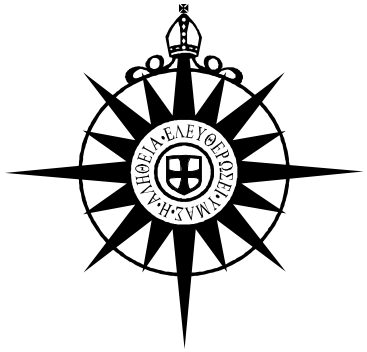
The Lambeth Commission on Communion

The Windsor Report 2004



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FOREWORD

The Most Reverend Dr Robin Eames
Archbishop of Armagh, Chairman of the Lambeth Commission

What do we believe is the will of God for the Anglican Communion?

That question has never been far from the minds of the members of the Lambeth Commission during the exacting work they have undertaken in the past year.

Since the 1970s controversies over issues of human sexuality have become increasingly divisive and destructive throughout Christendom. Within the Anglican Communion the intensity of debate on these issues at successive Lambeth Conferences has demonstrated the reality of these divisions.

The decision by the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) to give consent to the election of bishop Gene Robinson to the Diocese of New Hampshire, the authorising by a diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada of a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions and the involvement in other provinces by bishops without the consent or approval of the incumbent bishop to perform episcopal functions have uncovered major divisions throughout the Anglican Communion. There has been talk of crisis, schism and realignment. Voices and declarations have portrayed a Communion in crisis.

Those divisions have been obvious at several levels of Anglican life: between provinces, between dioceses and between individual Anglican clergy and laity. The popular identification of 'conservatives' and 'liberals', and 'the west' as opposed to 'the global south', has become an over-simplification - divisions of opinion have also become clear within provinces, dioceses and parishes. Various statements and decisions at different levels of leadership and membership of the Church have illustrated the depth of reaction. Among other Christian traditions, reactions to the problems within Anglicanism have underlined the serious concerns on these issues worldwide. Comparison has been made with the controversies on women's ordination years ago. But the current strengths of expression of divergent positions are much greater. Questions have been raised about the nature of authority in the Anglican Communion, the inter-relationship of the traditional Instruments of Unity, the ways in which Holy Scripture is interpreted by Anglicans, the priorities of the historic autonomy enshrined in Anglican provinces, and there are also issues of justice. Yet the Lambeth Commission has been aware that consideration within its mandate of any specific aspect of inter-Anglican relationships overlaps and relates to others and has a clear bearing on the sort of Anglican Communion which should enhance the life and worship of our diverse worldwide church family.

What could be termed 'the human face' of these divisions has become clear to the Commission. Within provinces, dioceses and parishes, where individual Anglican Christians have experienced degrees of alienation and exclusion due to differences of opinion between leadership and members, there has been much pain and

disillusionment. Further questions have surfaced about episcopal oversight within a diocese where significant groups of Anglicans have become alienated from their bishop. The Commission has seen and heard those emotions.

During its work the Lambeth Commission has recognised the existence within the Anglican Communion of a large constituency of faithful members who are bemused and bewildered by the intensity of the opposing views on issues of sexuality. This group embraces worshippers who yearn for expressions of communion which will provide stability and encouragement for their pilgrimage. At times they have felt their voices eclipsed by the intensity of sounds on opposing sides of the debate.

The Lambeth Commission was established in October 2003 by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the request of the Anglican Primates. The mandate spoke of the problems being experienced as a consequence of the above developments and the need to seek a way forward which would encourage communion within the Anglican Communion. It did not demand judgement by the Commission on sexuality issues. Rather, it requested consideration of ways in which communion and understanding could be enhanced where serious differences threatened the life of a diverse worldwide Church. In short, how does the Anglican Communion address relationships between its component parts in a true spirit of communion?

As the Commission has addressed its mandate the atmosphere in the Anglican Communion has continued to reflect the depth of feeling on these issues. Indeed during the past year events in the Communion have prompted observers to conclude that our work was so overtaken by decisions of some provinces and by words of individual Church leaders that any conclusion reached would be irrelevant. The Anglican Communion appears to such observers to be set on a voyage of self-destruction. I acknowledge the willingness of large sections of the Anglican Communion to permit this Commission space to complete its Report. However, in some instances the request by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates for an absence of developments or pronouncements which would make the work of the Lambeth Commission more difficult has been ignored.

The depth of conviction and feeling on all sides of the current issues has on occasions introduced a degree of harshness and a lack of charity which is new to Anglicanism. A process of dissent is not new to the Communion but it has never before been expressed with such force nor in ways which have been so accessible to international scrutiny. Not all the opinions voiced have been expressed in ways which are conducive to dialogue or the encouragement of communion. Modern methods of communication and in particular the internet have become powerful means of expressing and influencing opinion. This fact requires careful note by the Anglican Communion when consideration is given to its traditional decision-making processes.

The 'bonds of affection' so often quoted as a precious attribute of Anglican Communion life, as well as the instruments of communion and unity, have been threatened by the current divisions. While attention in this regard turns to the developments in the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada it is clear that this threat has been increased by reactions to them.

This Report is not a judgement. It is part of a process. It is part of a pilgrimage towards healing and reconciliation. The proposals which follow attempt to look forward rather than merely to recount how difficulties have arisen. A large majority of the submissions received by the Commission have supported the continuance of the Anglican Communion as an instrument of God's grace for the world.

Throughout the work of this Commission many different views have been expressed by its members. These opinions have been shared openly. We have come to a position which takes our differing views seriously and yet we are able to offer this Report together for the Communion's consideration.

A process for the study of this Report is being established and there will be opportunity for the Communion as a whole to consider its findings. However, if realistic and visionary ways cannot be agreed to meet the levels of disagreement at present or to reach consensus on structures for encouraging greater understanding and communion in future it is doubtful if the Anglican Communion can continue in its present form.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of our current difficulties is the negative consequence it could have on the mission of the Church to a suffering and bewildered world. Even as the Commission prepared for its final meeting the cries of children in a school in southern Russia reminded us of our real witness and ministry in a world already confronted by poverty, violence, HIV/AIDS, famine and injustice.

As Chairman of the Commission it has been my privilege to lead and co-ordinate the work in fulfilment of this mandate. I pay a warm tribute to the involvement of all members of the Commission who have worked with such commitment at their difficult task and enjoyed genuine Christian fellowship in their work. This task has involved three detailed plenary meetings, two at St George's, Windsor, England and one at the Kanuga Conference Centre, North Carolina, USA, in addition to months of intensive research, debate and prayer as the Commission has considered the problems and reviewed the many submissions from throughout the Anglican Communion and beyond. In addition to oral presentations the Commission is grateful for many written submissions which have been available to all of its members. There has been a genuine search for the will of Almighty God for the Communion. Each meeting has commenced with worship and Bible study. The Commission has been much encouraged by the expressions of prayerful support for its work.

I acknowledge the service and immensely detailed work of the Secretary of the Commission, Canon Gregory Cameron, Director of Ecumenical Affairs and Studies at the Anglican Communion Office in London; the assistance of our legal consultant, Canon John Rees; the secretarial staff at the Anglican Communion Office at St Andrew's House, London; and the Revd Brian Parker, who acted as Media Officer. Dr Albert Gooch, President of the Kanuga Conference Centre in North Carolina, facilitated a full meeting of the Commission and has given much practical assistance in the costs involved on that occasion. The Dean and Chapter of St George's College, Windsor, England, hosted two of our meetings: I express our sincere appreciation to them and the staff at Kanuga and Windsor.

The Lambeth Commission has been conscious of the trust placed in it by the Anglican Communion and, despite the difficulties it has faced, offers this Report in the

prayerful hope that it will encourage the enhanced levels of understanding which are essential for the future of the Anglican Communion. Above all I pray it will be viewed as a genuine contribution to what communion really means for Anglicans.

+Robert Armagh

October 2004

The Lambeth Commission on Communion

Mandate

The Archbishop of Canterbury requests the Commission

1. To examine and report to him by 30th September 2004, in preparation for the ensuing meetings of the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, on the legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions of the Episcopal Church (USA) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops, and of the Diocese of New Westminster to authorise services for use in connection with same sex unions, and specifically on the canonical understandings of communion, impaired and broken communion, and the ways in which provinces of the Anglican Communion may relate to one another in situations where the ecclesiastical authorities of one province feel unable to maintain the fullness of communion with another part of the Anglican Communion.

2. Within their report, to include practical recommendations (including reflection on emerging patterns of provision for episcopal oversight for those Anglicans within a particular jurisdiction, where full communion within a province is under threat) for maintaining the highest degree of communion that may be possible in the circumstances resulting from these decisions, both within and between the churches of the Anglican Communion.

3. Thereafter, as soon as practicable, and with particular reference to the issues raised in Section IV of the Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998, to make recommendations to the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, as to the exceptional circumstances and conditions under which, and the means by which, it would be appropriate for the Archbishop of Canterbury to exercise an extraordinary ministry of episcope (pastoral oversight), support and reconciliation with regard to the internal affairs of a province other than his own for the sake of maintaining communion with the said province and between the said province and the rest of the Anglican Communion.

4. In its deliberations, to take due account of the work already undertaken on issues of communion by the Lambeth Conferences of 1988 and 1998, as well as the views expressed by the Primates of the Anglican Communion in the communiqués and pastoral letters arising from their meetings since 2000.

The members of the Lambeth Commission

- Archbishop **Robin Eames**,
  Primate of All Ireland, *Chairman*
- The Revd Canon **Alyson Barnett-Cowan**,
  Director of Faith, Worship and Ministry, Anglican Church of Canada
- Bishop **David Beetge**,
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- Professor **Norman Doe**,
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- Bishop **Mark Dyer**,
  Director of Spiritual Formation, Virginia Theological Seminary, USA
- Archbishop **Drexel Gomez**,
  Primate of the West Indies
- Archbishop **Josiah Iduwo-Fearon**,
  Archbishop of Kaduna, the Anglican Church of Nigeria
- The Revd **Dorothy Lau**,
  Director of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council
- Ms **Anne McGavin**,
  Advocate, formerly Legal Adviser to the College of Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church
  Ms McGavin resigned for personal reasons after the first meeting of the Commission.
- Archbishop **Bernard Malango**,
  Primate of Central Africa
- Dr **Esther Mombo**,
  Academic Dean of St Paul's United Theological Seminary, Limuru, Kenya
- Archbishop **Barry Morgan**,
  Primate of Wales
  Archbishop Morgan was unable to be present at the first meeting of the Commission.
- Chancellor **Rubie Nottage**,
  Chancellor of the West Indies
  Mrs Nottage was unable to be present at the second meeting of the Commission.
- Bishop **John Paterson**,
  Bishop of Auckland, and Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council

- Dr **Jenny Te Paa**,
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- Bishop **James Terom**,
  Moderator, the Church of North India
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THE REPORT

Section A : The Purposes and Benefits of Communion

The communion we have been given in Christ : Biblical foundations

1. God has unveiled, in Jesus Christ, his glorious plan for the rescue of the whole created order from all that defaces, corrupts and destroys it. The excitement and drama of that initial achievement and that final purpose pervade the whole New Testament, and set the context for understanding why God has called out a people by the gospel, and how that people is to understand its identity and order its life.

