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# Called to Full Unity

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Documents on  
Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations  
1966-1983

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## Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission in the U.S.A.

### Where We Are: A Challenge for the Future A Twelve-Year Report

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*The Malta Report of 1968 and Cardinal Willebrands' Cambridge Address of 1970 and his Lambeth Address of 1972 had stressed that unity in the faith, essential to organic unity, should be articulated in mutually agreed statements. For three years, ARC attempted this articulation. Using the ARC discussions as a base, Fathers J. Robert Wright and Herbert J. Ryan, SJ, drafted a summary report in June 1977, at Los Angeles. The report summarized ARC's doctrinal agreements and possible areas of disagreement between the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church. It also set proposals for ARC's future agenda and suggested the formation of five task forces for possible joint action by Episcopalians and Roman Catholics. ARC accepted the *Twelve-Year Report* on Friday, August 12, 1977, at Cincinnati.*

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#### Preface

Having met nineteen times over a twelve-year period, the national consultation of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches in the U.S.A. now issues a report to its sponsoring communities. The report is both a summary of past work and a challenge for future cooperation. The Consultation believes it has discovered a significant and substantial unity of faith between the two Churches, a unity which demands visible expression and testimony now. At the same time, the Consultation honestly recognizes differences which continue to separate the two Churches. In the following pages we present, at this point in our work, conclusions and suggestions to our sponsoring bodies for evaluation, response, and action. We offer direction to the Churches which commission us, but we also seek direction and a continuing mandate from those Churches for the pursuit of the unity God wills for His church.

The Most Rev. Raymond W. Lessard, Bishop of Savannah  
The Rt. Rev. Arthur A. Vogel, Bishop of West Missouri  
Co-Chairmen  
December 1977

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#### Introduction

Since 1965 the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church have been in officially sponsored dialogue. At the request of these Churches, these meetings have been conducted in this country by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the USA (ARC), whose members have been jointly appointed by the authorities in both Churches. The purpose of these official consultations has been to aid both Churches in realizing together that unity for which Christ prayed.

After 12 years of study ARC contends that the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church agree at the level of faith on such topics as the Holy Eucharist, Priesthood and Ordination, and the nature and mission of the Church. There is also a common understanding between us of the theological methodology necessary for ecumenical dialogue. Yet agreement even at the level of faith is not always evident in visible expression. The Episcopal and the Roman Catholic Churches differ in their forms of worship, their traditions of spirituality, their styles of theological reflection and in some of their organizational structures of church life. Despite these historically conditioned differences, however, ARC finds after 19 joint consultations that the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches share so profound an agreement on the level of faith that these Churches are in fact "sister Churches" in the one *Communio* which is the Church of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

How may this unity in faith be shown? We propose that such unity be given expression in an immediate responding together in the Spirit through Christ to the Father. In this report we suggest specific joint activities which can be undertaken by our two Churches, and we indicate some areas which we think require further investigation.

#### A. Responding Together in the Spirit through Christ to the Father

1. *Worship.* The ritual patterns in the liturgies of Baptism and Eucharist in both our Churches show that we both understand the Christian life as a response not only to historical events but also to a transcen-

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1. Cf. Pope Paul VI, 25 October 1970: "There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and the worthy patrimony of piety and usage proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Catholic Church—this humble 'Servant of the servants of God'—is able to embrace her ever beloved sister in the one authentic Communion of the family of Christ: a communion of origin and of faith, a communion of priesthood and of rule, a communion of the saints in the freedom of love of the spirit of Jesus." Cf. pp. 54-55.