

# Growing Convergence on the Eucharist

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In spite of isolated voices expressing doubts about the direction the ecumenical movement is taking at present and a fairly general feeling of ill-concealed impatience about its slow progress, it can hardly be denied that the last two or three years have witnessed a considerable (and, till a few years ago, quite unforeseeable) ecumenical advance in the eucharistic field. Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism may be responsible for this progress, but its cautious treatment of the reality of the Eucharist in the Churches separated from Rome would hardly account, if taken in isolation, for the present phenomenon of growing convergence. The history behind the timid statement of *Unitatis Redintegratio* Chapter 22, is too well-known to bear repetition.<sup>1</sup> This passage in its present, final form states 'that the ecclesial Communities separated from us . . . especially because of the lack<sup>2</sup> of the sacrament of Orders . . . have not preserved the genuine and total reality of the eucharistic mystery. Nevertheless, when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with

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<sup>1</sup> The text in its present form is the result of Pope Paul's last-minute intervention, after the document had already been passed by the bishops. Though juridically above reproach, this papal intervention at the very last moment had a deplorable psychological effect on the Council, all the more to be regretted that the Pope's changes did not substantially alter the doctrinal meaning of the text. Cf. W. Becker-J. Feiner, 'Decree on Ecumenism', in H. Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II*, vol. II (N. York, 1968) pp.54-56 154 f.—Card. Jaeger, *A stand on Ecumenism: the Council's decree* (London, 1965) pp. 164-169.—L. Laurentin, *Bilan de la troisième session* (Paris 1965) pp. 253-273.

<sup>2</sup> Though usually translated as 'lack of the sacrament of Orders', the original Latin expression ('propter sacramenti Ordinis defectum') is susceptible of a milder interpretation: it could well be rendered as *defect* rather than *lack* and in this case the Decree would be less categorical in its denial of the reality of the Protestant ministry.

Christ and they await his coming in glory. For these reasons, dialogue should be undertaken concerning the true meaning of the Lord's Supper. . . .'<sup>3</sup> And dialogue has certainly been undertaken to a hitherto unprecedented degree.

One should carefully note that, in Roman eyes, the Protestant celebration of the Supper '*signifies* life in communion with Christ'. But the sign-value is only one of the realities constituting the fulness of the sacrament. The Vatican decree falls short of acknowledging the full efficacy of the Protestant Supper, for this efficacy, when joined to the signifying value contained therein, would turn the Protestant eucharistic celebration into a full-fledged sacrament, and this was more than Rome was ready to grant in November, 1964. Two years later, however, Cardinal Bea, at the International Youth Conference held at Taizé in September 1966, took the official Roman position one step further: 'Everything we have said suffices to affirm that, for our separated brethren as well, the Holy Supper can be and is a *source* of unifying grace, though in a manner and measure known to God alone'.<sup>4</sup> This carefully worded statement of the Cardinal seems to be tantamount to an implicit recognition of the reality of the Eucharist in the Churches separated from Rome.

The same year saw the visit of Archbishop Ramsey to Pope Paul, the immediate and tangible result of which was the setting up of a joint preparatory Anglican-Roman Catholic commission and eventually of a final and official joint commission of the two Churches. At its third meeting (Windsor, September 1971), this commission reached a 'substantial agreement' on the Eucharist, subsequently released to the press on December 31, 1971.<sup>5</sup> As for Catholic-Protestant relations, a Catholic-Lutheran study group, restricted to the USA, had already reached, three years previously, a similar agreement,<sup>6</sup> and again in September 1971, a second Catholic-Protestant commission which met at Dombes,

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<sup>3</sup> English translation taken from W. Abbott (ed.), *The documents of Vatican II* (N. York 1966) p. 364.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by M. Thurian, *The one bread* (N. York 1969) p. 43 (italics mine).

<sup>5</sup> This Windsor Statement has been published in *One in Christ*, 8 (1972) 69-73 and in *Theology* 75 (1972) 4-8.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 'Eucharist and ministry: a Lutheran-Roman Catholic statement' *Theological Studies* 31 (1970) 712-734. Recently another commission appointed respectively by the Roman Secretariat for Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation has reached a limited agreement on the Eucharist, but the text has not yet been released.

France, issued a joint statement of eucharistic agreement.<sup>7</sup> In the light of all these recent developments one can confidently assert that the eucharistic field seems to be at present the one which holds the promise of the richest harvest in our ecumenical endeavours. I would like now to comment briefly on two of these agreed statements and point out the repercussions they may possibly have on the contemporary Indian scene.

### *The Windsor Statement*

In the very brief commentaries on this Statement published so far, the general tone is one of approval, sometimes qualified, sometimes almost enthusiastic.<sup>8</sup> In order to forestall all unjust criticism, one should remark from the outset that the intention of the theologians responsible for the Statement was not to produce a complete, exhaustive treatment on the Eucharist, but only to search for avenues of doctrinal convergence. The result has been a document which, although it embodies only substantial, but not yet total, eucharistic agreement, is yet significant for the rich variety of its perspectives which blend together traditional aspects, firmly adhered to (real presence, dimension of banquet with its effects, both individual and ecclesial, epiclesis, etc . . . ) and new approaches which are in keeping with contemporary trends in other fields (personalist approach, dynamic conception connected with the aspect of gift, eschatological dimension. . . ).

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. 'Accord doctrinal entre Catholiques et Protestants sur l'Eucharistie', *Documentation Catholique* n. 1606 (2 Avril 1970), pp. 334-337. The French text (to my knowledge no English version has been published so far) is followed by a brief commentary by M. Thurian. A more extensive commentary by bishop Pézeril, 'Vers une même foi eucharistique?', *Docum. Cathol.* n. 1610 (4 Juin 1972), pp. 527-531. Cf. also B. Sesboué, 'Vers une même foi eucharistique?' *Etudes*, June 1972, pp. 911-926. Both Thurian and Sesboué are among the thirty-two signatories of the document.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. Ryder—B. Byron, 'The Anglican/Roman Catholic Statement on the Eucharist', *Clergy Review* 57 (1972) 163-173; A. Allchin, 'Agreed Statement on eucharistic doctrine', *One in Christ* 8 (1972) 2-5. Neither Rome nor Canterbury has so far (August 1972) reacted officially to the Statement, apart from passing remarks by Arch. Ramsey (general approval) and Cardinal Willebrands (qualified approval). Cf. *Docum. Cathol.* n. 1610 (4 Juin 1972), pp. 523, 534. On March 2, 1972 the theological commission of the English Catholic hierarchy approved the Statement as containing 'nothing which is contrary to the Catholic faith' (Cf. *Docum. Cathol.* 2 Avril 1972, p. 347). Subsequently the English Catholic bishops have made their own this approval of their theological commission, cf. *The Tablet* 22 April 1972, p. 390.

One of the aspects of the Statement for which one cannot but feel particularly grateful to the drafters is the pneumatological dimension of the mystery, mentioned emphatically twice: 'Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist builds up the life of the Church' (n. 3); and again, in connection with the transformation of the elements: 'the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit' (n. 10). This is an aspect of the Eucharist which, though in reality traditional, had been greatly obscured in the Middle Ages and especially in the controversies which preceded and followed the Council of Trent. One should always bear in mind that, already in the New Testament, the clearest revelation of the Spirit as a distinct, divine person, takes place in a deeply eucharistic atmosphere (Jesus' discourse at the Last Supper). The Eastern liturgies, with their emphatic insistence on the epiclesis, either before or after the words of institution, have always kept alive this pneumatological dimension. Without in any way wishing to exaggerate the difference between the Eastern and the Western approach to the Eucharist, one can hardly deny that the eucharistic conception which has for centuries prevailed in the Western Church, centered mainly on the christological dimension of sacrifice, was but an echo of a christology almost obsessed with the Passion of Christ, to the almost total neglect of the salvific significance of the Resurrection. Western theology tended to become, not only markedly christocentric but almost exclusively 'monochristic', and this can hardly be considered to be a legitimate development. As an unavoidable consequence of this one-sided christological stress, the Eucharist was presented as a sacramental re-enactment of the Cross, entirely closed to and disconnected from, the blessed light of the Resurrection. The Easter-event had nothing to add to the all-embracing efficacy of the Cross, man had already been redeemed by the Death of Christ, and it is this mystery of Christ's redeeming Death that was said to be sacramentally shown forth on the altar. An imperfect conception of the Redemption could not but have a damaging effect on the wholeness of the eucharistic mystery, narrowly centered on the Passion. Within these perspectives it was but natural that the role of the Spirit poured out by the Risen Lord, should have been neglected.

