

RECOMMENDED TEXT FOR PUBLICATION

In the past few months the Windsor Statement on the Eucharist has received a wealth of response from members of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions. The International Commission is grateful for this widespread interest, ~~and has carefully studied the varied comments and reactions. It would have been unrealistic to look for unqualified approval, for such a new kind of enterprise, the result of an intensive experience. Those who had not shared this experience could not reasonably be expected to respond to the Statement immediately with full comprehension or sympathy.~~ ^{It is} ~~What was~~ encouraging ~~was~~ that even those who had criticisms or reservations nearly always welcomed the document as a remarkable and historic advance in the relations between the two Churches.

The questions raised and criticisms made in the public media and in private discussion and correspondence were carefully discussed by the Commission during its meeting at Gazzada, August 31st - September 7th, on the basis of a report prepared by a Sub-Commission which met for this purpose two days earlier. It was felt that some of the objections arose from a misunderstanding of the scope of the document. Other difficulties, it was hoped, would dissolve in the light of a volume of background material to the Windsor Statement which is to be published in due course. The Commission felt that

some major questions would be further clarified after the publication of the projected documents on Ministry and Authority.

At this time, therefore, it seems premature for the Commission to attempt detailed answers to queries and objections which have been received.

Some of the comments made, however, suggest that it would be useful for the Commission to clarify once more the status and character of its work. A document drawn up by the International Commission is presented by a Church-appointed group of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops and theologians as an ecumenical service to their world-wide communions. It thus serves as a practical instrument for forging a common expression of shared faith. It does this by providing the Churches with a carefully prepared statement, which they can evaluate by reference to their own beliefs in common discussion and study.

This status of the Commission's documents dictates their style and character. Succinct, clear and positive expression of consensus at the level of faith is the aim. The claim to have reached substantial agreement expresses the conviction that this aim has been achieved, by concentrating explicitly on the core of Eucharistic doctrine.

In its procedure, the Commission recognises the intimate connection between various areas of faith: it is confident, therefore, that all its documents will be mutually illuminative. The document on the Eucharist was prepared first, because the Commission felt that the question of Ministry could not be resolved without a prior agreement on the doctrine of the Eucharist.

The Introduction to the Statement on the Eucharist, prepared by the Co-Chairmen of the Commission, is indicative of the spirit and manner in which this document must be studied. Since the Statement has in some places been published without this Introduction we reproduce it here:

Introduction

The following Agreed Statement evolved from the thinking and the discussion of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission over the past two years. The result has been a conviction among members of the Commission that we have reached agreement on essential points of eucharistic doctrine. We are equally convinced ourselves that, though no attempt was made to present a fully comprehensive treatment of the subject, nothing essential has been omitted. The document, agreed upon at our third meeting, at Windsor, on 7 September 1971, has been presented to our official authorities, but obviously it cannot be ratified by them until such time as our respective

Churches can evaluate its conclusions.

We would want to point out that the members of the Commission who subscribed to this Statement have been officially appointed and come from many countries, representing a wide variety of theological background. Our intention was to reach a consensus at the level of faith, so that all of us might be able to say, within the limits of the Statement: this is the Christian faith of the Eucharist.

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Co-Chairmen