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Ecumenical Study Guide *on the* Eucharist



*Recommended by the
Ecumenical Commissions of the Archdiocese
of New York and the
Episcopal Diocese of New York
and the Committee for Participation of
Christians of Other Churches in the
41st International Eucharistic Congress*

INTRODUCTION

What does the command of Jesus at the Last Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me" really mean to Christians today? This study guide is designed to help his followers of various churches and traditions to reflect anew on the significance of the Christian's central act of worship. Full documentation of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Agreed Statement on the Eucharist (The Windsor Statement issued in 1971) is provided, together with a study guide originally prepared by the Committee on Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Although these materials originated with the dialog of these two sister churches, they are of interest to all Christians, representing both a basic statement of eucharistic belief and a point of departure for further discussion. A chart issued by the San Diego Ecumenical Conference provides further insight into how the various denominations view the sacraments. A short bibliography for further study of the developing dialog between the churches on this subject indicates the original sources. Those using this study guide, either in groups or as individuals, may wish to include prayer and reflection in their program. Our guide concludes with a prayer prepared by an ecumenical Committee for the Participation of Christians of Other Churches in the 41st International Eucharistic Congress of the Roman Catholic Church. These materials have appeared separately in issues of Ecumenical Trends, a monthly newsletter of news and documentation published by the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute, Garrison, N.Y.

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Anglican/Roman Catholic

AGREED STATEMENT ON EUCCHARISTIC DOCTRINE

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 important stage in progress towards organic unity is a substantial consensus on the purpose and meaning of the eucharist. Our intention has been to seek a deeper understanding of the reality of the eucharist which is consonant with biblical teaching and with the tradition of our common inheritance, and to express in this document the consensus we have reached.

2. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has reconciled men to himself, and in Christ he offers unity to all mankind. By his word God calls us into a new relationship with himself as our Father and with one another as his children—a relationship inaugurated by baptism into Christ through the Holy Spirit, nurtured and deepened through the eucharist, and expressed in a confession of one faith and a common life of loving service.

I. THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

3. When his people are gathered at the eucharist to commemorate his saving acts for our redemption, Christ makes effective among us the

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.

8. The sacramental body and blood of the Saviour are present as an offering to the believer awaiting his welcome. When this offering is met by faith, a lifegiving encounter results. Through faith Christ's presence—which does not depend on the individual's faith in order to be the Lord's real gift of himself to his Church—becomes no longer just a presence *for* the believer, but also a presence *with* him. Thus, in considering the mystery of the eucharistic presence, we must recognize both the sacramental sign of Christ's presence and the personal relationship between Christ and the faithful which arises from that presence.

9. The Lord's words at the last supper, "Take and eat; this is my body," do not allow us to dissociate the gift of the presence and the act of sacramental eating. The elements are not mere signs; Christ's body and blood become really present and are really given. But they are really present and given in order that, receiving them, believers may be united in communion with Christ the Lord.

10. According to the traditional order of the liturgy the consecratory prayer (*anaphora*) leads to the communion of the faithful. Through this prayer of thanksgiving, a word of faith addressed to the Father, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood.

11. The Lord who thus comes to his people in the power of the Holy Spirit is the Lord of glory. In the eucharistic celebration we anticipate the joys of the age to come. By the transforming action of the Spirit of God, earthly bread and wine become the heavenly manna and the new wine, the eschatological banquet for the new man: elements of the first

creation become pledges and first fruits of the new heaven and the new earth.

12. We believe that we have reached substantial agreement on the doctrine of the eucharist. Although we are all conditioned by the traditional ways in which we have expressed and practiced our eucharistic faith, we are convinced that if there are any remaining points of disagreement they can be resolved on the principles here established. We acknowledge a variety of theological approaches within both our communions. But we have seen it as our tasks to find a way of advancing together beyond the doctrinal disagreements of the past. It is our hope that in view of the agreement which we have reached on eucharistic faith, this doctrine will no longer constitute an obstacle to the unity we seek.

See p. 10 for the study guide to this Statement.

SACRAMENTS—how various Christian denominations view them (Revised)

The chart on the following pages shows how Catholics and the major Protestant churches express their belief in sacraments, particularly in the Eucharist. This "tentative spectrum," as it is called, was produced by Lutheran Pastor Jack Lindquist, a member of the religious studies department at the University of San Diego, in cooperation with Rev. John Huber (Lutheran) and Rev. Kenneth Treat (Episcopalian). It was issued by the San Diego Ecumenical Conference at its last annual meeting, and is reproduced with permission. Readers will, we hope, find much to study in this tabulation, not only about their own belief, but about the practices and interpretations of others in the ecumenical movement.