In sharp contrast with this Latin conception, and as a theological expression of the Oriental ethos, the East never for a moment lost sight of the soteriological importance of the Resurrection. Whereas the Latin sees human Redemption exclusively associated

with the Cross, suffering and death, the Oriental breathes the expansive joy of the paschal, transfigured Lord of Easter, and this emphasis of the Easter-event necessarily links up with the outpouring of the Spirit, communicated to the Church by the Risen Jesus. This pneumatological christology could not but bring about an equally pneumatological eucharistic theology. In stating so explicitly the function of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist the Windsor Statement (WS) is only re-introducing a very rich dimension which both, Rome and Canterbury, had neglected for too long. For what the eucharistic elements impart to the worshipping community is not primarily an impersonal sanctifying grace, but the living person of the Holy Spirit of Easter, mediated to the Church by the Risen eucharistic Lord. Dialogue with the Orthodox is certainly bearing rich fruit.<sup>9</sup>

Number 5 is undoubtedly the core of the Statement, and probably the most difficult to draft from the ecumenical point of view, since it touches on the issue that has divided the Churches for so long: the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. Avoiding the controversial approach, the Statement rightly focuses its attention on the biblical notion of memorial, so much emphasized

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<sup>9</sup> The consecration prayer in *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other parts of Divine Service for the use of the Church of Scotland* (1637) contains an explicit epiclesis in the best Oriental tradition, but this seems to have been an exception in the Anglican Church. Cf. P. E. More and F. L. Cross (eds.), *Anglicanism* (London, 1962), pp. 309 f. A similarly explicit statement concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments, in the *Augsburg Confession*, art. 5 (P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* III, Grand Rapids, 1966, p. 10). The Anglican *Order of the Lord's Supper* of 1960 also contains a consecratory epiclesis, which was absent in the Order of 1662. Cf. *The Book of Common Prayer*, for the use of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon (Madras, 1961), p. 368. Cf. also as an example of a brief, dense epiclesis, the CSI *Book of Common Worship* (London, 1963), pp. 16 f. epiclesis which has been incorporated in the *Order of service for the inauguration of the Church of North India* (Mysore, 1970), p. 22.—On the Catholic side, Vatican II speaks of Christ's eucharistic flesh 'made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit' (*Fresh. Ord.* 5); and in the same vein *Eucharisticum mysterium* (1967) n. 38 states that 'on those who receive the Body and Blood of Christ the Spirit is poured out abundantly like living water (cf. Jn. 7:37-39)'. All the new eucharistic prayers in use in the Catholic Church since 1968 contain a double epiclesis, before and after the words of institution. This pneumatological aspect of the Eucharist is receiving increasing attention from theologians, cf. J. Tillard, 'L'Eucharistie et le Saint-Esprit', *Nouv. Rev. Théol.* 90 (1968) 363-388; R. Adams, 'The Holy Spirit and the real presence', *Theol. Stud.* 29 (1968) 37-51; J. Dupuis, 'Christ and the Holy Spirit in liturgical worship', *Clergy Monthly* 35 (1971) 248-257.

in contemporary theology.<sup>10</sup> The anamnesis is not merely a subjective memorial of Christ's past redeeming action, but 'the making effective in the present of an event in the past . . . the Church's effective proclamation of God's mighty acts'. The biblical memorial has simultaneously two points of reference: it is the act that reminds the Church that her own salvation rests on Christ's redemptive work now rendered sacramentally present, and this issues forth into an ecclesial hymn of joyful gratitude. At the same time, and inserted into its very structure, the anamnesis is an effective entreaty by the Church to God, to bring to completion in her the salvific work, accomplished in Christ's Paschal Mystery, which remains yet unfulfilled. Not only therefore is the Church reminded of the gratuitousness of her salvation, but God, too, is 'reminded' of his salvific promises and this typically Hebrew, anthropomorphic expression is but the Church's supplication to the Father to bring to fruition the salvation begun in Christ. This dimension of intercession on the part of the Church thrusts her, by the necessary dynamism included in the memorial, into an eschatological future. Hence the eucharistic memorial, so conceived, embraces the totality of the Church's life: her past (Paschal Mystery), her present (subjective appropriation of the benefits of the Redemption) and her future (final fulfilment of her own salvation at the Parousia).<sup>11</sup>

It is in this biblical perspective that one should consider the thorny problem of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. The Statement lays heavy stress on the absolute uniqueness and unrepeatable character of the sacrifice of the Cross. Catholic theology, and especially a misguided form of popular Catholic piety had not always emphasized sufficiently, on the one hand, that the Eucharist is not and cannot possibly be a repetition, however mysteriously conceived, of the Cross, for the Cross stands on its own right as a perfect and absolute sacrifice which

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Jeremias, *The eucharistic words of Jesus* (2nd ed. London, 1966) pp. 237-255.—M. Thurian, *The eucharistic memorial*, 2 vols (London, 1961); M. Thurian, *The one bread* (N. York, 1969), pp. 15-35; L. Bouyer, *Eucharistie* (Desclée, 1966), pp. 106-109; J. Tillard, 'Le Mémorial dans la vie de l'Église', *Maison-Dieu* n. 106 (1971), 24-45.

<sup>11</sup> This is substantially Jeremias' interpretation of the biblical anamnesis, defended also by Bouyer and Thurian, and (hesitantly) by Tillard. But this view has been rejected by others: G. Kilpatrick, 'L'Eucharistie dans le N. Testament', *Rev. de Théol. et Phil.* 14 (1964) 193-304; A. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the N. Testament* (London, 1952), p. 55; P. Neunzeit *Das Herrenmahl* I (München, 1960), p. 143.

needs no sacramental complement of any sort. And on the other, some theological trends of doubtful value, anxious to defend the intrinsic dignity of the Mass, had overstressed its redeeming power, leaving somewhat in the shadows its essentially subordinate character with regard to the Cross. The fruit of Christ's Death and Resurrection flows down into the Church through the eucharistic memorial, as a river flows down from the spring which gives birth to it. River and spring are obviously intimately connected, for the river would be nothing without the spring; but the river is not the spring, rather it draws its life from its essential, subordinate relation to the spring.<sup>12</sup>

However, one can hardly avoid being disappointed with the expression that the Eucharist is 'a perpetual memorial of Christ's death' (n. 5). The Church's Redemption is not accomplished by Christ's Death alone, but rather by his Death and Resurrection, for Christ's self-offering on the Cross had, in order to constitute a full and perfect sacrifice, to be accepted by the Father, and this acceptance is embodied in the Resurrection. Without the Resurrection, Christ's sacrifice would have been essentially incomplete, mutilated. It is only when the Father graciously accepts the sacrificial self-offering of Jesus by raising Him from the dead, that the sacrifice of Calvary is complete. And since, on the other hand, the Eucharist is but the memorial of this salvific event, with its two essential, inseparable dimensions of Death and Glorification, the definition of the eucharistic memorial should have included them both. It is true that in the same number, the Statement speaks of 'the totality of God's reconciling action in Him' and refers to the Cross as 'the culmination of his whole life of obedience'. And yet the fact remains that in this very dense Number 5, Christ's Glorification is not mentioned even once. Certainly a regrettable *lacuna* which is all the more difficult to justify as both the confessions, Anglican and Roman Catholic, have no quarrel on this issue.

The Statement is understandably cautious when, within the context of the memorial, it comes to deal with the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. The eucharistic celebration is never explicitly called a sacrifice, and critics on the Catholic side have been quick to raise an accusing finger at this, according to them, unjustifiable omission.<sup>13</sup> Anglicans have, ever since

<sup>12</sup> Cf. M. Thurian, *The eucharistic memorial, II*, p. 86.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop Butler tries to justify this deliberate reticence in the Statement, cf. *The Tablet*, Jan. 8, 1972, p. 7.

the 16th century break with Rome, been wary, to say the least, of attributing to the Eucharist a sacrificial value, for reasons which substantially seem to be those of the continental reformers. Certain medieval distortions in this area were largely responsible for the reaction (or overreaction?), not only of Luther, but even of Cranmer; and, ever since, Anglican as well as Lutheran theology has never tired of echoing Hebr. 10:10, which states unequivocally that we have been sanctified by the Cross 'once for all'. The fear that the post-tridentine emphasis on the Eucharist as sacrifice might tend to obscure the uniqueness of the Cross is quite legitimate and understandable, but the heated polemical atmosphere of the 16th century was hardly the most conducive to a calm, balanced and objective appraisal of the nature of the Eucharist. If it is true that controversy always produces very bad theology, one can easily understand the inability of both the contendants in the struggle to see clearly through the dust raised by centuries of polemical diatribe and mutual recrimination.