2. In particular, as the letter to the Ephesians puts it, God's people are to be, through the work of the Spirit, an *anticipatory sign* of God's healing and restorative future for the world. Those who, despite their own sinfulness, are saved by grace through their faith in God's gospel (2.1-10) are to live as a united family across traditional ethnic and other boundaries (2.11-22), and so are to reveal the many-splendoured wisdom of the one true God to the hostile and divisive powers of the world (3.9-10) as they explore and celebrate the astonishing breadth of God's love made known through Christ's dwelling in their hearts (3.14-21). The redeemed unity which is God's will for the whole creation is to be lived out within the life of the church as, through its various God-given ministries, it is built up as the Body of Christ and grows to maturity not least through speaking the truth in love (1.10, 22-3; 4.1-16). The church, sharing in God's mission to the world through the fact of its corporate life, must live out that holiness which anticipates God's final rescue of the world from the powers and corruptions of evil (4.17-6.20).

3. The *unity* of the church, the *communion* of all its members with one another (which are the primary subjects of this report), and the *radical holiness* to which all Christ's people are called, are thus rooted in the trinitarian life and purposes of the one God. They are designed not for their own sake (as though the church's in-house business were an end in itself), but to serve and signify God's mission to the world, that mission whereby God brings to men and women, to human societies and to the whole world, real signs and foretastes of that healing love which will one day put all things to rights. The communion we enjoy with God in Christ and by the Spirit, and the communion we enjoy with all God's people living and departed, is the specific practical embodiment and fruit of the gospel itself, the good news of God's action in Jesus Christ to deal once and for all with evil and to inaugurate the new creation. The unity (specifically celebrating the diversity within that unity) to which Christ's body is called, which is brought into being by the work of the Spirit through the gospel, is sustained and maintained through the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministries which the Spirit enables. All that can be said about unity and communion assumes this foundation in the gospel itself. It assumes, likewise, that this unity and communion are meaningless unless they issue in

that holiness of life, worked out in severely practical contexts, through which the church indicates to the world that a new way of being human, over against corrupt and dehumanising patterns of life, has been launched upon the world. In other words, unity, communion and holiness all belong together. Ultimately, questions about one are questions about all.

4. These themes are worked out dramatically in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In writing to the very troubled faith community there, he begins his pastoral and restorative ministry (following on from his apostolic and evangelistic ministry, already exercised) by reminding them of the true gift of God that is their identity in Christ. He writes to them in the grace and peace that is "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1.3). The Corinthians, he maintains, are a people who have been "sanctified in Christ Jesus" and are "called to be saints" (1.2). In Christ they are "enriched in every way in speech and knowledge of every kind" and "are not lacking any spiritual gift as [they] await the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1.5-7). Paul reminds them that a faithful God has "called them into the fellowship [*koinonia,* 'communion'] of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1.9). Whatever problems there are in the community – and Corinth had more than its fair share, from personality cults and social divisions to immorality and unbelief – Paul begins by addressing them as those who are, despite some outward appearances, already set apart by and for the love of God. This does not hold him back from administering severe discipline in the case of scandalous behaviour (ch.5); but this too, as 2 Corinthians 2 indicates, is held within the larger context of pastoral and reconciling intent. At the climax of this letter, after dealing with all these problems, we find Paul's longest exposition of what it means to live as the Body of Christ, united in diversity (ch.12), with that unity characterised not by a mechanistic or formal structure but by that all-demanding and all-fulfilling virtue which the early Christians called *agape*, love (ch.13).

5. As we Anglicans face very serious challenges to our unity and communion in Christ - challenges which have emerged not least because of different interpretations of that holiness to which we are called, and different interpretations of the range of appropriate diversity within our union and communion - Paul would want to remind us of the unique source of that unity, our common identity in Christ, and its unique purpose, the furtherance of God's mission within the world. We too have certainly been gifted with the grace of fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We are, by God's gift, in communion with the Persons of the Holy Trinity, and are members of one another in Christ Jesus. We are, in the power of the Spirit, sent into all the world to declare that Jesus is Lord. This grace-given and grace-full mission from God, and communion with God, determine our relationship with one another. Communion with God and one another in Christ is thus both a gift and a divine expectation. All that we say in this report is intended both to celebrate that gift and to answer that expectation.

The practical consequences of a healthy communion

6. Ephesians insists that the Body of Christ, taking Christ, its Head, as the source of its life, grows and builds itself up in love as each part plays its proper role

(4.15-16). It is appropriate that we ground our report in some reflections on how this has been worked out within the Anglican Communion up to now.

7. Life in the Anglican Communion, as a communion of churches, is indeed nourished by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, building up the body in love. Throughout its history, the Anglican Communion has been sustained by a common pattern of liturgical life rooted in the tradition of the Books of Common Prayer; shaped by the continual reading, both corporate and private, of the Holy Scriptures; rooted in its history through the See of Canterbury; and connected through a web of relationships – of bishops, consultative bodies, companion dioceses, projects of common mission, engagement with ecumenical partners – that are the means and the signs of common life. This continues to flourish in a myriad of ways at the local as well as national and international level.

8. This was given formal expression at the third 'Anglican Congress'[1] in 1963. Anglican life in communion was there described as "mutual interdependence and responsibility in the Body of Christ". From that affirmation ten Principles of Partnership were developed by the Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group II, which form a valuable foundation to the life of the Communion.[2]

9. When these principles have been lived out and honoured, there have been practical consequences which have advanced the mission of the church and enhanced the life of the people of the Communion and of the world it exists to serve. Though we remain painfully aware of our many failures, we should not ignore the great achievements of our unity and communion. Over the centuries Anglicans have lived out the gift of communion in mutual love and care for one another. We have at times embraced costly grace in standing together in opposition to racial enslavement and genocide. We have reached out and offered aid to one another in combating famine, disease and the chaos caused by natural disasters. In the struggle against apartheid, in common efforts of evangelism and mission, in acts of solidarity with indigenous peoples, in bringing dioceses together from diverse parts of the globe through the communications network and partnership arrangements, in the development of centres of excellence in theological education, in common prayer for those facing persecution, in disaster relief and development projects grounded in the local reality and assisted by the resources of all – in all these things, Anglicans have shared their gift of communion for the building up of the whole and thereby for the advancement of God's mission.

10. All these examples and many more spring from the organic reality that is life in communion. They are signs of a healthy attentiveness to the needs of other parts of the body and, moreover, of respect for the insights, hopes, beliefs and convictions of others within the Communion (1 Corinthians 12:25-26). We take courage from these signs of God's blessing upon our common life.

[1] These occasional gatherings have been held from time to time. The first Congress was held in London in 1908; the second in Minneapolis in 1954; the third in Toronto in 1963. An 'Anglican Gathering' is currently in preparation for 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa.
[2] The 'Ten Principles of Partnership' are set out in Appendix Three/5.

11. What has been less clear in Anglicanism is exactly how this organic body should be sustained. In acknowledging Jesus Christ as our one and only Head, we are aware that at no point have we found the need to clarify the ways in which, through particular ministries, that Headship is brought to expression within the local and international leadership of the Communion. In recent years, there have been attempts to develop a common mind about how this great Communion might actually function together in those situations in which mutual discernment is necessary to sustain the life of the body. Those attempts form part of the context of our work.

Recent mutual discernment within the Communion

12. The story of ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate provides us with a recent example of mutual discernment and decision-making within the Anglican Communion.

13. The background to the story was a period of debate and disagreement both before and after the ordination to the priesthood of Florence Li Tim-Oi in 1944. The story gathered pace in 1968, when the Diocese of Hong Kong & Macao brought the question of women's ordination to the priesthood to the Lambeth Conference. The Conference was not ready to respond because, as it stated in Resolution 34, "The Conference affirms its opinion that the theological arguments as at present presented for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood are inconclusive". The Conference recommended that before any regional or national church or province made a final decision to ordain women to the priesthood they should consider carefully the advice of the Anglican Consultative Council.

14. The Bishop of Hong Kong & Macao sought out the advice of the Anglican Consultative Council at its first meeting (in Limuru, Kenya) in 1970. After lengthy debate the Anglican Consultative Council advised the Bishop of Hong Kong & Macao that if, with the approval of his Synod, he were to proceed to the ordination of a woman his action would be acceptable to the Council, and that the Council would use its good offices to encourage all provinces of the Communion to continue in communion with that Diocese. The resolution passed (for: 24; against: 22).

15. What needs to be noted is that Hong Kong did not understand itself to be so autonomous that it might proceed without bringing the matter to the Anglican Consultative Council as requested by the Lambeth Conference 1968. Furthermore, action was only taken with the co-operation of the Instruments of Unity.

16. The 1978 Lambeth Conference addressed a situation where Hong Kong, Canada, the United States and New Zealand had all ordained women to the priesthood and eight other provinces had accepted the ordination of women in principle. In response, the Conference passed Resolution 21: *Women in the Priesthood*, which in part stated, "The Conference also recognises…(3a) the autonomy of each of its member Churches, acknowledging the legal right of each Church to make its own decision about the appropriateness of admitting

women to Holy Orders". The Resolution also noted that such provincial action "has consequences of the utmost significance for the Anglican Communion as a whole", and that "The Conference affirms its commitment to the preservation of unity within and between all member Churches of the Anglican Communion". This resolution passed with 316 for, 37 against, and 17 abstentions.

