

6.9.78: 6.30 p.m.

ARCIC 195/4

Final text

5. Since the publication of the Agreed Statement on Ministry and Ordination there have been rapid developments with regard to the ordination of women to the priesthood. Anglican provinces which are already proceeding to ordain women to the presbyterate believe that their action implies no departure from the traditional doctrine of the ordained ministry as expounded, for example, in the Agreed Statement. In any case the principles on which our doctrinal agreement rests are unaffected by such ordinations and objections to them, e.g. the departure from traditional practice, should be distinguished from those which have hitherto been raised against the validity of Anglican Orders.

The Windsor and Canterbury Statements, and our subsequent discussions on them, have revealed a consensus which places in a new context the question of reconciliation of our ministries, a question not to be considered apart from that of the establishment of full organic unity. The extent of our agreement on the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist and its sacrificial character, on the nature of ordination and on apostolic succession shows that there is no divergence between us on the doctrine of the Eucharist or Ministry sufficient to prevent communion. Whether this agreement calls for the re-examination of the verdict of 1396 (*Apostolicae Curae*) or whether some other way of reconciling our ministries should now be sought, we do not consider within our terms of reference to decide. It has not been our task to pass judgement upon previous decisions, rather, though aware of their consequences, we have looked to the future and to the next steps towards full organic unity. These, we believe, must include positive initiatives by the Roman Catholic Church and affirmation by the Anglican Communion of its desire to enter into communion with the See of Rome.