SACRAMENTS--how various Christian denominations view them

Church, Tradition, or Confessional Family	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Anglican (Episcopal)	Lutheran	Presbyterian and UCC	Methodist	Disciples of Christ (Christian)	Baptist
1. How many "Sacraments" does your church have ?	Seven	Seven	2 "major" 5 "minor"	differing views: 2 to 7	2: Baptism & Eucharist	2: Baptism & Eucharist	2: Baptism & Eucharist	The two "ordinances"
2. Do you consider them to be a "means of grace" ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varying Views	Yes	Yes	No
3. Must the Minister of the Eucharist be in some way in "Apostolic Succession" ?	Yes, in Order	Yes, in Order	Yes, in Order	Yes, in Office	Yes, in function	Yes, in function	Yes, in Faith	No
4. Does this mean he/she must be "ordained" ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, normally	Yes, normally	Yes, normally	No	Yes
5. Must he/she be ordained by the "historic Episcopate" ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, but desirable	No	No	No	No
6. Do you use a standard liturgy for the Eucharistic service ?	Yes	Yes, New Rite	Yes, old & Trial	Yes, old & new	optional	normally	No	No
7. Do you offer the Eucharist every Sunday ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, increasingly	at least quarterly	quarterly or monthly	Yes	quarterly or monthly
8. Are the people given only the bread or both the bread and cup ?	Both, by intinctn.	Normally only bread	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both
9. Do lay people assist in giving Holy Communion ?	No	they may	they may	Yes, increasingly	Yes, Elders or Deacons	Yes, Deacons	Yes, Deacons & Elders	Yes
10. Where do you primarily "locate" Christ's presence in Communion ?	In the bread & wine	In the bread & wine	in the bread & wine	in the bread & wine	in the presence of the Holy Spirit	in the believers	in the believers	in the believers
11. How is this presence effected in the service ?	invocation of Holy Spirit	words & acts of consecration	words & acts of consecration	words of institution	faith in Christ's promise to be with us, sustained in us by the Spirit	Faith in Christ	Faith in Christ	Faith in Christ
12. How long does this presence remain in effect ?	As long as the bread and wine remain what they are	Elements "become" Body & Blood		varying views	as long as Faith is present	as long as Faith is present	as long as Faith is present	as long as Faith is present
13. What is the relationship between the elements and the Body / Blood ?	Elements "become" Body & Blood			Elements convey them	Elements represent them	Elements symbolize them	Elements symbolize them	Elements symbolize them
14. Are they "reserved" for the communion of the sick and shut-in ?	Yes	Yes	commonly	very rarely	No	No	No	No
15. Are they "reserved" for the purposes of veneration ("Benediction") ?	No	Yes	No, but sometimes permitted	No	No	No	No	No

16. What is most basic for "validity" Christ in his ministry at the altar; in his meal on it; in his members around it ?	All three	In His ministry	In His ministry	In His meal	In His members	In His members	In His members	In His members
17. Do you stress Eucharist — as — Sacrament: Christ's offering of himself to us ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18. Do you stress Eucharist — as — sacrifice; that it includes us in his offering of himself to his Father ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	increasingly	somewhat	somewhat	No	No
19. How do you understand the word "remembrance" (anamnesis) ?	to make present again	to make present again	to make present again	to make present	to represent	to recall	to recall	to recall
20. At what age do children in your church receive "First Communion," or become Communicants ?	infancy, at baptism & Chrismation	infancy, at baptism & Chrismation	when priest, parents, child agree. (New Rule)	when priest parents, child agree (New Rule)	usually in early teens	usually in early teens	usually in early teens	as soon as they join the church
21. Must they be baptized beforehand ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
22. Must they be "confirmed" beforehand ?	Yes	No	not anymore	not anymore	not anymore	No	No	No
23. Is some period of fasting involved in preparation for Communion ?	Yes	Yes	recommended	recommended	No	No	No	No
24. Is "Confession" of sin involved in preparation ?	Yes, in liturgy & private	Yes, in the liturgy	Yes, in the liturgy	usually in the liturgy	Yes	Yes	self-examination	personal repentance
25. Does your church practice official inter-communion with some churches of other confessions ?	No	No	Yes	Lutheran Churches differ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
26. Are individuals of other churches admitted to communion in your church ?	Rarely	Rarely	Yes, as guests	Lutheran Churches differ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
27. If so, what is required of them for admission ?	Orthodox Faith in Eucharist, emergency	Baptism, Faith Eucharist, & emergency	Baptism & Communicant status in own Ch.	Baptism & faith in real presence	Faith in Christ	Faith in Christ	Faith in Christ	Faith in Christ
28. Does your church practice "excommunication" in some form ?	Yes	Yes	rarely	very rarely	very rarely	No	No	No
29. Does your church see communion as the "sign" of complete unity ?	Yes	Yes	varying views	Lutheran Churches differ	No	No	No	No
30. Does your church see communion as a "means" to complete unity ?	No	No	varying views	Lutheran Churches differ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
31. Do you see the Eucharist as a "Looking forward" to Christ's Kingdom ?	Yes	increasingly	increasingly	increasingly	Yes	increasingly	somewhat	rarely
32. Do you see the elements as symbols of all of man's earthly life offered to God in Christ ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	increasingly	Yes	somewhat	rarely	No