17. In 1985 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) expressed the intention "not to withhold consent to the election of a bishop on the grounds of gender". Aware that such a possible action would indeed affect the whole Anglican Communion, the then Presiding Bishop brought the question to the newly established Primates' Meeting in Toronto, Canada.[3] The Archbishop of Canterbury and the primates requested the Primate of Australia, John Grindrod, to head a committee to prepare a paper for the 1988 Lambeth Conference after requesting the opinions of the provinces of the Communion. This report's first chapter was entitled 'Listening as a Mark of Communion'.

18. The Grindrod Report presented two options to the Lambeth Conference: first, to counsel restraint in the hope that the moral authority inherent in a gathering of all the bishops of the Communion would find a response at the provincial level. Second, if a province went ahead, persuaded by compelling doctrinal reasons, by its experience of women in the priesthood and by the demands of mission in its region, and with the overwhelming support of the dioceses, such a step should be offered for reception within the Anglican Communion.

19. In response, Resolution 1 of Lambeth 1988 stated: "That each province respect the decision and attitudes of other provinces in the ordination or consecration of women to the episcopate, without such respect necessarily indicating acceptance of the principles involved, maintaining the highest possible degree of communion with the provinces which differ". This long resolution went on to recommend courtesy and respect and open dialogue with those who differ, and asked the Archbishop of Canterbury, in consultation with the primates, to appoint a Commission to ensure the process of reception, to monitor and encourage consultation and to offer pastoral guidelines for the churches of the Communion. This resolution passed with 423 for, 28 against, and 19 abstentions.

20. The Commission on Women in the Anglican Episcopate ('The Eames Commission') worked throughout the period between the Lambeth Conferences of 1988 and 1998. A monitoring committee of the Commission made a report to Lambeth 1998.

21. Anglicans can understand from this story that decision-making in the Communion on serious and contentious issues has been, and can be, carried out without division, despite a measure of impairment. We need to note that the Instruments of Unity, i.e. the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, were all involved in the decision-making process. Provincial autonomy was framed

[3] A description of the nature and work of the Primates' Meetings is given below at paragraph 104.

by Anglican interdependence on matters of deep theological concern to the whole Communion.

Illness: The surface symptoms

22. The precedent that could have been set by this procedure has not, unfortunately, been followed in the matters currently before the Communion. This, we conclude, lies at the heart of the problems we currently face. Before we offer some diagnosis of our situation, we must summarise the presenting symptoms.

23. Two sets of interrelated questions have arisen in several provinces of the Communion: whether or not it is legitimate for the church to bless the committed, exclusive and faithful relationships of same sex couples, and whether or not it is appropriate to ordain, and/or consecrate to the episcopate, persons living in a sexual relationship with a partner of the same sex. These matters are highly sensitive and emotionally charged, and come in the wake of various other related debates in the Communion, in relation (for instance) to polygamy and to the remarriage of divorced persons. Experimentation with blessings of same sex relationships had begun as early as 1973 within North America. Granted that local churches are often best placed to respond to pastoral needs within their own context and to understand the issues that arise in their particular culture, no part of the church can ignore its life in communion with the rest. What is done in one place can and does affect all. In March 2003, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA), when considering the question of the ordination of unmarried, non-celibate persons, heterosexual or homosexual, offered for study and reflection by the Episcopal Church (USA) these words from the report of its Theology Committee:

> "Sexual discipline and holiness of life must be very serious considerations for bishops, Standing Committees, and Commissions on Ministry as they discern what constitutes "a wholesome example to all people" (BCP 544). We affirm the responsibility of Dioceses to discern and raise up fit persons for the ministry of word and sacrament to build up the body of Christ in that place. We call on bishops and Standing Committees to be respectful of the ways in which decisions made in one Diocese have ramifications on others. We remind all that ordination is for the whole Church."[4]

24. The strong reaction across the Communion to synodical decisions taken in the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Canadian Diocese of New Westminster has confirmed the Episcopal Church's fears, and undercuts any argument that such decisions are purely local.

[4] The Gift of Sexuality: A theological perspective, Report of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, offered for study and reflection by the House of Bishops, 18 March 2003, paragraphs 7.0 and 7.1. See http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/presiding-bishop/pdf/theologycomreport.pdf.

25. In the context of continuing debate, the Lambeth Conference discussed matters relating to homosexuality and issued resolutions in 1978 and 1988.[5] At the Conference of 1998, extensive study and discussion by one subsection produced a report, following which a resolution was debated and eventually passed by the vast majority of bishops as Resolution 1.10.[6] There has been some controversy about the way in which this resolution was arrived at and voted upon. But the primates unanimously upheld the resolution as the standard of Anglican teaching on the matter in their statement of October 16, 2003:

> "We also re-affirm the resolutions made by the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 on issues of human sexuality as having moral force and commanding the respect of the Communion as its present position on these issues."[7]

This statement was in harmony with the position adopted by the primates to issues of human sexuality in their Pastoral Letter following their meeting in Gramado in May 2003.[8] This commitment to Lambeth Resolution 1.10 as the current position of the Anglican Communion was also reflected in a letter written to the primates by Archbishop Rowan Williams on the announcement of his nomination to the See of Canterbury.[9] In the years following the Lambeth Conference the Archbishop of Canterbury invited a small number of bishops from around the Communion for *International Conversations on Human Sexuality*, which set a high standard for how these matters could be discussed in charity and with reason.

26. *It should be clearly understood that this Commission has not been asked to continue this conversation, nor comment on or reconsider either the Lambeth Resolution or the Primates' Statement. Further serious Communion-wide discussion of the relevant issues is clearly needed as a matter of urgency, but that is not part of our mandate.*

27. Nevertheless, the primates singled out synodical actions that have been taken in one diocese and one province which have gone against both the letter and the spirit of the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, reiterated, as they are, by the Primates' Meeting. The synod of the Diocese of New Westminster has requested the Bishop to provide and authorise a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions; the Bishop has complied, and such services have gone ahead. The Episcopal Church (USA) has given its consent to, and proceeded with the consecration of, the person elected as Bishop of New Hampshire, a divorced man openly acknowledged to be living in a sexually active and committed same

[5] Lambeth 1978, Resolution 10; Lambeth 1988, Resolution 64 – reproduced in Appendix Three/2&3.
[6] The text of the 1998 Resolution 1.10 is included in Appendix Three/6.
[7] The full text of the Primates' Statement is included in Appendix Three/10.
[8] The relevant section of the Pastoral Letter is reproduced at paragraph 142.
[9] "… the Lambeth resolution of 1998 declares clearly what is the mind of the overwhelming majority in the Communion, and what the Communion will and will not approve or authorise. I accept that any individual diocese or even province that officially overturns or repudiates this resolution poses a substantial problem for the sacramental unity of the Communion.", Letter to the Primates, Archbishop Rowan Williams, 23 July 2002.

sex relationship, despite the primates describing that forthcoming consecration as one which might "tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level".[10] The same General Convention which gave consent to this election also decided to allow experimentation with public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions.[11] Many of those which have begun to be celebrated are similar to those authorised in New Westminster. We should also note that, after this Commission had already been set up, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada passed a resolution affirming "the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same-sex relationships".[12] Further details of these developments are given later in this Report at paragraphs 137-139.

28. The overwhelming response from other Christians both inside and outside the Anglican family has been to regard these developments as departures from genuine, apostolic Christian faith. Granted, some churches in other denominations have made provision, or are considering making such provision, for the ordination of persons in sexually active same-sex relationships, offering arguments based on modern scientific proposals about sexual attraction, and corresponding, in their proposals, to changes and innovations in civil law in some of the relevant countries.[13] But condemnation has come from the Russian Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, as well as a statement from the Roman Catholic church that such moves create "new and serious difficulties" to ecumenical relationships.[14] Within our own Communion, some eighteen of the thirty-eight provinces of the Anglican Communion, or their primates on their behalf, have issued statements which indicate, in a variety of ways, their basic belief that the developments in North America are "contrary to biblical teaching" and as such unacceptable.[15]

29. Unfortunately, reaction has not been confined to statements of disagreement and opposition. Three elements of the reaction need to be noted as they themselves are now part of the problem we face:

    (1) Several provinces and dioceses in the Communion have included in their reactions to developments in New Hampshire, either by primatial announcement or by synodical vote, a declaration that a state of either impaired or broken communion[16] now exists between them and those who

[10] From the statement by the Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting in Lambeth Palace, 16 October 2003, reproduced in Appendix Three/10.
[11] Resolution C051 Liturgy/Music: Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships, reproduced in Appendix Three/9.
[12] The full texts of Resolutions A134 *Blessing of Same Sex Unions* and A135 *Blessing of Same Sex Unions - Resources* are included in Appendix Three/12.
[13] Such developments or debate can be found in the United Church of Canada, the Lutheran Church of Sweden, and some Old Catholic dioceses in Europe.
[14] Pope John Paul II's address to the Archbishop Of Canterbury, October 2003
[15] A summary of some of the earlier statements may be found in footnote 19 of 'What is the Anglican Communion for?', a submission made to the Lambeth Commission by Canon Chris Sugden of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, available on the Commission website at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/commissions/lambeth/documents/200402whatisitfor.pdf
[16] For discussion of the meaning of these terms, see paragraph 50.

have taken the actions in the Episcopal Church (USA) described above.[17] Whilst these declarations may express natural frustrations and conscientious reactions to abnormal circumstances, they have left many Anglicans without a clear sense of who is now in communion with whom (personally and ecclesially). In addition, there are question marks over their ecclesiological legitimacy (for many, they represent an exercise in unilateralism counter to the communion principle of interdependence) as well as the constitutional authority under which some were issued (impaired communion is not a generally recognised canonical category).

(2) Within the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Diocese of New Westminster themselves, several moves have been made by dissenting parishes and groups to distance themselves, in a variety of ways, from the dioceses, bishops and provinces within which they are geographically located. In some cases this has involved them in appealing for help to the Archbishop of Canterbury; in others, in seeking episcopal oversight by bishops or archbishops from other dioceses and/or provinces. In many cases, it has simply meant bewilderment and uncertainty as to the present and future Anglican status of those who dissent to the innovations.