Even after making due allowance for this historical past, I find the Statement in this respect too timid. One really wonders if Anglicans would object to calling the Eucharist openly a sacrifice, for this terminology is quite in keeping with the most representative of the 17th century Anglican divines. The Eucharist is called by them 'a commemorative sacrifice' in which the ministers 'offer up the same sacrifice to God, the sacrifice of the Cross by prayers' (J. Taylor); 'we acknowledge an eucharistic sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, a commemorative sacrifice or a memorial of the sacrifice of the Cross, a representative sacrifice . . . an imperative sacrifice' (J. Bramhall); 'the holy Eucharist being considered as a sacrifice . . . is fitly called an Altar' (L. Andrewes). Little wonder that it could hopefully be asserted that 'if we agree about the matter of sacrifice, there will be no difference about the Altar' (L. Andrewes).<sup>14</sup> Similarly Article XXXI of the Thirty-Nine Articles rejects in strong and emphatic terms, not the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, but only its propitiatory character. E. J. Bicknell openly states in his commentary that 'the New Testament . . . leaves no doubt . . . that the Church regarded it (the Eucharist) as a sacrifice'.<sup>15</sup> Interpreting correctly 1 Cor. 10:14-21 he asserts that 'the words imply a sacrifice present comparable to those of the Old Covenant'. Not only

<sup>14</sup> Cf. P. E. More—F. L. Cross, *Anglicanism*, pp. 495-497.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. E. J. Bicknell, *A theological introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England* (3rd ed. London, 1963), p. 410.

in Paul, but in the institution texts of the Synoptics 'the whole tone and structure are sacrificial. . . . Both the manner and circumstances of the institution leave no doubt of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. . . . In the early Church the Eucharist is from the first spoken of in sacrificial language'<sup>16</sup>. In perfect agreement with the above, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer speaks of 'our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving', and refers to the faithful as 'a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto thee'.<sup>17</sup>

But whatever one may think of the Commission's excessive prudence in dealing with the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, one cannot but go along with it in the way they have handled the delicate problem of the Eucharist conceived, not only as a sacrifice, but specifically as a sacrifice of *propitiation*. The members of the commission were undoubtedly faced with the difficult task, of reaching an agreement whilst at the same time remaining faithful to their different ecclesial traditions. For there is no denying that Trent and Article XXXI speak apparently contradictory language, the former categorically affirming the propitiatory character of the Eucharist, which is as categorically denied by the latter.<sup>18</sup>

The solution of the impasse is to be found, once again, in an objective study of the early sources, common to both the Churches. The New Testament uses the term *hylasterion* (propitiatory) only thrice (1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25), and in all the three cases the term refers either to the whole of Christ's life or to the Cross, never to the Eucharist. It is true that Mt 26:28, when narrating the institution, speaks of the blood to be poured out 'for the

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 411. May I note, moreover, that Bicknell's sacrificial interpretation of the institution texts is in perfect agreement with the latest results of exegetical scholarship, cf. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-231; E. Schweizer, *The Lord's Supper according to the N. Testament* (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 16 f.; E. Kilmarin, *The Eucharist in the primitive Church* (N. Jersey, 1965), p. 61 f.; J. Von Allmen, *The Lord's Supper* (London, 1969), pp. 89-96; A. J. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the N. Testament* (London, 1952), pp. 49-51.

<sup>17</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer*, The prayer of oblation, after Communion.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Trent, 22nd session (1562) canon 2: 'If anyone should say that the sacrifice of the Mass is only one of praise and thanksgiving . . . but not a propitiatory one: *anathema sit*' (H. Roos—J. Neuner, *The teaching of the Catholic Church*, Ranchi, 1966, p. 317). To be compared with article XXXI: 'The sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said that the priests did offer Christ . . . to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits'. But it is to be noted that this Article was not aimed at Trent, since it was written in 1553, whereas the 22nd session of Trent took place only in 1562. Cf. E. J. Bicknell, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

remission of sins', as a legitimate explicitation of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, but in spite of this clear statement by Matthew the early patristic tradition is almost entirely silent about any propitiatory nature of the Eucharist, the Oriental liturgies being an exception with their emphasis on the purifying power of the sacrament.<sup>19</sup> Confronted therefore with this lack of explicit support in the sources on the one hand, and with the firmly entrenched and divergent traditions of the two Churches on the other, the Commission opted for a carefully worded statement which (contrary to what often happens in similar circumstances) succeeded in satisfying both sides. After stating the unrepeatability of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, it is said that 'God has given the Eucharist to his Church as a means through which the atoning work of Christ on the Cross is proclaimed and made effective in the life of the Church'. Since, scripturally speaking, the Eucharist is primarily a sacrificial memorial of thanksgiving and intercession, not of propitiation, the Commission was right in dropping this expression as being both, a-biblical and definitely anti-ecumenical. For the Eucharist is, strictly speaking, not a sacrifice of propitiation, but the memorial of a sacrifice of propitiation. In this connection, however, and again in perfect fidelity to the early liturgical sources, the Commission could profitably have mentioned, no matter how briefly, the cleansing power of the Eucharist.<sup>20</sup>

One of the clearest and most emphatic statements in the document is that concerning Christ's real presence in the sacrament: 'The sacramental body and blood of the Saviour are present as an offering to the believer awaiting his welcome' (n. 8); 'Christ's body and blood become really present and are really given' (n. 9); 'the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit' (n. 10). The explicitness and even insistence on this aspect of the doctrine

<sup>19</sup> Cf. my previous article, 'The propitiatory nature of the Eucharist: inquiry into the early sources', *Ind. Journ. of Theol.* Vol. 21, No. 3 (1972).

<sup>20</sup> This purifying aspect of the Eucharist, explicitly taught by Trent in the context of sacrifice, seems to have mysteriously disappeared from our current theology, possibly due to fear of pastoral abuses. But at the close of the 17th century an Anglican, T. Jackson, has stated it unambiguously, cf. P. E. More—F. L. Cross, *op. cit.* p. 498. For Trent, cf. H. Roos—J. Neuner, *op. cit.* pp. 303, 313. To be noted also is the fact that none of the new eucharistic prayers in use since 1968 in the Catholic Church, has any reference to sin (apart from the end of prayer IV, but the context is eschatological) let alone to the propitiatory nature of the sacrifice.

leaves nothing to be desired, and one can legitimately presume that the drafters had no special difficulty in reaching an agreement here, as in reality the doctrine of the real presence has never been a dividing issue between the two Churches. Furthermore, the perspectives into which the doctrine is inserted are not individualistic but broadly ecclesial, since the eucharistic presence is conceived as the culmination of other forms of Christ's ecclesial presence which are no less real for not being strictly sacramental.<sup>21</sup> The danger of staticism, which has so often in the past plagued the presentation of the real presence, is avoided by conceiving it as a dynamic act of Christ imparting his paschal life to men (n. 6) and as Christ's gift of Himself to the believer (n. 8).

The 'receptionist' interpretation, which would make the real presence strictly dependent upon the faith of the recipient, is openly rejected (n. 8). Faith is obviously necessary for the fruitful reception of the sacrament, but it is not faith that brings about the real presence in the sacrament. This presence is not the result of man's subjective dispositions (even if they are enlivened by faith); it is rather Christ's gift to man to be received in faith. If viewed in this way, the efficacy of the sacrament is primarily seen as a living, personal encounter between the Risen eucharistic Lord and the believer, without the slightest suspicion of any magical effect. Eucharistic communion becomes the meeting place between the love of Christ, manifested in the eucharistic gift, and the living faith of the recipient, Christ and man giving themselves to each other in a mutual movement of self-surrender.<sup>22</sup>

The footnote on transubstantiation calls for some comment. This term, which has always been considered as typically 'Romish' was, possibly no less than 'justification by faith alone', one of the watchwords of the Reformation. It is hardly necessary to insist on what is already common knowledge: Trent proposed as a doctrine of faith the fact of the eucharistic conversion, clothing

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<sup>21</sup> Number 7 in the Statement is clearly reminiscent of Vatican II's doctrine on the various forms of Christ's presence, doctrine which was later expanded by Paul VI. Cf. the conciliar constitution on the Liturgy, n. 7 (W. Abbott, *The documents of Vatican II*, pp. 140 f.) and the Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (1965).