GUIDE FOR STUDY OF THE "AGREED STATEMENT ON EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE"

The following guide for study of the "Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" (The Windsor Statement) was prepared by the Committee on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations of the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

STUDY GUIDE FOR ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE: THE WINDSOR STATEMENT ON THE EUCHARIST

Paragraph 1—This paragraph calls attention to the fact that there has been a diversity of expression with regard to the eucharistic celebration. It claims that we must obtain a substantial consensus about the Eucharist prior to sacramental sharing and organic unity.

- ... Are we comfortable with a diversity of expression?
- ... How far do we feel diversity can go and still be compatible?
- ... What is meant by "organic unity"?
- ... Do we agree that "Eucharist" is the most universally accepted term?
- ... Is agreement a prior necessity?
- ... What would constitute agreement or consensus?

Paragraph 2—This paragraph refers to the unity that we are called to. It makes note of the fact that we are incorporated into the Body of Christ through Baptism and that this relationship is nurtured and deepened through the Eucharist.

- ... What do we mean when we refer to reconciliation?
- ... How shall we respond to the unity offered to us by Christ?
- ... Does this paragraph help us to understand what is meant by "organic unity"?
- ... What is the role of the Eucharist in the "new relationship" inaugurated by baptism into Christ?

Paragraph 3—This paragraph discusses the re-presentation of Christ's redemptive activity when we gather together at the Eucharist. It identifies the Eucharist as the central act of Christian worship.

- ... What is meant by the term "commemorate"?

- ... What is meant by the phrase "... his sacramental *presence* given through bread and wine. . . ."?
- ... Would we agree that the Eucharist is the central act of Christian worship?
- ... What is meant by the phrase "... Christ makes *effective* among us the eternal benefits of his victory. . . ."?

Paragraph 4—This paragraph identifies what we are doing when we celebrate the Eucharist. It mentions the importance of the Eucharist in our lives of service to Christ and to one another through the mission of his Church.

- ... Does this paragraph help us to understand the transcendence of time that is spoken of in reference to the Eucharist?
- ... Would we agree on the importance of the Eucharist when talking of mission?
- ... Would we agree that the Eucharist is the "Sacrament of Unity"?

Paragraph 5—This paragraph deals with our understanding of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Sacrifice of Christ. It defines the important notion of *anamnesis*. It talks about what happens to the Church when it celebrates the Eucharist.

- ... How do we understand the relationship between the "... one, perfect and sufficient sacrifice. . ." of Christ and the Eucharistic Sacrifice?
- ... What do we mean by sacrifice?
- ... Can both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Communion find their faith in this paragraph regarding Sacrifice?
- ... Would we agree on the nature and meaning of *anamnesis* as defined in this paragraph?

Paragraph 6—This paragraph speaks about the Real Presence and the fact that bread and wine become Body and Blood. It notes that in our celebration of the Eucharistic Gift we are more fully united with Christ and with one another.

- ... Do we agree that "Communion with Christ in the Eucharist presupposes his true presence. . . ."?
- ... What does "... effectually signified . . ." mean?
- ... Is footnote 2 accurate in that contemporary Roman Catholic theology uses the term "transubstantiation" to refer to the *fact* of Christ's presence and not the "*how*"?
- ... What is the Anglican view on this?

Paragraph 7—This paragraph speaks of the various ways in which Christ is present in the Eucharist.

- ... What do we mean when we speak of “present”?
- ... Would we agree that Christ is present in these various ways?
- ... How is He present in these various ways, that is, what is the difference between these?

Paragraph 8—This paragraph states that there is a reality to Christ’s presence prior to any reception by the believer. It talks of the importance of a response on the part of the believer in his relationship with Christ that is initiated by His presence.

- ... Would we agree that the faith of the believer does not alter the nature of Christ’s presence as offering?
- ... What do we mean when we use the term “sacramental”?
- ... What effect does the faith of the believer have on Christ’s presence when we speak of a “presence *with him*”?