(3) Some Archbishops from elsewhere in the Communion have, both by taking initiatives, and by responding to invitations from clergy purporting to place themselves under their jurisdictions, entered parts of the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada and exercised episcopal functions without the consent of the relevant diocesan bishop. This goes not only against traditional and often-repeated Anglican practice (as reaffirmed most recently by, for example, resolutions at Lambeth 1988 and 1998[18]), but also against some of the longest-standing regulations of the early undivided church (Canon 8 of Nicaea). These actions are not purely reactions to recent events, though that has been their main character. In some cases they build on earlier attempts at unilateral action against bishops whose theology and/or practice was perceived to be out of line with traditional Anglican and Christian teaching, or even to set up would-be "orthodox" structures or "mission churches" for their own sake, e.g. the Anglican Mission in America (AMiA).

30. By whatever route, all these developments have now contributed materially to a tit-for-tat stand-off in which, tragically in line with analogous political disasters in the wider world, each side now accuses the other of atrocities, and blames the

[17] See, for example, the declaration by Nigeria of 15 November 2003, "We continue to stand solidly behind the leadership of the Church of Nigeria in breaking relationship, not only with the Diocese of New Hampshire, but with all bishops and dioceses in ECUSA that have joined in this divisive and unscriptural act.", and the declaration by the House of Bishops of the Church of Uganda on 20 November 2003, "The Church of the Province of Uganda (Anglican) cuts her relationship and Communion with the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA) on their resolution and consequent action of consecrating and enthroning an openly confessed homosexual Gene Robinson as the bishop of New Hampshire Diocese in the Anglican Communion, and with any other province that shall follow suit."

[18] Lambeth Conference 1988 Resolution 72 *Episcopal responsibilities and diocesan boundaries*; Lambeth Conference 1998 Resolution III.2 *The Unity of the Anglican Communion* – reproduced in Appendix Three/4.

other for the need to react further in turn. These are the problems which have presented themselves to the Communion as a whole; which necessitated a special meeting of the primates in October 2003; and which have resulted in the establishment of the Lambeth Commission. We must now probe deeper to discern the symptoms underlying these problems.

Illness: The deeper symptoms

31. There are six underlying features of our common life which, interacting on one another, together make up the key strands in the story of what has happened and the reasons why the Anglican Communion arrived at the impasse which caused the primates to request the Archbishop of Canterbury to set up this Commission.

Theological development

32. There is, first, *theological development*. Virtually all Christians agree on the necessity for theological development, including radical innovation, and on the fact that the Holy Spirit enables the church to undertake such development. Primary examples include the great fourth-century creeds, which go significantly beyond the actual words and concepts of scripture but which have been recognised by almost all Christians ever since as expressing the faith to which we are committed. At the same time, all are agreed that not all proposed developments are (to put it mildly) of equal weight and worth. Some, in fact, do not develop the Christian faith, but distort or even destroy it. A recent example might be the heresy of apartheid. Healthy theological development normally takes place within the missionary imperative to articulate the faith afresh in different cultures, but (as has become notorious) this merely pushes the question a stage further back: how is the line between faithful inculturation and false accommodation to the world's ways of thinking (note Romans 12.1-2) to be discerned and determined? Christians are not at liberty to simplify these matters either by claiming the Spirit's justification for every proposed innovation or by claiming long-standing tradition as the reason for rejecting all such proposals. The church therefore always needs procedures for discussing, sifting, evaluating and deciding upon proposed developments; in particular, they need to honour the process of 'reception', described in Section B below.

33. The first reason therefore why the present problems have reached the pitch they have is that it appears to the wider Communion that neither the Diocese of New Westminster nor the Episcopal Church (USA) has made a serious attempt to offer an explanation to, or consult meaningfully with, the Communion as a whole about the significant development of theology which alone could justify the recent moves by a diocese or a province.

Ecclesiastical procedures

34. Such a process would require appropriate *ecclesiastical procedures*. Such procedures that do exist have developed within the Anglican Communion over a period of time and in response to particular earlier problems. We have described in the previous section the ways in which they were followed quite carefully in the run-up to the consecration of women to the episcopate. Several recent

Anglican documents, notably *The Virginia Report* (1997), have spelled out explicitly and in detail what procedures could be applied and the way in which they could function, making it clear (among other things) that these procedures are not merely pragmatically determined but express the theology they seek to serve. Furthermore, a special resolution of ACC-12,[19] meeting in Hong Kong in September 2002, called for the observance of such procedures in the introduction of any controversial policies which touched on the wider life of the Communion.[20] True, Anglican structures have sometimes posed problems by their dispersed nature, but this has normally been regarded as a small price to pay for the flexibility for mission which they permit, whilst nurturing the increased sense and strength of *koinonia* that they invite and sustain.

35. The second reason we have reached the present impasse is that neither the Episcopal Church (USA) nor the Diocese of New Westminster, in deciding and acting as they did in 2003, went through the procedures which might have made it possible for the church to hold together across differences of belief and practice.

Adiaphora

36. Such holding together across differences within Anglicanism has made use of the vital doctrine of *adiaphora* (literally, "things that do not make a difference"). This is explained further in section B. For the moment, we simply note that Anglicans have always recognised a key distinction between core doctrines of the church (remembering that ethics, liturgy and pastoral practice, if authentically Christian, are all rooted in theology and doctrine) and those upon which disagreement can be tolerated without endangering unity.[21] Paul urged Christians in Corinth and Rome to recognise some matters in this way (what to eat or not to eat being a prime example). When something is seen in this way, an individual church, at whatever level, can make its own decisions on the matter.

37. The third reason therefore why the present crisis has arisen is that many within the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Diocese of New Westminster hold to the opinion, at least by implication, that the questions they were deciding were things upon which Christians might have legitimate difference, while large numbers of other Anglicans around the world did not regard them in this way.

Subsidiarity

38. This highlights a fourth key strand of our common life: *subsidiarity*, the principle that matters should be decided as close to the local level as possible. *Subsidiarity* and *adiaphora* belong together: the more something is regarded as 'indifferent', the more locally the decision can be made. It does not take an Ecumenical Council to decide what colour flowers might be displayed in church; nor does a local congregation presume to add or subtract clauses from

[19] i.e. the twelfth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council.
[20] Resolution 34 *Province-wide and Communion-wide consultation*, reproduced in Appendix Three/8.
[21] See, for example, the line of argument developed in the discursus 'Of Ceremonies' in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

the Nicene Creed. In part this belongs with the missionary imperative: the church must give its primary energy to God's mission to the world, not to reordering its internal life.

39. The fourth reason for our present problems is thus that it was assumed by the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Diocese of New Westminster that they were free to take decisions on matters which many in the rest of the Communion believe can and should be decided only at the Communion-wide level.

Trust

40. All this points up a more general feature which ought to characterise life within the Communion: *a relationship of trust*. Mutual trust generates, and is in turn reinforced by, mutual responsibility. Ideally, the Communion puts its trust in each province to exercise its autonomy appropriately within our mutual fellowship.[22] This commits each church to a fiduciary duty to honour, and not to breach, that trust. However, where trust has broken down in many areas of life in our contemporary world, it is perhaps not surprising, though it remains regrettable, that trust has been eroded in many areas of church life as well. The language of debate has become adversarial, not to say abusive; recourse has been made to secular courts of law in place of Christian forbearance and charity; undertakings have been ignored; protagonists have acted out of spite rather than the demands of proper administration, and facts have been manipulated to serve party spirit. The major cultural divisions in today's world, not least between the rich nations of western Europe and north America and the poorer nations in other parts of the world, have left their ugly mark on our ecclesial life. Likewise, the deep divide in contemporary American political life has led both to an oversimplification and a polarisation of many issues, as though 'liberal' and 'conservative' opinion were simply a pair of uncomplicated pre-packaged bundles. Despite several wonderful counter-examples, each side has increasingly come to distrust the other, and to accuse the other (not least) of using inappropriate models and methods of reading scripture and reaching decisions.

41. This is the fifth unhappy circumstance (itself catastrophic in terms of our mission which, as we have seen, includes the call to model before the watching world the new mode of being human which has been unveiled in Christ) that has brought us to the present difficulty. We clearly need more mutual exploration and explanation of our theological beliefs, our understanding of the Bible, and of many aspects of our common life and witness. The Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, established following the 1998 Lambeth Conference, has made a good start, but much remains to be done.[23] Theological commissions within provinces need to be made more conscious of, and conversant with, Communion-wide dimensions of theological discourse. In particular, we need to develop the habit, and thence the virtue, of that charity

[22] On the relation of communion and autonomy, see below, Section B : Fundamental Principles, paragraphs 67-96.
[23] For the work of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, see http://www.aco.org/ecumenical/commissions/iatdc/index.cfm.

which listens intensely and with good will to widely different expressions of sincerely held Christian theology, at the levels both of method and of content. As a Communion, we need a common forum for debate, a common table to which we can bring our questions for a proper family discussion.

Authority

42. All of this can be summed up in a word which, though often misunderstood, denotes an elusive sixth element which might hold the key: *authority*. The Anglican Communion does not have a Pope, nor any system which corresponds to the authority structure and canonical organisation of the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglican Communion has always declared that its supreme authority is scripture. Later in the report we examine what this claim might actually mean, not least the way in which living under scriptural authority is principally the grounding for the church's mission.[24] In that context, scriptural authority demands, and we believe that in our Communion structures it has begun to receive, appropriately sensitive and fine-tuned systems of decision-making which allow both for the full participation of all members and for an eventual way of making difficult decisions which can enhance, rather than endanger, the unity and communion of our richly diverse family. It is because we have not always fully articulated how authority works within Anglicanism, and because recent decisions have not taken into account, and/or worked through and explained, such authority as we all in theory acknowledge, that we have reached the point where urgent fresh thought and action have become necessary.

[24] See paragraphs 53-62 below.

Section B : Fundamental Principles

43. The mandate of this Commission has been to examine, and make recommendations in relation to, the formal results, in terms of our Communion one with another within Anglicanism, of the recent events which have been described. *We repeat that we have not been invited, and are not intending, to comment or make recommendations on the theological and ethical matters concerning the practice of same sex relations and the blessing or ordination or consecration of those who engage in them.* Having outlined the problems, and sketched the deeper symptoms we believe to lie beneath them, it is time to examine more fully, in this Section, the nature of the Communion we share, the bonds which hold it together, the ways in which all this can be threatened and how such threats might be met. This will enable the report to offer, in Section C, the ways in which we believe our Communion needs strengthening for its future mission and life, before finally, in Section D, offering our recommendations to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his fellow primates on the ways in which our present crisis ought to be resolved.

