

FULL COMMUNION (1970)

- (i) Our usage of the term 'Full Communion' is deliberately comprehensive. In general we mean by it the fullest possible recognition of and co-operation with other Churches, including mutual recognition of the validity of orders and willingness to receive and transfer members from and to other churches. We draw attention to the definitions used in the Report *Intercommunion Today* and suggest that these definitions should be borne in mind, especially when Anglican attitudes are being considered.
- (ii) Each enquiry about our relationship with another Church is dealt with in the light of all the circumstances. Where ministerial status within Methodism is desired without further ordination, we require assurance that the church to which the minister belongs adheres to the apostolic faith, and that he has been ordained by the laying on of hands with prayer.
- (iii) We think we can best contribute to ecumenical understanding on this subject by emphasising that all communicant members of Christian Churches are welcome at our eucharist. We desire to join in the eucharist of any Christian body that is willing to receive us, as occasion permits. We do not make exclusive claims for our system of government or order, and do not wish to persuade others to conform with us in these matters. Above all we want to avoid bigotry, which according to John Wesley is 'too strong an attachment to, or fondness for, our own party, opinion, church or religion'. We seek with all Christians the relationship expressed by Wesley in his sermon on *The Catholic Spirit* 'Whatsoever love, whatsoever offices of love, whatsoever spiritual or temporal assistance I claim from him whose heart is right, as my heart is with his, the same I am ready, by the grace of God, according to my measure, to give him. I have not made this claim on behalf of myself only, but of all those whose heart is right towards God and man, that we may all love one another as Christ has loved us'.

(*Agenda 1970, pp. 258f*)

The Conference in adopting this report replaced the term 'eucharist' with 'service of Holy Communion'.