<sup>22</sup> The controversial expression *ex opere operato*, which has given rise to so many unnecessary misunderstandings, is fortunately avoided. The efficacy of the sacrament is not thereby denied, but rather set within a strictly personalist perspective: it is not the 'magic' of the rite that explains the efficacy, but the personal activity of both, Christ acting through the minister and man meeting Him in faith.

this doctrine with a technical expression of Aristotelian flavour which had already acquired right of citizenship in the theology of the time. Hence today's Catholic will find himself bound by the doctrine of the eucharistic change, but not by the Tridentine expression. And even the doctrine itself, though explicitly sanctioned by Trent, is in a way peripheral with regard to the more central tenet of the real presence, which it is meant to protect and safeguard.<sup>23</sup> The Anglican stand on this point, on the other hand, is far from unanimous, ranging from an outright rejection of the Tridentine dogma (R. Hooker, W. Forbes) to an acceptance of the doctrine as a free theological opinion which does not engage the Christian faith (L. Andrewes, J. Cosin).<sup>24</sup>

Since, on the one hand, the term itself, 'transubstantiation', is, by and large, no longer favoured even by Catholic theologians, as being hardly understandable to the average layman, obviously untrained in philosophical categories; and since, on the other, it still evokes and even provokes unnecessary controversies and useless misunderstandings in the ecumenical field, the Commission could have simply omitted the footnote in question after affirming the reality of the eucharistic conversion implied in the doctrine of the real presence, without thereby laying itself open to the charge that the Catholic signatories had been unfaithful to Trent. For if the expression 'propitiatory sacrifice', also sanctioned by Trent, has been deliberately circumvented, one fails to see why the same could not have been done with the word 'transubstantiation'.<sup>25</sup> In any case one should not forget that patristic eucharistic theology conceives the mystery of the real presence

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<sup>23</sup> This is all the more to be stressed that Vatican II has referred to the 'hierarchy of truths which exists in Catholic teaching' (*Unit. Redint.* 11: W. Abbott, *The documents*, p. 354). As for the term itself 'transubstantiation', one should keep in mind that Vatican II, in more than a hundred eucharistic references spread throughout its sixteen documents, does not use the tridentine expression even once. Pope Paul, however, still retains the term in *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) and in his new *Profession of Faith* (1968), but theologians continue to show a justifiable reluctance to use the controversial word.

<sup>24</sup> See references to these and other 17th century Anglican divines in P. E. More—F. L. Cross, *op. cit.* pp. 463-494. Cf. also the important study of J. Tillard, published a few months before the commission released the Windsor Statement, 'Catholiques Romains et Anglicans: l'Eucharistie', *Nouv. Rev. Théol.* 93 (1971) 602-656.

<sup>25</sup> Only two days before the term was definitely sanctioned by Trent, the bishop of Vienna asked for its suppression from the draft. Cf. *Concilii Tridentini Acta*, vol. 7 (Friburg, 1961), p. 188.

as patterned either on the Incarnation (Justin) or on the Resurrection (Theodore of Mopsuestia), and this patristic approach, dynamic and strictly theological (rather than philosophical) differs considerably from the more static medieval and Tridentine conception.<sup>26</sup> Both the early Fathers and Trent obviously witness to the same revealed eucharistic faith, but their widely different presentations of the same doctrine ought to serve us as a reminder that there is no contradiction between the unity in the same faith and a legitimate plurality in its expression.

The Statement ends with two brief, beautiful paragraphs (nn. 10, 11) which emphasize once again the deeply trinitarian character of the eucharistic mystery, which is essentially the 'word of faith addressed to the Father' and the action of the Lord of glory who comes to his people transformed by the action of the Spirit to instill in them a foretaste of 'the joys of the world to come'. The eschatological nature of the memorial, included in its intercessory dimension, finds expression in the equally eschatological character of the eucharistic banquet.

#### *The Dombes Statement*

Precisely at the time the Anglican-Roman Catholic joint international commission met at Windsor (September, 1971), a similar Protestant-Catholic Commission was in session at Dombes (France). On the initiative of the late abbé P. Couturier similar meetings between Protestant and Catholic theologians had been taking place since 1937. These mutual interconfessional exchanges have now produced an agreed eucharistic statement which bears a striking similarity to that of Windsor, commented on above. The importance of this document is in no way diminished by the fact that, unlike the Windsor Statement, it has been signed by a mixed Commission not officially delegated by the respective Churches.<sup>27</sup>

Relying heavily on the Bristol text on Faith and Order (1967), which is sometimes quoted literally, sometimes condensed, the French theologians, after a searching examination of their confessional differences, have turned out a report that embodies a substantial eucharistic agreement, even if they acknowledge that certain aspects remain yet to be further clarified.<sup>28</sup> For the

<sup>26</sup> Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (London, 1968), pp. 67-70.

<sup>27</sup> The French text with the names of the signatories, in *Docum. Cathol.* n. 1606 (2 Avril 1972), pp. 334-337.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the 1967 Bristol document in *New Directions in Faith and Order* (Geneva, 1968), which was subsequently worked upon by a theological

first time in documents of this kind, the Dombes Statement (DS) sets the mystery of the Eucharist in an explicitly trinitarian pattern, as an action of thanksgiving to the Father, the memorial of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit; and it is into this trinitarian framework that the traditional aspect of sacrifice is inserted, thereby rendering it more biblical and freeing it from past controversies that have tended to becloud its true theological meaning. Bolder and more explicit than WS, DS speaks of the Eucharist as 'the efficacious sign of the gift that Christ made of Himself as bread of life by the sacrifice of his life, death and resurrection' (n. 5). Broadening still more the perspectives to veritable cosmic dimensions, the Eucharist is presented as 'the great sacrifice of praise in which the Church speaks in the name of the whole creation' (n. 8); 'celebrating the memorial of the passion, resurrection and ascension of Christ, our high priest and intercessor, the Church presents to the Father the unique and perfect sacrifice of his Son. . . .' (n. 10). It is this clear, explicit language one misses in WS. But contrariwise, in the question of the propitiatory nature of the sacrifice I would favour the forceful, yet circumspect expression of WS 5 in a sacrificial context ('the atoning work of Christ on the Cross is proclaimed and made effective') to the less vigorous sentence in DS 23, in a sacramental perspective ('each member of his Body receives in the Eucharist the remission of sins and life eternal'). Fortunately both the documents drop the expression 'propitiatory sacrifice'.<sup>20</sup>

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commission in Geneva, in 1968. Cf 'Accord oecuménique sur l'Eucharistie', *Ver. Caro* n. 87 (1968) 1-10 and commentary by M. Thurian, 'L' intercommunion, fruit d'une foi commune', in M. Thurian—J. Klinger—J. de Baciocchi *Vers l'Intercommunion* (Tours, 1970), pp. 13-35.

<sup>20</sup> This clarity of sacrificial expression in DS, however, was not achieved without some initial misgivings of the Protestant members. Not only deep reflection, but also humility and hope are needed on both sides in order to transcend our past entrenched positions in the painful search for an acceptable expression of the same Christian faith. Cf B. Sesbüté, *art. cit.* pp. 916 f. As for Luther, I find it very difficult to pinpoint exactly what he held with regard to the eucharistic sacrifice. In his *Treatise on the New Testament* (1520) he seems to consider the Mass as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in which the Church offers Christ to the Father, whereas in *The Babylonian Captivity*, written the same year (1520) he reduces it to a promise of the forgiveness of sins whose only purpose is to strengthen man's faith. And he holds this on strictly scriptural grounds. In *De abroganda Missa* (1521) he reserves the name of sacrifice exclusively for the Cross, whereas the Mass would be only the remembrance or memorial of the unique sacrifice, a testament rather than a sacrifice. His rejection of sacrifice is based both, on the absence of any explicit testimony in

The Eucharist, as the memorial of the Son, is 'the effective proclamation by the Church of the great act of God' (n. 9),<sup>80</sup> which re-presents God's past salvific acts and anticipates the coming of his kingdom. Hence the memorial, on account of this double movement of re-presentation and anticipation, embraces in one mighty sweep the entirety of God's reconciling work in Christ, which produces in the worshipping Church a correspondingly double movement of thanksgiving (past) and entreaty (present and future). Consequently the memorial is not narrowly centered on the Cross, it rather opens up to and connects beautifully with, the uninterrupted heavenly intercession of Christ before the Father. The entirety of the Paschal Mystery (in fact, Christ's whole life) is never lost sight of, but the eucharistic community keeps her gaze on the transfigured person of the high-priest, and it is to this Christic supplication that she joins her own humble intercession, suffused with gratitude. The glorified Christ is, before the Father, like the concrete personification of the memorial, a perpetual and objectified memorial of unceasing supplication.