44. This section of the report considers in more detail the nature of our communion with God and with one another; the specific elements of our common life which bind us together and thus equip us for God's mission in the world; and the ways in which, within our common life, diversity produces tension and difficulty. In so doing, the section sets out the principles against which recent events and actions may be measured.

The communion we share

45. The communion we enjoy as Anglicans involves a sharing in double 'bonds of affection': those that flow from our shared status as children of God in Christ, and those that arise from our shared and inherited identity, which is the particular history of the churches to which we belong. This is a relationship of 'covenantal affection'; that is, our mutual affection is not subject to whim and mood, but involves us in a covenant relation of binding mutual promises, with God in Christ and with one another. All those called by the gospel of Jesus Christ and set apart by God's gift of baptism are incorporated into the communion of the Body of Christ. This communion is primarily a relationship with God, who is himself a communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and it binds every member of Christ into the whole body.[25]

46. Our communion enables us, in mutual interdependence, to engage in our primary task, which is to take forward God's mission to his needy and much-loved world. As a means to that end, it is also necessarily the expression of the worldwide, i.e. 'catholic', nature of the Church. In both these respects, communion remains God's gift as well as God's command.

[25] Extended treatment of these themes can be found in Eames, ch.2, 14-24 and *The Virginia Report*: the report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (1997), ch.2.

47. When "the Anglican Communion" describes itself as such, it is self-consciously describing that *part* of the Body of Christ which shares an inheritance through the Anglican tradition, that is, from the Church of England, whose history encompasses the ancient Celtic and Saxon churches of the British Isles, and which was given fresh theological expression during the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Reformers of that time looked back explicitly to the Bible and the early Fathers, and had every intention that their theology would be 'catholic' in the sense of sharing the faith of the universal Church. The very fact that the family of churches which traces its roots back to the ancient churches of the British Isles should call itself an Anglican Communion is itself indicative of the twin fundamental concepts on which the community is built: our shared inheritance ('Anglican') and our worldwide fellowship as God's children ('communion'). That shared inheritance has itself included a developing understanding of communion, which has been expressed, for instance, in some of our ecumenical dialogues. It also makes us aware of a responsibility, not only to our contemporaries within the Communion, but to those with whom we share in the Communion of Saints.

48. Various different but interlocking descriptions of the Anglican Communion exist amongst us. The Lambeth Conference has described the Anglican Communion as a fellowship of churches in communion with the See of Canterbury.[26] Individual provinces express their own communion relationships in a variety of juridical forms, as: bipartite (in communion with Canterbury);[27] multipartite (in communion with all Anglican churches);[28] or simply through the idea of "belonging to the Anglican Communion".[29] Communion is therefore a relationship between churches (institutional or ecclesial communion) as well as between individual Christians (personal communion).

49. Communion is, in fact, all about mutual relationships. It is expressed by community, equality, common life, sharing, interdependence, and mutual affection and respect. It subsists in visible unity, common confession of the apostolic faith, common belief in scripture and the creeds, common baptism and shared eucharist, and a mutually recognised common ministry. Communion means that each church recognises that the other belongs to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, and shares in the mission of the whole people of God. It involves practising a common liturgical tradition, and intending to listen, speak and act alongside one another in obedience to the gospel. In communion, each church acknowledges and respects the interdependence and autonomy of the other, putting the needs of the global fellowship before its own. Through such communion, each church is enabled to find completeness through its relations to the others, while fulfilling its own

[26] Lambeth Conference 1930 Resolution 49.
[27] e.g. "The Church of Ireland will maintain communion with the sister Church of England": Ireland, Constitution, Preamble and Declaration, III.
[28] e.g. "The Church of Nigeria shall be in full Communion with the See of Canterbury and with all dioceses, provinces and regional Churches which are in full Communion with the See of Canterbury: Nigeria, Constitution, Chapter 1.3(1).
[29] e.g. "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America ... is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion", a fellowship of churches "in communion with the See of Canterbury": ECUSA, Constitution, Preamble.

particular calling within its own cultural context. This does not mean, of course, that each church must accept every theological opinion, or follow every sacramental devotion or liturgical practice, characteristic of the other. Such a distinction, between the essentials in which we agree and the non-essentials which do not inhibit communion, is a vital part of life within the Anglican Communion, and is explored further elsewhere.[30]

50. When people use the normally imprecise language of 'impaired', 'fractured', or 'restricted' communion, or speak of there being 'degrees' of communion between one church or group of churches and another, they commonly mean that only some of the characteristics outlined in the previous paragraph now obtain. Communion is now "less full than it was".[31] Which characteristics are affected (perhaps a failure in complete mutual recognition of ministries, as has happened since the ordination of women to the priesthood and their consecration to the episcopate) will vary from case to case, contributing to the confusing nature of such terms.[32] Such a condition of impairment is not merely sad, and detrimental to our common mission and witness. It could in principle call into question the constitutional position of several member churches of the Anglican Communion, since many, as we have just seen, mark out their identity in terms precisely of being in full communion either with Canterbury or with all other churches in communion with Canterbury. But there has been little consensus within the Anglican Communion on how precisely to identify, beyond a bare assertion, that such impairment, fracturing, and so forth, has taken place, let alone how such a situation might be remedied.[33]

51. Communion clearly makes demands on all within it. It involves obligations, and corresponding rights, which flow from the theological truths on which the life of the Christian community rests. The Lambeth Quadrilateral commits Anglicans to "a series of normative practices: scripture is *read*, tradition is *received*, sacramental worship is *practised*, and the historic character of apostolic leadership is *retained*".[34] The commitments of communion provide objective criteria by which to understand the rights and responsibilities that go with the relationship and which promote and protect the common good of the worldwide community of churches. Many obligations are implicit in the foundation, purposes, forms, subjects and substance of communion, and thus relate to matters of critical common concern to the global Anglican fellowship. For instance, the divine foundation of communion should oblige each church to avoid unilateral action on contentious issues which may result in broken

[30] See paragraphs 36-39, 87-96.
[31] *Women in the Anglican Episcopate: theology guidelines and practice*, The Eames Commission and the Monitoring Group Reports, IV:57 (Toronto, 1998).
[32] See generally *The Virginia Report* and the work of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC) which develop longstanding ideas enunciated by successive Lambeth Conferences.
[33] For analysis of the declarations of impaired communion, see N. Doe, 'Communion and Autonomy in Anglicanism: Nature and Maintenance', pp.20-24, Lambeth Commission website http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/commissions/lambeth/documents/200402whatisitfor.pdf
[34] See Summary Argument from the IATDC's 'Communion Study', p.3; see also IARCCUM Sub-commission submission, p.18. Both documents are set out on the Commission's website http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/commissions/lambeth/kanuga/index.cfm

communion. It is an ancient canonical principle that what touches all should be decided by all. The relational nature of communion requires each church to learn more fully what it means to be part of that communion, so that its members may be fulfilled and strengthened in and through their relations with other churches. Communion obliges each church to foster, respect and maintain all those marks of common identity, and all those instruments of unity and communion, which it shares with fellow churches, seeking a common mind in essential matters of common concern: in short, to act interdependently, not independently.

The bonds of communion

52. These broader considerations lead to reflection in more detail on the specific bonds which hold the Anglican Communion together. Communion, after all, does not simply happen. Even at the human level, it is not left to chance and tacit goodwill. There are several aspects of our common life which, as well as fulfilling the primary purpose of enabling the Church to fulfil its gospel mission in and for the world, serve to draw us together and hold us in fellowship.

The authority of scripture

53. Central among these is *scripture*. Within Anglicanism, scripture has always been recognised as the Church's supreme authority, and as such ought to be seen as a focus and means of unity. The emphasis on scripture grew not least from the insistence of the early Anglican reformers on the importance of the Bible and the Fathers over against what they saw as illegitimate mediaeval developments; it was part of their appeal to ancient undivided Christian faith and life. The seventeenth and eighteenth century divines hammered out their foundations of "scripture, tradition and reason"; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we have seen the 'Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral', in which scripture takes first place.[35] The Bible has always been at the centre of Anglican belief and life, embodied and exemplified by the fact that the reading and singing of scripture has always been at the centre of Anglican worship.

54. However, the common phrase "the authority of scripture" can be misleading; the confusions that result may relate to some of the divisions just noted. Scripture itself, after all, regularly speaks of *God* as the supreme authority. When Jesus speaks of "all authority in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28.18), he declares that this authority is given, not to the books that his followers will write, but to himself. Jesus, the living Word, is the one to whom the written Word bears witness as God's ultimate and personal self-expression. The New Testament is full of similar ascriptions of authority to the Father, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. Thus the phrase "the authority of scripture", if it is to be based on what scripture itself says, must be regarded as a shorthand, and a potentially misleading one at that, for the longer and more complex notion of "the authority of the triune God, *exercised through* scripture". The question of how this

[35] This 'Quadrilateral' was first adopted by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) meeting in synod in Chicago in 1886. It was subsequently adopted as a fundamental basis for ecumenical reconciliation in Resolution 11 of the Lambeth Conference 1888 – reproduced in Appendix Three/1.

'exercised through' works in practice is vital to understanding the kind of authority which scripture possesses and hence to the nature and exercise of actual authority within the Church. It may be, historically, that the phrase 'authority of scripture' has characteristically emerged in contexts of protest (when one part of the Church appeals to scripture against something being done by another part). When we attempt to apply it more widely, to an entire understanding of the Church's mission and common life, it quickly becomes apparent that its implications need to be thought out more fully.

55. For Jesus and the early Christians, 'authority' was not conceived as a static source of information or the giving of orders (as the word 'authority' has sometimes implied), but in terms of the dynamic inbreaking of God's kingdom, that is, God's sovereign, saving, redeeming and reconciling rule over all creation. This saving rule of God, long promised and awaited in Israel, broke in upon the world in and through Jesus and his death and resurrection, to be then implemented through the work of the Spirit until the final act of grace which will create the promised new heavens and new earth. If the notion of scriptural authority is itself to be rooted in scripture, and to be consonant with the central truths confessed by Christians from the earliest days, it must be seen that the purpose of scripture is not simply to supply true information, nor just to prescribe in matters of belief and conduct, nor merely to act as a court of appeal, but to be part of the dynamic life of the Spirit through which God the Father is making the victory which was won by Jesus' death and resurrection operative within the world and in and through human beings. Scripture is thus part of the means by which God directs the Church in its mission, energises it for that task, and shapes and unites it so that it may be both equipped for this work and itself part of the message.

