

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.

Many appraisals were enthusiastically positive; others gave the document a cautious and qualified welcome; still others were frankly negative. The predominant character of the response, however, evidenced genuine accord with the direction taken by the Statement.

The questions and criticisms which have surfaced in the public and private media were thoroughly discussed by the Commission during its meeting at Gazzada, August 31st - September 7th. 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 the Windsor Statement's full documentation which is soon to be published. The Commission felt that some major issues would be more effectively re-considered after the publication of the projected documents on Ministry and Authority.

At this time, therefore, it seems premature for the Commission to present a detailed answer to queries and objections which imminent and later publications by the Commission will hopefully clarify.

In view of some of the comments received, however, it seems necessary that the Commission should 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. Such a document provides the Churches with a carefully prepared statement which they can evaluate by their own belief; it thus serves as a practical instrument for forging a common expression of shared faith.

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 of first importance. The Commission avoids the style both of pastoral appeal and of distinctively theological elaboration. The Agreement, therefore, on the Eucharist confines itself explicitly to the core of revealed 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. If the document on the Eucharist was prepared first, it was because the Commission felt that the question of Ministry could not be resolved without 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 style in which this document must be studied.