Furthermore, given the necessary effectiveness of the memorial, guaranteed by Christ's own heavenly intercession, the Church

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Scripture and on the impossibility of reconciling an angry God. Later on, in *The private Mass and the consecration of priests* (1533) the Mass is reduced to a communion service and private Masses are rejected as an 'abomination'. In his last eucharistic work, *Brief confession concerning the Holy Sacrament* (1544) he seems to return to the sacrificial doctrine he had upheld in 1520. In conclusion, even after making due allowance for his proverbial inconsistency, inclination for trenchant expressions and the virulence of his attack, it is exceedingly difficult to build a coherent doctrine out of all these scattered theological views. Cf. J. Pelikan—H. T. Lehmann (eds.), *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia, 1959-), vol. 33, pp. 75-111; vol. 36, pp. 3-126; 127-230; vol. 38, pp. 141-219; 279-319. One could perhaps doubt if Luther was rejecting the sacrificial nature of the Mass or, rather the medieval (and partially distorted) presentation of it prevalent at that time. But in any case to assert, as McCue does, that 'Luther was actually holding the Roman Catholic position', may be a fine example of ecumenical zeal, but not of historical accuracy. Cf. J. McCue, 'A Lutheran doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice', *Journ. of Theol. Stud.* 2 (1965) 205-233. On the other hand, neither W. Elert (*The structure of Lutheranism*, St Louis, 1962, pp. 300-321), nor W. Averbek (*Das Opfercharakter des Abendmahls*, Paderborn, 1966, pp. 10-34) throw much light on the question.

<sup>80</sup> The French original reads: 'la proclamation effective par l'Eglise du grand oeuvre de Dieu' (*Docum. Cath.* 2 Avril 1972, p. 334). It is certainly a remarkable testimony of the gradual convergence of views that WS should have used almost exactly the same expression when defining the memorial as 'the Church's effectual proclamation of God's mighty acts' (WS 5).

cannot fail to draw from it an abundant salvific fruit. Since the essential outcome of Christ's historical mission, and especially of his Death and Resurrection, was the outpouring of the Spirit; and since, on the other hand, the eucharistic memorial is the sacramentally effective re-presentation of Christ's past salvific act, the concrete fruit of this intercessory memorial has to be a fresh outpouring of the Spirit on the Church. The effect of Christ's Paschal Mystery, in its unrepeatable historical reality, was the communication of the Spirit, and the result of the liturgical memorial of that salvific action is an eucharistic imparting of the same Spirit, secured by Christ's Death and given after the Resurrection: the anamnesis of the Son necessarily, by the very force of its intrinsic dynamism, leads up to the epiclesis of the Spirit. The re-presentative character of the memorial, if considered in the totality of the action itself and its effects or fruits, includes necessarily a thanksgiving for the gift received, *vis.*, for the Spirit. And similarly, the anticipatory dimension of the same memorial cannot but be inclusive of the concrete and all-embracing fruit which will cause the fulness of the kingdom: the Spirit. The epicletic dimension therefore, is not an accessory element extrinsically added to the memorial, but is rather branded into the very fulness of the memorial. In the last analysis, the unity between anamnesis and epiclesis is but the reflection, on the ecclesial and liturgical level, of the internal bond of unity which, in the mystery of the intratrinitarian life, renders all separation between the Son and his Spirit absolutely inconceivable.<sup>21</sup>

The section on the real presence (DS 17-20) is equally emphatic: on the basis of the institution texts 'we confess unanimously Christ's real presence, living and acting, in the sacrament. The discernment of Christ's body and blood requires faith. However, the presence of Christ to his Church in the Eucharist does not depend on each one's faith, for it is Christ who binds himself, through his words and in the Spirit, to the sacramental event, sign of his given presence' (DS 17f.; cf. 19). This seems to

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<sup>21</sup> The treatment of the memorial in DS 9-12 is on the whole superior to that of WS 5 also on account of the explicit mention of joy as one of its constitutive elements which originally was, it would seem, even more radically inserted into the memorial than even the double dimension of thanksgiving and intercession. Cf. J. Audet, 'Literary forms and contents of a normal Eucharistia in the first century', in K. Aland (ed.), *Studia Evangelica (Texte und Untersuchungen LXXIII)*, Berlin, 1959), pp. 642-662.

be a deliberate correction of a similar statement in the Bristol document of 1967, in order to reach a greater doctrinal precision.<sup>22</sup> Whatever doubts one may still have concerning the exact position of some of the reformers with regard to the real presence, one cannot but point joyfully to the contemporary agreement in this matter between the representatives of the Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic confession.<sup>23</sup>

Deliberately omitting the obnoxious term 'transubstantiation', the Statement nevertheless bears witness to the doctrine of the eucharistic conversion, for 'it is in virtue of the creative word of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit that bread and wine become a sacrament and therefore "a participation," in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16)' (DS 19). All this is perfectly normal and to be expected, but the conclusions of nn. 19 and 20 mark an unexpected progress over the past, containing as they do a new Protestant position which departs somewhat from previously held opinions. The pertinent passage reads: 'What is given as the body and blood of Christ remains given as body and blood of Christ and requires that it be treated as such' (DS 19). From this important principle two conclusions are deduced: a welcome reminder to Catholics that 'the primary intention of the eucharistic reservation is the distribution (of the sacrament) to the sick and to those absent'. And a request to Protestants that they 'put into practice the best way of showing respect to the elements used at the eucharistic celebration, that is, their subsequent

<sup>22</sup> The 1967 Bristol passage reads: 'Moreover it is the Spirit who, in our Eucharist, makes Christ really present and given to us in the bread and wine, according to the words of institution' (*New directions*, p. 62). The ambiguity of this statement has rightly been pointed out by bishop Pérezil, *art. cit.* p. 529.

<sup>23</sup> Luther was certainly a constant, staunch defender of the real presence against Zwingli and his followers, and the Catholic Church has always held fast to the same doctrine. But the case of the Reformed Church has been more ambiguous. Until recently, Calvin was branded by Catholics as an opponent of the real presence, yet the least one can say is that the same ambiguity we noted in Luther with regard to the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is noticeable also in Calvin as regards the real presence. Modern theologians from the Reformed tradition, however, usually understand Calvin's statements as containing the doctrine of the real presence in the Lutheran-Catholic sense. Cf. H. Chavannes, 'La présence réelle chez St Thomas et chez Calvin', *Ver. Caro* 13 (1959) 151-171; M. Thurian, *The eucharistic memorial*, II, pp. 108-124. DS 19, in the context of the real presence, quotes in a footnote, together with St Thomas, also Calvin's *Inst. Chrét.* I, 11.13 and IV, 14.18. Cf. K. McDonnell, *John Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist* (New Jersey, 1967).

consumption, without excluding their use for the communion of the sick' (DS 20).