56. How then does scripture function in this way? This is not the place for a detailed consideration of the respective authority of the Old and New Testaments, important though that discussion is. The early Christians understood themselves to be both beneficiaries and agents of the saving sovereignty of God, the 'kingdom' which had been accomplished in Jesus Christ. The 'authority' of the apostles – a concept worked out with great pain and paradox by Paul in 2 Corinthians – was their God-given and Spirit-driven vocation as witnesses of the resurrection, through whose announcement of the good news God was powerfully at work to call men and women to salvation (Romans 1.16-17) and thus to create the Church as the sign and foretaste of new creation (Ephesians 1-3). It is within this context of apostolic witness, drawing its 'authority' from the victory of Jesus Christ and the power of the Spirit (Matthew 28.18-20; 2 Corinthians 3.1-4.6, 13.3-4), that the writings we call the New Testament came to be written, precisely to be vehicles of the Spirit's work in energising the Church in its mission and shaping it in the holiness of new creation. Thus, as scholarship has emphasised, the writers of the canonical gospels (despite all the obvious differences between them, and the multiple sources upon which they drew) were conscious of telling the story of Jesus in such a way as to demonstrate its fulfilment of the story of Israel and its foundational character for the mission and life of the Church. From the first, the New Testament was intended as, and perceived to be, not a repository of various suggestions for developing one's private spirituality, but as the collection of books through

which the Spirit who was working so powerfully through the apostles would develop and continue that work in the churches. This is why, from very early in the Church, the apostolic writings were read during worship, as part of both the Church's praise to God for his mighty acts and of the Church's drawing fresh strength from God for mission and holiness. This, rather than a quasi-legal process of 'appeal', is the primary and dynamic context within which the shorthand phrase "authority of scripture" finds its deepest meaning.

Scripture and interpretation

57. This means that for scripture to 'work' as the vehicle of God's authority it is vital that it be read at the heart of worship in a way which (through appropriate lectionaries, and the use of scripture in canticles etc.) allows it to be heard, understood and reflected upon, not as a pleasing and religious background noise, but as God's living and active word. The message of scripture, as a whole and in its several parts, must be preached and taught in all possible and appropriate ways. It is the responsibility of the whole Church to engage with the Bible together; within that, each individual Christian, to the fullest extent of which they are capable, must study it and learn from it, thoughtfully and prayerfully. Within this context, the Church's accredited leaders have a responsibility, through constant teaching and preaching, to enable the Church to grow to maturity, so that when difficult judgements are required they may be made in full knowledge of the texts.

58. The place of Christian leaders – chiefly within the Anglican tradition, of bishops – as *teachers of scripture* can hardly be overemphasised. The 'authority' of bishops cannot reside solely or primarily in legal structures, but, as in Acts 6.4, in their ministry of "prayer and the word of God". If this is ignored, the model of 'the authority of scripture' which scripture itself offers is failing to function as it should. The authoritative teaching of scripture cannot be left to academic researchers, vital though they are. The accredited leaders of the Church – within the diocese, the bishop(s); within the Communion, the primates – must be people through whose prayerful teaching ministry the authority of God vested in scripture is brought to bear - in mission within the world and in wise teaching to build up the Church.

59. As this task proceeds, questions of *interpretation* are rightly raised, not as an attempt to avoid or relativise scripture and its authority, but as a way of ensuring that it really is scripture that is being heard, not simply the echo of our own voices (though our own responsive hearing is necessary) or the memory of earlier Christian interpretations (though we must always take them into account: 'tradition' consists primarily of the recollection of what the scripture-reading Church has said). Historical interpretation, from ongoing lexicographical work (to make sure the nuances of ancient words are properly and precisely heard) to large-scale historical reconstruction (to ensure we are not making anachronistic assumptions), remains vital. It can be deeply challenging to entrenched views of what scripture is thought to be saying, not least where it has been read within an unchallenged philosophical or cultural matrix.

60. This applies equally, in our own day and setting, to the assumptions and entrenched views of the Enlightenment (which have often resulted in

unwarranted negative judgements on much biblical material), as well as to the assumptions and entrenched views of a pre- or anti-critical conservatism. Biblical scholarship needs simultaneously to be free to explore different meanings and to be constrained by loyalty to the community of the Church across time and space. It cannot pretend to a detached 'neutrality'. Such pretence (as in phrases like "the objective results of scholarship") is often, and rightly, seen as either a grab for power or a mere protest against alternative interpretations. Where a fresh wave of scholarship generates ideas which are perceived as a threat to something the Church has always held dear, it is up to the scholars concerned, on the one hand, to explain how what is now proposed not only accords with but actually enhances the central core of the Church's faith. And it is up to the Church, on the other hand, not to reject new proposals out of hand, but to listen carefully, to test everything, and to be prepared to change its mind if and when a convincing case is made.

61. The current crisis thus constitutes a call to the whole Anglican Communion to re-evaluate the ways in which we have read, heard, studied and digested scripture. We can no longer be content to drop random texts into arguments, imagining that the point is thereby proved, or indeed to sweep away sections of the New Testament as irrelevant to today's world, imagining that problems are thereby solved. We need mature study, wise and prayerful discussion, and a joint commitment to hearing and obeying God as he speaks in scripture, to discovering more of the Jesus Christ to whom all authority is committed, and to being open to the fresh wind of the Spirit who inspired scripture in the first place. If our present difficulties force us to read and learn together from scripture in new ways, they will not have been without profit.

62. A mention of scripture today can sometimes seem actually divisive, so aware are we of the bewildering range of available interpretative strategies and results. This is tragic, since, as with the Spirit who inspired scripture, we should expect that the Bible would be a means of unity, not division. In fact, our shared reading of scripture across boundaries of culture, region and tradition ought to be the central feature of our common life, guiding us together into an appropriately rich and diverse unity by leading us forward from entrenched positions into fresh appreciation of the riches of the gospel as articulated in the scriptures. This is characteristically and appropriately accomplished through the various ministries of the Church, not least the next of the bonds of unity now to be considered.

The episcopate

63. The unity of the Communion is both expressed and put into effect among other things through the *episcopate*. At the Reformation, the Church of England maintained the threefold order of ministry, in continuity with the early Church. As the events of the seventeenth century bear witness, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the Church of England would end up with a continuing episcopacy. But in the event "there was no attempt [during the sixteenth-century Reformation] to minimise the role of bishops as ministers of word and sacrament or to stop a collegial relation between bishops and presbyters in the

diocese or bishops together at the level of Province."[36] Within a short period of time, in fact, this retention of episcopacy as the foundational form of government within the Anglican churches became the distinctive mark of its claim to be both Catholic and Protestant; and, reflecting the practice of the very early Church, the ministry of bishops as chief pastors and teachers of the faith, as the focus of unity and source of ministry, became central. The principle of Anglican episcopacy was fought over and defended in the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church. It was retained in the life of the Episcopal Church (USA). It was subsequently, and carefully, preserved in the life of all thirty-eight provinces of the Anglican Communion, including the United Churches of South Asia. As recognised in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, an episcopate at once local and universal is therefore an essential element of the life of the Anglican Communion. And, to link once more with scripture as the central fact of unity within the Communion, it is the bishop's role as teacher of scripture that is meant, above all, to be not merely a symbolic but a very practical means of giving the Church the energy and direction it needs for its mission and therefore the motivation and the groundwork for its unity.

64. It has always been maintained within Anglicanism that a bishop is more than simply the local chief pastor.[37] Bishops represent the universal Church to the local and *vice versa*.[38] This is why individual churches have developed ways of confirming the election of bishops, signifying their acceptability to the wider Church. Without such attention to general acceptability, the episcopate, instead of being in its very existence one of the bonds of unity in the Communion, quickly becomes an occasion and focus of disunity.

65. The work, and symbolic unifying value, of the local episcopate is matched at the transprovincial level by the four Instruments of Unity (described more fully in paragraphs 98-104), and especially by the Archbishop of Canterbury himself as the chief pastor of the entire Communion. Their role and work is not a substitute for the mutual accountability of the rest of the Church, but is rather a means of expressing it, drawing it together, and enabling the whole Church to listen to each member and each member to listen to the whole. It is with this in mind that successive Lambeth Conferences have urged the primates to shoulder the burden of enhanced responsibility for the unity of the Communion, a request echoed by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission at its meeting in September 2003.[39] This request draws on that theology of wider apostolic and episcopal leadership which is expressed in the New Testament by the apostles themselves (e.g. Paul, writing with authority to various churches including some he had not himself founded), by such writers as Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus

[36] *The Virginia Report*, paragraph 3.25.
[37] See also Section D : The Maintenance of Communion, paragraphs 124-132.
[38] "We have seen that a Bishop's ministry is 'representative' in several different senses. A Bishop represents the local church to the wider, but also the other way round. Bishops represent Christ to the people, but also bring the people and their prayers to God. Finally, they often represent God and his Church in the world at large." Dr Michael Nazir-Ali in *Working with the Spirit: Choosing diocesan bishops*, CHP (2001), p.107.
[39] 'Reflections offered to the Primates of the Anglican Communion by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury'. See http://www.aco.org/ecumenical/commissions/iatdc/20031015primates.cfm

and Cyprian, and in subsequent centuries by the recognition of the role of the great sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome and Jerusalem.

