own at his Table, through his minister presides at that Table and gives himself sacramentally but really in the Body and Blood of his Paschal Sacrifice. It is the Lord present at the right hand of the Father, and therefore transcending the sacramental order, who thus offers to his Church in the Eucharistic signs the special gift of himself.

9. The sacramental Body and Blood with their salvific reality are present as an offering, awaiting the welcome of the believer; this welcome can only become real through lively faith, itself a gift of the Spirit. When this presence is met by faith a lifegiving encounter results. This indicates the capital importance of the part played by faith. Through faith, and only through faith, the presence - which does not need faith in order to be the real gift of himself that the Lord makes to his Church - becomes no longer just a presence for the believer but a presence with him in the sense of an interpersonal and mutual relationship. One thus finds two related dimensions of presence in the eucharistic mystery: the sacramental sign of his presence and the interpersonal relationship which issues from that presence.

9. The Lord's words at the Last Supper: "Take and eat, this is my body" impel believers not to dissociate the coming of the presence and the act of sacramental eating. The Body and Blood become really present and are really given. The elements are not mere signs lacking objective content. There is a refusal to remove the elements from the integral dynamism of the memorial.

10. The view which sought to detect the precise word at which the presence is accomplished is not longer acceptable to us. We rather see the efficacy of the Spirit of God and of the Word which brings the presence as pervading the whole Anaphora, which is a word of faith uttered by the Church.

11. The presence of the Lord in the Eucharist is a mystery. By the power of his Holy Spirit the Lord of the Church truly gives himself to the Christian through the sacramentality of the memorial. The Spirit of God, in his transforming power, newly appropriated the created elements to Christ the Lord, putting them into a state of total and radical possession by the Kurios. Thus they are the new wine, the eschatological banquet for the new man. In this way, the pledges of the eschatological world emerge in the first creation.

12. Once the bread and wine of the Eucharist have been creatively appropriated by Christ through his Church, that appropriation defines them.