This double request to both the Churches is certainly most opportune. Catholic multi-secular tradition had implicitly believed in the fact of the real presence even outside the liturgical celebration, in spite of the lack of explicit New Testament testimonies in this connection. Catholic faith has always understood the 'this is my body' of the institution as directed to communion both in and outside the eucharistic celebration. It was only much later in the Middle Ages that, overreacting against the Berengarian heresy, the Church's attention was narrowly focused on the real presence, even as detached from the totality of the dynamism of the eucharistic action; and this restricted view, which substantially departed from the earlier patristic conception, gave rise, through a slow but unremitting process, to a proliferation of static eucharistic practices centered all of them on the aspect of adoration of the sacrament. Popular piety seized eagerly at this development of doubtful value, and as a consequence the practices of benediction, processions, public adoration, confraternities of the blessed sacrament, etc., developed profusely. A clearly discerning spirit is needed here to separate the wheat from the chaff. As long as there is a possibility of consumption, the consecrated elements do mediate Christ's real presence; nor can it be denied that 'it (the sacrament) is no less to be adored for the reason that it was instituted by Christ the Lord in order to be received'.<sup>84</sup> And yet, this medieval development, when checked against the supreme criterion of the word of God, cannot be accepted in its entirety. Static eucharistic cult remains legitimate, even if its excessive manifestations do need some pruning, but the *biblical* fact remains that the Lord instituted the sacrament primarily for the sake of communion. Hence the timeliness of the Dombes recommendation.<sup>85</sup>

The uncompromising teaching of Trent on the legitimacy of adoration was prompted, not so much by Luther's views, which

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<sup>84</sup> Trent, 13th session, ch. 5 (H. Roos—J. Neuner, *op. cit.* p. 305).

<sup>85</sup> Pope Paul, in *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) tries to show the legitimacy of Catholic eucharistic cult by appealing to the century-old tradition which gradually developed from the original scriptural nucleus of the institution. This explanation, however, has left some Lutheran critics unconvinced; cf. V. Vajta—E. Timiadis, "Two views on 'Mysterium Fidei'"; *Concilium*, April 1966 pp. 81-89. The instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium* of 1967 (nn. 50-58) emphasizes the primacy of communion over any other eucharistic practice, a principle

allowed a considerable latitude on the matter<sup>36</sup>, but rather by the opinion of the other reformers. And yet Protestants of all shades have always been reluctant to admit this aspect of the eucharistic doctrine. Clearly DS 20 falls short of recommending the practice of adoration, limiting itself to stating the permanence of the real presence *extra usum*, the respect due to the eucharistic elements and the legitimacy of reservation for the sake of communion to the sick. Protestants certainly will not go beyond this, but this is already a good deal, for the mutually divergent views between Catholics and Protestants were based in the past on the admission and rejection, respectively, of the permanence of the real presence *extra usum*, and this doctrinal disagreement has now been removed. The remaining differences in this area can be considered as legitimate expressions of a healthy, pastoral (no longer doctrinal) pluralism, which need not constitute an insuperable obstacle to the substantial unity of the two Churches in eucharistic doctrine.<sup>37</sup> WS relegated this point of the permanence of the real presence to subsequent conversation between Anglicans and Catholics, whereas DS, going considerably further, admits the above principle of agreement even if acknowledging that 'clarifications are still necessary about the permanence of the sacramental presence' (DS 37).

In a final passage, dense and vigorous, DS refers to the problem of the ministry: 'The mission of the ministers has its origin and norm in that of the apostles; it is transmitted in the Church by the imposition of hands with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. This transmission implies the continuity of the ministerial office, the fidelity to apostolic doctrine and the conformity of life to the Gospel' (DS 33). A succinct statement which strikes a

that had already been stated by the Roman Congregation of Rites in 1949 (Cf. *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 1949, pp. 509 f.). For a balanced appraisal of the medieval developments, cf. J. Jungmann, 'Eucharistic piety', *The Way*, 3 (1963) 83-94.

<sup>36</sup> 'One should not condemn people or accuse them of heresy if they do not adore the sacrament, for there is no command to that effect and it is not for that purpose that Christ is present. On the other hand, one should not condemn and accuse of heresy people who do adore the sacrament' (*The adoration of the sacrament*, in J. Pelikan—H. Lehmann, *Luther's Works*, vol. 36, p. 295).

<sup>37</sup> As it is known, the practice of adoration and concomitant eucharistic cult outside the celebration has never been accepted by the Orthodox, and yet it is generally acknowledged that their eucharistic faith does not substantially differ from that of the Catholic Church. As an instance of the progress marked by this point of agreement, one has only to compare it with the opinion held by M. Thurian, one of the signatories of DS, in 1959: 'the real connection between Christ and the elements left over is a mystery that should be respected' (*op. cit.* II, p. 123).

careful balance between extreme positions which would either reduce apostolic succession to a mere transmission of ministerial powers by the rite of imposition of hands (Catholics) or to a continuity in apostolic doctrine apart from any sacramental rite (Protestants). Clearly neither of these two principles can be neglected: the traditional Catholic stand is by itself obviously insufficient and too narrow, satisfied with a mechanical transmission of ministerial functions down the centuries in a manner which has aptly been described as a relay-race or pipe-line transmission. A much broader ecclesial basis is needed, which should take into consideration, not only the clerical section of the Church, but also the faith, life and doctrine of the entire ecclesial community. But just as the undeniable precision of the Catholic position rests on too narrow a basis, so also one should acknowledge that in the very broadness and 'comprehensiveness' (to use an Anglican term) of the Protestant stand lurks the danger of vagueness and diffusiveness. It is best to build a criterion of apostolic succession which would enable the entire Church to recognize itself as being in the line of the apostles; and for this the life of the whole Church, based on faith, as well as the genuineness and purity of its *kerygma* should offer a firm foundation. Yet this broad ecclesial basis should be rendered visible, tangible and sacramentally concrete by the rite of the imposition of hands. This rite therefore, may not by itself be a sure guarantee that the Church has kept to the apostolic faith, but when taken in conjunction with the larger criterion of the Church's life, faith and doctrine, it does offer an external concretization and sufficient guarantee that the Church of today is the Church of apostolic times. The external rite of imposition of hands should be considered as the sacramental sign, externally visible, of the interior and, in itself, somewhat intangible reality of the Church's life and doctrine.<sup>88</sup>

One need hardly point out that the real problem behind this apparently academic question is the possibility of the mutual

<sup>88</sup> Cf. H. Küng, *Structures of the Church* (N. York, 1964), pp. 172-212, and 'What is the essence of apostolic succession?', *Concilium*, April 1968, pp. 16-19; M. Villain, 'Can there be apostolic succession outside the continuity of the laying-on of hands?', *Ibid.* pp. 45-53; Y. Congar, 'Composantes et idée de la succession apostolique', *Oecumenica*, 1966, pp. 61-80; E. Schlink, 'Die apostolische Sukzession', in his own work *Der kommende Christus und die kirchlichen Traditionen* (Göttingen, 1961) and 'La succession apostolique', *Ver. Caro* n. 69 (1964) 52-86; E. Schweizer, *Church order in the N. Testament* (London, 1961) pp. 211-220; H. McSorley, 'Recognition of a presbyteral succession?' *Concilium*, April 1972, pp. 23-32.

recognition of ministries. Both Anglicans and Protestants have always acknowledged the validity of the Catholic ministry, but this gesture has so far not been reciprocated by Rome, which still considers all Protestant ministries as 'invalid'.<sup>39</sup> And this in turn constitutes the most serious obstacle—in fact, the only obstacle—to mutual intercommunion. All the Churches have the serious responsibility of using all the means at their disposal to come closer, and as fast as is reasonably possible, to the ideal of full, corporate union. And among these available means, the Eucharist has undoubtedly prime of place, as being not only the sign of unity already achieved, but also *the* means to achieve it. No joint eucharistic celebration by ministers of different Churches, however, will be possible, as long as the Churches have not surmounted the barrier of their different views on the ministry, and this hurdle cannot be satisfactorily crossed until a greater convergence is reached on the question of apostolic succession.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> The growing literature on the mutual recognition of ministries shows only too clearly the extraordinary importance attached to it by all the Churches. Among the several avenues of approach recently tried from the Catholic side, one could mention the following; the traditional concept of extraordinary minister (F. Van Beek, 'Towards an ecumenical understanding of the sacraments', *Journ. of ecum. Stud.* 3, 1966, pp. 57-112); the NT pattern of plurality of ministries, including the unordained charismatic ministry (H. Küng, *The Church*, London, 1967, pp. 393-444 and K. McDonnell, 'Ways of validating the ministry', *Journ. of ecum. Stud.* 1970, pp. 209-265); the principle of *Ecclesia supplet*, which either confers to non-Catholic ministers the stamp of genuineness (J. Tillard, *Miscellanea liturgica in onore di S. E. il Card. Lercaro*, Roma 1967, pp. 143-194); or recognizes a pre-existent genuineness (G. Tavard, 'The function of the minister in the eucharistic celebration', *Journ. of ecum. Stud.* 1967, pp. 629-249); the ecclesial character of Protestant communities recognized by Vatican II (K. McDonnell, *art. cit.*; Y. Congar, 'Quelques problèmes touchant les ministères', *Nouv. rev. théol.* 1971, pp. 785-800; E. Schillebeeckx, 'Catholic understanding of office', *Theol. stud.* 1969, pp. 567-587). The US Catholic-Lutheran colloquium of 1968 recommended to Rome the recognition of Protestant ministries without further delay. Cf. 'Eucharist and ministry', *Theol. stud.* 31 (1970), p. 733.