66. The very existence of the Instruments of Unity points to the desire of the Communion to work together, with bishops, clergy and laity all involved as fully as possible. This is where the ongoing synods, at all levels of the Church, express by their existence, as well as (it is to be hoped) by their actual work, the unity-in-diversity which characterises our life in communion. In 1988, Archbishop Robert Runcie put the challenge this way:

> "…are we being called through events and their theological interpretation to move from independence to interdependence? If we answer yes, then we cannot dodge the question of how this is to be given 'flesh': how is our interdependence articulated and made effective; how is it to be structured? ... We need to have confidence that authority is not dispersed to the point of dissolution and ineffectiveness … Let me put it in starkly simple terms: do we really *want* unity within the Anglican Communion? Is our worldwide family of Christians worth bonding together? Or is our paramount concern the preservation of promotion of that particular expression of Anglicanism which has developed within the culture of our own province? … I believe we still need the Anglican Communion. But we have reached the stage in the growth of the Communion when we must begin to make radical choices, or growth will imperceptibly turn to decay. I believe the choice between independence and interdependence, already set before us as a Communion in embryo twenty-five years ago, is quite simply the choice between unity or gradual fragmentation."[40]

What this bears witness to is the understanding that the churches of the Anglican Communion, if that Communion is to mean anything at all, are obliged to move together, to walk together in *synodality*. It is by listening to, and interacting with, voices from as many different parts of the family as possible that the Church discovers what its unity and communion really mean. Synodality as a characteristic of the Anglican Communion finds expression in Lambeth Conferences as early as 1867 (Resolutions 4, 5, 8 and 10) as well as in the Lambeth Conference of 1897 (Resolution 24).

Discernment in communion and reception

67. As the whole Church, corporately and individually, gives attention to the reading and pondering of scripture, we are called to the specific unifying task of a common *discernment in communion*. We come from a rich variety of cultures, and each of us is called to read scripture within, and apply it to, our own particular setting – and to respect the fact that other churches face the same demands within their own contexts. We cannot, therefore, confine our readings of scripture to our own setting alone (as scholarship, sometimes claimed as the preserve of the western academy, has often done). On the contrary, one of the

[40] R Runcie, Opening Address, reproduced in *The Truth Shall Make You Free, The Lambeth Conference 1988*, CHP (1988), p.16.

ways in which we discern the limits of appropriate inculturation is by our rendering account to one another, across traditional boundaries, for the gospel we proclaim and live and the teaching we offer. One of the hallmarks of healthy worldwide communion will be precisely our readiness to learn from one another (which by no means indicates an unquestioning acceptance of one another's readings, but rather a rich mutual accountability) as we read scripture together. To the extent that this has not been a major feature of our common life in recent decades, we should not be surprised that major divisions have opened up amongst us. It is by reading scripture too little, not by reading it too much, that we have allowed ourselves to drift apart.

68. Within our common life, one way in which unity has been maintained is by subjecting fresh developments within the Anglican Communion to a test of *reception*. In classical theological terms, 'reception' was the process by which the pronouncements of a Council of the Church were tested by how the faithful 'received' it. The *consensus fidelium* ('common mind of the believers') constituted the ultimate check that a new declaration was in harmony with the faith as it had been received. More recently, the doctrine has been used in Anglicanism as a way of testing whether a controversial development, not yet approved by a universal Council of the Church but nevertheless arising within a province by legitimate processes, might gradually, over time, come to be accepted as an authentic development of the faith. This offers a clear threefold sequence:

    (i) theological debate and discussion

    (ii) formal action, and

    (iii) increased consultation to see whether the formal action settles down and makes itself at home.

    This process of consultation, designed to strengthen Communion, is the very opposite of confrontation, and leads to a shared discernment of God's truth. It is a key way of maintaining the unity of the Church through a time of experiment and uncertainty.[41]

69. We should note, however, that the doctrine of reception only makes sense if the proposals concern matters on which the Church has not so far made up its mind. It cannot be applied in the case of actions which are explicitly against the current teaching of the Anglican Communion as a whole, and/or of individual provinces. No province, diocese or parish has the right to introduce a novelty which goes against such teaching and excuse it on the grounds that it has simply been put forward for reception. In such a case, if change is desired, it must be sought through the appropriate channels, which we describe elsewhere.

70. The Anglican Communion is thus bound together in a variety of ways, with scripture as the constant factor, the historic episcopate, the Instruments of Unity, and the synodical life of the Church as the practical means of living together

[41] Consideration of the process of reception is well developed in *The Virginia Report*, ch.4 'Levels of Communion - Subsidiarity and Interdependence' 4:14-4:21.

under scripture, and with discernment and reception as the modes in which the Communion operates in relation to new proposals and the emergence of differences. It is important to note that these Bonds of Unity are different in kind from those which operate in the Roman Catholic Church, in which the Pontiff, with the support of the Curia, enjoys "supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power", which he can always freely exercise.[42] The Anglican way, theological, symbolic and practical, is diffused among the different aspects of the life of the Communion precisely in such a way as to give supreme authority, in the sense outlined above, to scripture as the locus and means of God's word, energising the Church for its mission and sustaining it in its unity.

Diversity within communion

71. The nature of unity within the Anglican Communion necessarily includes the rich diversity which comes from factors such as local culture and different traditions of reading scripture. Diversity is a great strength; without care, however, it can also be a source of great tension and division. Within the Communion we have developed theological and practical ways of working at this problem and of distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable forms of diversity.

Autonomy

72. This diversity is enshrined in the *autonomy* of the individual provinces. This is fundamental to Anglican polity. But 'autonomy' is a much-misunderstood concept and, not least because it is often referred to in current disputes, it is important to examine it in more detail.

73. Although there is a sense in which the Church of England's break with Rome in the sixteenth century was an assertion of that Church's 'autonomy', in more recent times the concept of 'provincial autonomy' in Anglican thinking was developed in its early twentieth century context to signify 'independence from the control of the British Crown'. The established Church of England of the Reformation was, and remains, subject to the royal supremacy, and many overseas Anglican churches at one time or other had been similarly subject; speaking of their 'autonomy' came to refer to their disengagement from that supremacy.

74. A further development in meaning then occurred: as provinces received or devised their own constitutions, autonomy (itself acquired or derived, not inherent) came to be interpreted more in terms of "the right of each church to self-determination", expressed in the possession of extensive powers over the determination of local issues.[43] Thus, some provincial constitutions formally grant to their principal synods extensive jurisdiction over a wide range of matters including faith, order and discipline. At different times, this right to self-determination has been expressed by Anglicans variously as: autonomy (of

[42] Code of Canon Law, canon 331.
[43] Examples - see *The Virginia Report* 3.26, 3.27, 3.28.

province or diocese),[44] independence as a limited freedom,[45] and, recently, within a more nuanced context of interdependence and subsidiarity.[46] These autonomous structures create a context in which the unity of the Communion, described above, can be expressed in diverse ways. This inevitably raises the key question of how much diversity is to be allowed or encouraged, on what matters, and under what conditions.

75. The word 'autonomy' represents within Anglican discourse a far more limited form of independent government than is popularly understood by many today. Literally, 'autonomous' means 'having one's own laws' (*auto* - self, *nomos* - law), and the autonomy of a body or institution means "[t]he right of self-government, of making its own laws and administering *its own affairs*".[47] In the secular world it is well settled that 'autonomic' laws are those created by a body or persons within the community on which has been conferred subordinate and restricted legislative power. Autonomy, therefore, is not the same thing as sovereignty or independence; it more closely resembles the orthodox polity of 'autocephaly', which denotes autonomy in communion.

76. A body is thus, in this sense, 'autonomous' *only in relation to others*: autonomy exists in a relation with a wider community or system of which the autonomous entity forms part. The word 'autonomous' in this sense actually implies not an isolated individualism, but the idea of being free to determine one's own life within a wider obligation to others. The key idea is autonomy-in-communion, that is, freedom held within interdependence. The autonomy of each Anglican province therefore implies that the church lives in relation to, and exercises its autonomy most fully in the context of, the global Communion. This idea of autonomy-in-relation is clearly implicit in the laws of some churches: for instance, South East Asia describes itself as "a fully autonomous part of the Anglican Communion".[48]

77. As the right to self-government, autonomy is a form of limited authority. Ordinarily, an autonomous body (unlike a sovereign body) is capable only of making decisions for itself in relation to its own affairs at its own level. Autonomy, then, is linked to subsidiarity (see paragraphs 38-39, 83, 94-95).

78. Understood in this way, each autonomous church has the unfettered right to order and regulate its own local affairs, through its own system of government and law. Each such church is free from direct control by any decision of any ecclesiastical body external to itself in relation to its exclusively internal affairs

[44] Lambeth Conference 1930, Resolution 48 *on the principle of autonomy*; Lambeth Conference 1978, Resolution 21.3 - recognises "the autonomy of each of its member Churches, acknowledging the legal right of each Church to make its own decision…"
[45] "The Churches represented [here] are indeed independent, but independent with the Christian freedom which recognises the restraints of truth and love. They are not free to deny the truth. They are not free to ignore the fellowship…", Lambeth Conference 1920, SPCK (1920), Evangelical Letter, p.14.
[46] See *The Virginia Report*, ch.4.
[47] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, (Oxford 1989).
[48] South East Asia, Constitution, Fundamental Declarations, 5.

(unless that external decision is authorised under, or incorporated in, its own law).[49]

79. However, some affairs treated within and by a church may have a dual character: they may be of internal (domestic) and external (common) concern. Autonomy includes the right of a church to make decisions in those of its affairs which also touch the wider external community of which it forms part, which are also the affairs of others, provided those internal decisions are fully compatible with the interests, standards, unity and good order of the wider community of which the autonomous body forms part. If they are not so compatible, whilst there may be no question about their legal validity, they will impose strains not only upon that church's wider relationship with other churches, but on that church's inner self-understanding as part of "the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" in relation to some of its own members.

80. In our view, therefore, 'autonomy' thus denotes not unlimited freedom but what we might call freedom-in-relation, so it is subject to limits generated by the commitments of communion. Consequently, the very nature of autonomy itself obliges each church to have regard to the common good of the global Anglican community and the Church universal.

81. These ideas are shared by other Christian traditions. At the present time, we sense that these ideas are also well understood in terms of the autonomy of an individual diocese in relation to the province of which it forms part, and perhaps also an individual parish in relation to the diocese of which it forms part, since they have been given strong institutional expression. They seem much less well understood when it comes to the autonomy of a province in relation to the global Communion.