Paragraph 9—This paragraph asserts that the Elements are not merely signs and that they are offered for communion.

- ... Would we agree that, essentially, the gift of the presence and the act of sacramental eating cannot be separated from one another?
- ... Do we agree that the “. . . elements are not mere signs . . .”?
- ... How does this relate to Reservation, Benediction, and certain devotional practices, and so on?

Paragraph 10—This paragraph states that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood during the consecratory prayer through the action of the Holy Spirit.

- ... Would we agree that in the consecratory prayer the bread and wine become the Body and Blood?
- ... What is the relationship between “blessing” and “thanksgiving”?

Paragraph 11—This paragraph talks about the eschatological banquet which we anticipate during the Eucharistic celebration.

- ... What do we mean when we refer to “eschatological banquet”, “heavenly manna and the new wine”, and “new heaven and the new earth”?

Paragraph 12—This final paragraph claims that the statement shows substantial agreement on the doctrine of the Eucharist. It states that the fundamentals of the Faith, with regard to the Eucharist, have been identified and articulated, thus laying the foundation for agreement on many other points and that on this doctrine we are “sister churches”.

- ... Would we agree that the statement shows substantial agreement?
- ... What is substantial agreement?
- ... Would we agree that “. . . any remaining points of disagreement . . . can be resolved on the principles . . . established” in the statement?
- ... Is there a diversity of theological approaches within *both* our communions?
- ... How do we feel about this diversity within our separate communions?
- ... Can this diversity within our separate communions help us to understand and embrace the diversity in each other’s communion?
- ... Would we agree that the doctrine of the Eucharist no longer constitutes an obstacle between us?
- ... What is meant by “. . . the unity we seek”?
- ... Do we genuinely seek unity? What will it look like?

Brief Bibliography on Eucharistic Agreements

PRIMARY SOURCES

Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine (The Windsor Statement), Anglican & Roman Catholic International Commission, Windsor, England, 1971.

The Eucharist: A Lutheran-Roman Catholic Statement, Lutheran-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation, U.S.A., St. Louis, Missouri, 1967.

The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought, World Council of Churches, Louvain, Belgium, 1971.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Two inexpensive paperbacks readily available and containing pertinent Eucharistic documents are:

Modern Eucharistic Agreement (1973)

A Critique of Eucharistic Agreement (1975)

They are available from: SPCK Bookshop, 14 North Parade, Bradford, England BO1 3HY.

An Ecumenical Prayer

TEXT:

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me . . . never thirst. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world (JOHN 6:35, 51).

V. The eyes of all look hopefully to you, O Lord.

R. And you give them their food in due season.

V. You open your hand.

R. And satisfy the desire of every living being.

Let us pray:

O Father, you who give food to all your creatures, satisfy our hunger not just for food but for freedom, truth, justice and love.

O Risen Christ, you made yourself known to the disciples in the breaking of the bread at Emmaus; the bread we break at this table is a sign of the brokenness of all the world; through our sharing in the Bread of Life in our many Christian communions open our eyes and hands to the needs of all people. Let our hearts burn to share your gifts and help us to go forth together with Bread: Bread of hope, Bread of Life, Bread of peace.

O Holy Spirit, Divine Companion, abide in the hearts of all who plan and participate in the 41st International Eucharistic Congress that through it there may be such an outpouring of love and sharing as to make us hunger more urgently for that ultimate unity that we all seek in Him who is the world's Living Bread, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. AMEN.

This prayer was prepared by an ecumenical Committee for the Participation of Christians of Other Churches in the 41st International Eucharistic Congress, August 1-8, 1976 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Father in Heaven feed our Hunger.

For when thy children ask for Bread
Then wilt thou, Father, give a stone?
Yet Jesus in the desert knew
Man cannot live by bread alone.

Lord help us feed the Hungry.

Father in Heaven feed our Hunger.

We need much more than food and drink
And dare not ever ask for less.
Lord Jesus, thou hast promised meat
For hungering after righteousness.

Lord help us feed the Hungry.

Father in Heaven feed our Hunger.

Our minds need truth to understand;
We long for peace; our hearts need love.
These are the hungers strong and deep
That must be nourished from above.

Lord help us feed the Hungry.

Father in Heaven feed our Hunger.

Lord Jesus who had meat to eat
That eased the ache and calmed the strife
Thou art Thyself our nourishment
Then feed us with this Bread of Life.

Lord help us feed the Hungry.

Composed for the Eucharistic Congress by the Reverend J. Ernest Somerville, D.D., The First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.