<sup>40</sup> Some theologians would favour occasional joint eucharistic celebration already now, even prior to the mutual recognition of ministries: cf. E. Echlin, 'Anglican intercommunion, an imminent possibility', *Homil. Pastor. Rev.* 71 (1970) 115-123; M. Thurian, 'L'intercommunion, fruit d'une foi commune', in M. Thurian-J. Klinger-J. de Baciocchi, *op. cit.* p. 64—Other authors, however, rightly consider this step as premature. Cf. V. Vajta, *Intercommunion avec Rome?* (Paris, 1970) p. 58; E. Schlink, 'The problem of communion between the evangelical Lutheran Church and the R. C. Church', *Ecum. Rev.* 34 (1972) 1-25.

No wonder then, that both the commissions, working at Windsor and Dombes, should have decided to devote their next meeting in September 1972, to the question of the ministry. Unless and until we have a sufficiently unified ministry all attempts at intercommunion will necessarily remain partial and transitional, and therefore ultimately unsatisfactory, for we cannot possibly be content with anything short of full communion in the one Church of Jesus Christ. However high this ideal may be, one cannot close one's eyes to the reality that, as DS 39 categorically puts it (and I cannot but subscribe wholeheartedly to this stand), 'we think that reception of communion should not be refused on grounds of eucharistic faith to Christians of another confession who make their own the faith professed above'. The ministry may still be an obstacle, but the Eucharist has clearly ceased to be a dividing issue between the Christian Churches.

### *The contemporary Indian scene*

All these interconfessional theological developments cannot but have a considerable impact on the Indian Church. As a concluding section of this paper, I would like to point out a few possibilities which seem to be open to us in the area of the Eucharist and the apostolic ministry.

The various streams of Christians denominations which, in 1947, flowed into the new Church of South India, expressed their common eucharistic belief in their *Book of Common Worship*, whose Order for the Lord's Supper is, on the whole, satisfactory from the Catholic point of view.<sup>41</sup> Lutherans, too, seem to be in agreement with it, even if some voices of strong dissent have been heard from the Anglican side.<sup>42</sup> A brief penitential rite at the beginning of the celebration in the best liturgical tradition of the early Church; a firm and clearly stated belief in

<sup>41</sup> Cf. The Church of South India, *The Book of Common Worship* (London, 1967), pp. 1-20 and commentaries by T. S. Garrett, *The liturgy of the Church of South India* (2nd ed. Madras, 1954) and *Worship in the Church of South India* (London, 1958).

<sup>42</sup> Lutheran S. Estborn approves of it in general terms, cf. 'The CSI service of the Lord's Supper of the Holy Eucharist', in *The Sacraments* (Bangalore 1956) pp. 84-98, esp. p. 98. Cf. also the CSI-Lutheran agreed statement on the Eucharist in *The CSI-Lutheran theological conversations 1948-1959* (Bangalore, 1964) pp. 175 f. Catholic L. Bouyer, too, is positive, cf. 'L'union des Eglises du Sud de l'Inde', *Istina* 2 (1955) 215-237. But Anglican W. Grisbrooke takes a very critical attitude, cf. 'The Constitution and liturgy of the Church of South India', *East. Church Quart.* 11 (1955-56), 214-231.

the real presence; the recital of the words of institution in their historical context; the dimension of memorial with its main phases of Death and Glorification; the purifying effect of the sacrament (which, as previously pointed out, is not explicitly mentioned in WS); the double unity effected by the sacrament, individual with Christ and ecclesial of the worshipping community; an explicit epiclesis: all these doctrinal aspects are incorporated into the Order.

As for the sacrificial dimension, one perfectly understands that the uniting Churches, with their strong Protestant background, should have been somewhat chary of overstressing this aspect, but after making due allowance for this unavoidable historical heritage, one regrets not finding this element sufficiently brought to light. It is true that the Order does mention it, but only towards the end and as a consequence of the liturgical act rather than as belonging to its very structure. Eucharistic worship undoubtedly produces in the participants a movement of sacrificial self-commitment: 'we offer and present unto thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy and living sacrifice'.<sup>43</sup> But is that all there is to it? Is not the intrinsic nature of the act—not only its effects—a sacramental offering of the sacrifice of Christ to the Father, by the Church? If the Eucharist, in its deepest centre and core, is the memorial of Christ's unrepeatable sacrifice, should not this dimension be made more explicit?<sup>44</sup> To my mind this is the only essential element of the eucharistic mystery which is not sufficiently brought out in the CSI liturgy. However, it would be unreasonable to consider this partial omission as a justifying reason to avoid eucharistic intercommunion. Rather, taking an overall view of the eucharistic doctrine as expressed in the CSI *Book of Common Worship* one can confidently assert that the Eucharist is no longer an obstacle preventing the union between the CSI and the Roman Catholic communion.

We are on a more shaky ground, however, when we come to the problem of the ministry. The principle adopted by the

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<sup>43</sup> *The Book of Common Worship*, pp. 18 f.

<sup>44</sup> This was already remarked by T. S. Garrett, who pointedly asks whether Cranmer . . . did not sweep away more than was necessary and unduly restrict the idea of sacrifice in the Eucharist' (*The liturgy*, p. 26). The final rubric of a second 'setting apart' of more bread and wine cannot but raise some misgivings in the Catholic mind. Is that short prayer (*The Book*, p. 20) enough to subsume the new elements into the totality of the already concluded eucharistic prayer and to consider them as thereby consecrated?

uniting Churches in 1947 of recognizing, that is, their mutual ministries without any ceremony for their unification obviously implies that episcopally-ordained ministers are, for all practical purposes, considered to be on equal footing with ministers coming from non-episcopal Churches. This generous principle of mutual recognition of ministries was bound to cause some anxiety both inside and outside the CSI, and it seems to be mainly responsible for the fact that the Anglican Communion has so far withheld recognition of the CSI ministry. A rite of unification of the ministry, no matter how carefully worked out, necessarily implies certain ambiguities as to the nature of the rite itself, but this would be preferable to the far greater uncertainty accompanying the CSI unification scheme, as far as the reality of their ministry is concerned. For the doctrinal principle implied in this scheme is, unavoidably, that episcopal Ordination is not essential to the ecclesial structure. This may well turn out to be true, if we keep in mind the considerable flexibility prevalent in the apostolic Church, but before excluding any rite of unification of the ministry I think one should have greater certainty than is at present available about the reality of the non-episcopally ordained ministry.

True, some of the vistas opened up by recent studies on this question are extremely promising, especially the one which lays stress on the ecclesial nature of the Protestant bodies and the undeniable fruits of salvation produced by their ministry, but agreement about the ministry should precede rather than follow a joint eucharistic celebration. Anglicans and Catholics are therefore in perfect unison in considering the CSI merger of ministries as an ambiguous step which in their eyes unavoidably affects the reality of the CSI Eucharist.<sup>45</sup> On these conditions,

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<sup>45</sup> Unless of course one extends to this case the possibility of lay consecration. As is known, it was only towards the close of the first century that presbyteral Ordination was required to preside over eucharistic worship. Given the obscurity of the early NT strata in this respect, one cannot exclude *a priori* the possibility of lay eucharistic consecration at least in extreme frontier-situation cases, especially if one takes seriously the reality of the general priesthood of the laity. On the other hand, it is not certain that the necessity of an ordained minister for the Eucharist is of divine institution. Cf. L. Newbigin, *The reunion of the Church* (London, 1960), pp. 177 f., and more cautiously, Y. Congar, *art. cit.* p. 793. As for the rite of Ordination now in force in the CSI one need not entertain any doubt about its fulness and legitimacy, cf. *The Book of Common Worship*, pp. 160-179. The Anglican Communion continues to withhold recognition of all ministry existing outside the historic episcopate, as is

a joint eucharistic celebration between CSI and either Catholic or Anglican ministers, even after taking into consideration their substantial agreement in matters eucharistic, would clearly be something to be hoped and prayed for, rather than a practice to be recommended at present.<sup>46</sup> This ambiguity of their ministry, however, is bound to be short-lived, since all the new CSI ministers ordained after 1947 will be episcopally-ordained.

As for the Church of North India, the possibilities of intercommunion are definitely brighter. If the eucharistic faith of this Church is aptly conveyed by the rite used at its inauguration (Nagpur, November 1970), then the above appreciative remarks concerning the Eucharist of the CSI should be extended to the Eucharist of the CNI, since the Order of the Lord's Supper used on that occasion was bodily taken from the *CSI Book of Common Worship*.<sup>47</sup>

But it is in the question of the ministry that the CNI holds a position of its own as compared to the CSI. The CNI apparently wanted to avoid the ambiguities inherent in the CSI ministry, and in order to achieve greater doctrinal precision and clarity the representative ministers of the uniting Churches submitted to the rite of imposition of hands and an accompanying epicletic prayer by bishops of the historic episcopate. Since the rite of the unification of the ministry, especially devised for the inaugurative act at Nagpur, was later repeated elsewhere, and since, therefore, *all* ministers of the uniting Churches underwent the same rite, there is no doubt that at present the entire body of

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clear from the recent failure of the Anglican-Methodist scheme to obtain the three fourths majority needed for approval by the Synod of the Church of England. Cf. *Inform. Cathol. Intern.* June 1, 1972, p. 26.

<sup>46</sup> Quite another thing is the limited intercommunion implied in the admission of CSI members to eucharistic communion. The last Lambeth Conference of 1968 requires only that the eucharistic guest should be duly baptized and qualified to receive communion in his own Church. Cf. *The Lambeth Conference 1968, Resolutions and Reports* (London, 1968) p. 42. As for Catholics, the recent Roman Instruction of June 1, 1972 (cf. *L'Observatore Romano*, weekly Engl. ed., July 20, 1972, pp. 6-7) hardly goes beyond what had already been laid down by the *Ecumenical Directory* of 1967, n. 55. In the opposite case (viz. Anglicans or Catholics receiving communion from ministers of other Churches), Lambeth leaves it to the conscience of the individual, whereas Rome forbids it, unless the non-Catholic minister has been validly ordained.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *The Order of service for the inauguration of the Church of North India and the representative act of the unification of the ministry* (Mysore, 1970) pp. 19-25. To be compared with the *CSI Book of Common Worship*, pp. 14-20.

CNI ministers have been drawn into the line of episcopal Ordination. To be sure, even at Nagpur, all uncertainties were not dispelled, for the mutual imposition of hands by the representative ministers raised the question of the nature of the rite itself: was it a conditional Ordination? supplementary Ordination? What did the ministers receive at that moment which they had not already received in their respective Churches?<sup>48</sup> Inescapably, this uncertainty seems to be the price to be paid for the guarantee that all the ministers are now episcopally ordained. Consequently Canterbury has reacted favourably to the scheme, but where does the CNI stand with regard to Rome?

There is new thinking going on in the Catholic Church today with regard to its traditional position on the 'invalidity' of Anglican Orders, and voices are being heard, loud and clear, in favour of a reversal of this attitude.<sup>49</sup> Pope Leo XIII's condemnation of Anglican Orders in *Apostolicae Curae* (1896) was based on the double theological principle of an alleged defect of right intention in the administration of the sacrament and a concomitant defect in the nature of the rite itself. Vigorous attempts have since then been made, not only by Anglicans but by Catholic theologians as well, to show that historically the Anglican hierarchy stands in unbroken continuity with St Augustine of Canterbury, but given the maze of conflicting opinions (particularly concerning the circumstances surrounding Parker's Ordination) this historical line of approach does not seem to hold much promise for the future. A more viable solution to the problem would probably be to start from the present reality of the Anglican Church, which embraces a number of factors whose careful theological appraisal may well prove decisive: the new Anglican Ordinal,

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. J. Lerch, 'Reunion in North India', *Clergy Monthly* 34 (1970) 421-434.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. H. Chadwick, 'The discussion on Anglican Orders in modern Anglican theology', *Concilium* Paril 1968, pp. 72-76; J. Hughes, *Absolutely null and utterly void* (London, 1968); M. Shepherd, 'An Anglican reply', *Concilium*, April 1972, pp. 91-97; P. Hughes, *Theology of the English Reformers* (Grand Rapids, 1965) pp. 159-188; R. Page, *New directives in Anglican theology* (N. York, 1965), pp. 94-114; J. Hughes, 'Two English Cardinals on Anglican Orders', *Journ. of ecum. stud.* 4 (1967) 1-26; E. Echlin, 'The validity of Anglican Orders', *Ibid.* 7 (1970) 266-281; J. Coventry, 'Anglican Orders: reassessing the debate', *New Blackfriars* 52 (1971) 36-40; J. Hughes, 'Anglican Orders: the growing consensus', *Ibid.* 274-279. A determined foe of Anglican Orders has always been F. Clark, *Anglican Orders and defect of intention* (London, 1956) and 'Anglican Orders', *New Cathol. Encycl.* 1 (1971) 525-528.

which has received warm approval from Catholic theologians,<sup>50</sup> the ecclesial reality of the Anglican Communion, acknowledged by Rome,<sup>51</sup> the unquestionable fruits of salvation produced by that Church, its broad-based ecclesial apostolicity in faith, life and service, the sacramental contacts between the Anglican and the Old Catholic Church (fostered particularly after 1896). All these factors, when taken together, seem to offer a sufficient ground for an eventual revocation of *Apostolicae Curæ*.<sup>52</sup>

If and when Rome changes its stand, the hoped-for recognition of Anglican Orders is likely to bring about a chain-reaction in the relations between the CNI and the Catholic Church. For, even on the narrow basis of episcopal imposition of hands as the only sure guarantee of apostolic succession (the only official position of Rome so far), Rome cannot logically withhold recognition of a ministry which is, from the moment of its inception in 1970, an episcopally-ordained ministry. Now a Church endowed with a valid ministry is also endowed with an equally valid and genuine Eucharist, and this being the case, the CNI would stand, in the eyes of Rome, in a position very similar to that of the Orthodox Churches, whose ministry and Eucharist Rome have always acknowledged as valid. And since Rome has, on this double basis of a genuine ministry and a genuine Eucharist, not only officially permitted but even encouraged intercommunion with the Oriental Churches,<sup>53</sup> the very same rule would logically have to be extended to the relations with the CNI.

In conclusion: all these recent developments in the eucharistic field augur well for the future. Doctrinal differences, especially with regard to the ministry, still remain and to rush headlong

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. C. Hay, 'Intercommunion: a Roman Catholic approach', *One in Christ* 5 (1969) 355-378; G. Tavard, 'The function of the minister in the eucharistic celebration', *Journ. of ecum. stud.* 4 (1967) 629-649; J. Coventry's equally laudatory opinion in 'Ecumenical notes and documentation', *One in Christ* 4 (1968) 309; B. Leeming, 'A step towards unity', *The Tablet*, June 8, 1968, pp. 572 f.; June 15, pp. 594-6; June 22, pp. 620 f.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism, art. 13, 19-24 (W. Abbott, *The documents*, pp. 355-357; 361-366).

<sup>52</sup> The next meeting of the Catholic-Anglican joint theological commission, scheduled for September 1972, will take up the problem of the ministry. In this context the question of Anglican Orders can hardly fail to come up for discussion and—hopefully—for substantial re-appraisal.

<sup>53</sup> Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism, art. 15 (W. Abbott, *The documents*, p. 359).

with misguided enthusiasm into every conceivable way of practicing intercommunion by circumventing these difficulties would hardly be the best way to foster ecumenism. Imaginative creativeness, courage and boldness are certainly needed, but they ought to be tempered by the humble realisation that the Churches, in their search for Christian unity, cannot force the pace set by the Spirit. If timidity is to be enlivened by courage, enthusiasm is to be tempered by patience. The recent proliferation of eucharistic agreements between the various Churches seems to be one of the signs of the times, a sign that the Spirit is leading the Churches in a special way to labour unremittingly—and this as a primary task for all of them, a task that brooks no delay—towards the removal of the remaining obstacles which still prevent us from coming together as brothers around the table of the Lord. The day seems to be finally dawning when the Eucharist will cease to be a sacrament of division to become once again what it was always meant to be: a sign and cause of Christian unity.