82. Since autonomy is closely related to interdependence and freedom-in-relation, there are legitimate limits (both substantive and procedural) on the exercise of this autonomy, demanded by the relationships and commitments of communion and the acknowledgement of common identity. Communion is, in fact, the fundamental limit to autonomy. In essential matters of common concern to the worldwide fellowship of churches (affairs, that is, which touch both the particular church and the wider community of which it forms part), we believe that each church in the exercise of its autonomy should:

- consider, promote and respect the common good of the Anglican Communion and its constituent churches (as discerned in communion through the Instruments of Unity)

- maintain its communion with fellow churches, and avoid jeopardising it, by bringing potentially contentious initiatives, prior to implementation, to the rest of the communion in dialogue, consultation, discernment and agreement

[49] In saying this, we are aware of course that, as a matter of civil law, a narrowly secular approach is likely to be adopted by the courts which would emphasise the strict legal autonomy of each church. See, for example, R *v* Ecclesiastical Commissioners of both Houses of Parliament *ex parte* The Church Society (1994), 6 Admin, LR 670.

in communion with the fellowship of churches (through the Instruments of Unity), and

- be able to depart, where appropriate and acceptable, on the basis of its own corporate conscience and with the blessing of the communion, from the standards of the community of which is an autonomous part, provided such departure is neither critical to the maintenance of communion nor likely to harm the common good of the Anglican Communion and of the Church universal (again, as determined by the Instruments of Unity).

83. 'Autonomy' in this sense is thus closely linked to ***subsidiarity***, discussed above.[50] This is clear in *The Virginia Report* which was presented to the Lambeth Conference 1998. It argued that "a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level." (4:8). "However," the Report continues, "when decisions are taken by Provinces on matters which touch the life of the whole Communion without consultation, they may give rise to tension as other Provinces or other Christian traditions reject what has been decided" (4:13). In this same section on subsidiarity *The Virginia Report* makes reference to the Report of the Eames Commission (III, 43-44), noting that where such decisions are concerned, there is need for consultation with appropriate agents of Anglican interdependence prior to action.

84. Autonomy and Communion therefore belong together, as many Christian traditions have stressed and as, indeed, emerges from our ecumenical dialogues. They are thoroughly compatible, interdependent and directed to the same goal, namely the mission of the Church. Each draws from the other in creative tension. Each church has a corporate ecclesial personhood and exists in and for its fellow churches. Each church has for itself the greatest possible liberty which is compatible with the unity and good order of the Anglican Communion, in governance, ministry, doctrine, liturgy, rites, ecumenism and property.

85. Autonomy gives full scope for the development of authentic local living out of the Christian faith and mission, in what has come to be known as ***inculturation***. This is an essential part of the Christian mission: each church must find fresh ways to proclaim the Gospel of Christ into the context of the world in which it is living. The eternal truth of the gospel relates in different ways to the particulars of any one society, as we see already within the life of the earliest church as described in Acts. This combination of faithfulness to the gospel and inculturation into different societies will inevitably produce a proper and welcome diversity within the life of the Church. Such diversity sometimes raises the question as to whether faithfulness has been abandoned (think of the shock to some devout Orthodox worshippers at observing western Christians crossing themselves the wrong way round); but diversity, as we have seen, is in principle to be welcomed and celebrated as normal and healthy. As the 1988 Lambeth Conference put it:

[50] In paragraphs 38-39, 75-83.

> "It is right and proper that the one faith and discipline of the Church should be 'incarnate' in varied cultural forms … the Gospel of Jesus does not come to people in the abstract, but to specific men and women."[51]

This means that the much discussed problem of 'Christ and Culture' is in large part a problem of how to communicate the gospel effectively in widely differing cultural situations.

86. There are, however, limits to diversity. In the life of the Christian churches, these limits are defined by truth and charity. The Lambeth Conference of 1920 put it this way:

> "The Churches represented in [the Communion] are indeed independent, but independent with the Christian freedom which recognises the restraints of truth and love. They are not free to deny the truth. They are not free to ignore the fellowship."[52]

This means that any development needs to be explored for its resonance with the truth, and with the utmost charity on the part of all – charity that grants that a new thing can be offered humbly and with integrity, and charity that might refrain from an action which might harm a sister or brother.

Adiaphora

87. As the Church has explored the question of limits to diversity, it has frequently made use of the notion of *adiaphora*: things which do not make a difference, matters regarded as non-essential, issues about which one can disagree without dividing the Church. This notion lies at the heart of many current disputes. The classic biblical statements of the principle are in Romans 14.1-15.13 and 1 Corinthians 8-10. There, in different though related contexts, Paul insists that such matters as food and drink (eating meat and drinking wine, or abstaining from doing so; eating meat that had been offered to idols, or refusing to do so), are matters of private conviction over which Christians who take different positions ought not to judge one another. They must strive for that united worship and witness which celebrate and display the fact that they are worshipping the same God and are servants of the same Lord.

88. This principle of 'adiaphora' was invoked and developed by the early English Reformers, particularly in their claim that, in matters of eucharistic theology, specific interpretations (transubstantiation was particularly in mind) were not to be insisted upon as 'necessary to be believed', and that a wider range of interpretations was to be allowed. Ever since then, the notion of 'adiaphora' has been a major feature of Anglican theology, over against those schools of thought, both Roman and Protestant, in which even the smallest details of belief and practice are sometimes regarded as essential parts of an indivisible whole.

[51] *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988* (London: CHP, 1988), 'Dogmatic and Pastoral Concerns', p.87(23).
[52] Lambeth Conference 1920, SPCK (1920), Evangelical Letter, p.14.

89. This does not mean, however, that either for Paul or in Anglican theology all things over which Christians in fact disagree are automatically to be placed into the category of 'adiaphora'. It has never been enough to say that we must celebrate or at least respect 'difference' without further ado. Not all 'differences' can be tolerated. (We know this well enough in the cases of, say, racism or child abuse; we would not say "some of us are racists, some of us are not, so let's celebrate our diversity"). This question is frequently begged in current discussions, as for instance when people suggest without further argument, in relation to a particular controversial issue, that it should not be allowed to impair the Church's unity, in other words that the matter in question is not as serious as some suppose. In the letters already quoted, Paul is quite clear that there are several matters – obvious examples being incest (1 Corinthians 5) and lawsuits between Christians before non-Christian courts (1 Corinthians 6) – in which there is no question of saying "some Christians think this, other Christians think that, and you must learn to live with the difference". On the contrary: Paul insists that some types of behaviour are incompatible with inheriting God's coming kingdom, and must not therefore be tolerated within the Church. 'Difference' has become a concept within current postmodern discourse which can easily mislead the contemporary western church into forgetting the principles, enshrined in scripture and often re-articulated within Anglicanism, for distinguishing one type of difference from another.

90. The question then naturally arises as to *how* one can tell, and indeed as to *who* can decide, which types of behaviour count as 'adiaphora' and which do not. For Paul, the categories are not arbitrary, but clearly distinct. For instance: that which would otherwise separate Jew and Gentile within the Church is 'adiaphora'. That which embodies and expresses renewed humanity in Christ is always mandatory for Christians; that which embodies the dehumanising turning-away-from-God which Paul characterises with such terms as 'sin', 'flesh', and so on, is always forbidden. This, of course, leaves several questions unanswered, but at least sketches a map on which further discussions may be located.

91. To this end, we note that, though Paul's notion of 'adiaphora' does indeed envisage situations where particular aspects of lifestyle are associated with particular cultures, he never supposes that human culture in the abstract is simply 'neutral', so that all habits of thought and life within a particular culture are to be regarded either as 'inessential' or for that matter 'to be supported and enhanced'. When we put the notion of 'adiaphora' together with that of inculturation (see above in paragraphs 32, 67, 85), this is what we find: in Paul's world, many cultures prided themselves on such things as anger and violence on the one hand and sexual profligacy on the other. Paul insists that both of these are ruled out for those in Christ. Others prided themselves on such things as justice and peace; Paul demonstrated that the gospel of Jesus enhanced and fulfilled such aspirations. The Church in each culture, and each generation, must hammer out the equivalent complex and demanding judgements.

92. Even when the notion of 'adiaphora' applies, it does not mean that Christians are left free to pursue their own personal choices without restriction. Paul insists

that those who take what he calls the "strong" position, claiming the right to eat and drink what others regard as off limits, must take care of the "weak", those who still have scruples of conscience about the matters in question – since those who are lured into acting against conscience are thereby drawn into sin. Paul does not envisage this as a static situation. He clearly hopes that his own teaching, and mutual acceptance within the Christian family, will bring people to one mind. But he knows from pastoral experience that people do not change their minds overnight on matters deep within their culture and experience.

93. Whenever, therefore, a claim is made that a particular theological or ethical stance is something 'indifferent', and that people should be free to follow it without the Church being thereby split, there are two questions to be asked. First, is this in fact the kind of matter which can count as 'inessential', or does it touch on something vital? Second, if it is indeed 'adiaphora', is it something that, nevertheless, a sufficient number of other Christians will find scandalous and offensive, either in the sense that they will be led into acting against their own consciences or that they will be forced, for conscience's sake, to break fellowship with those who go ahead? If the answer to the latter question is 'yes', the biblical guidelines insist that those who have no scruples about the proposed action should nevertheless refrain from going ahead.

94. Thus the notion of 'adiaphora' is brought back into its close relationship with that of 'subsidiarity', the principle that matters in the Church should be decided as close to the local level as possible.[53] A distinction is drawn between trivial issues about which nobody would dream of consulting the great councils of the Communion, and more serious matters which no local church has the right to tamper with on its own. The two notions of 'adiaphora' and 'subsidiarity' work together like this: the clearer it is that something is 'indifferent' in terms of the Church's central doctrine and ethics, the closer to the local level it can be decided; whereas the clearer it is that something is central, the wider must be the circle of consultation. Once again, this poses the question: how does one know, and who decides, where on this sliding scale a particular issue belongs? In many cases an obvious prima facie case exists of sufficient controversy, both locally and across the Communion, to justify, if only for the reasons in the previous paragraph, reference to the wider diocese or province, or even to the whole Communion.

95. Not least because of the recurring questions about 'who decides' in these matters, the twin notions of 'adiaphora' and 'subsidiarity' need to be triangulated with the questions of authority, and particularly the authority of scripture on the one hand and of decision-makers in the Church on the other. This brings us back from consideration of the nature of diversity within communion to the bonds of unity which hold that communion together, and so to complete the circle of this account of what our communion actually is and how it functions and flourishes as it seeks to serve the mission of God in the world.

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[53] See above in paragraphs 38-39, 77 and 83.

96. Having offered a description of both the nature of the problems that confront us in the Anglican Communion and the theological principles within which they must be addressed, we turn our attention to the future. In what direction is God now calling us as the Anglican Communion as we seek to fulfil our mission and, through our unity and communion, live out the gospel of Jesus for the sake of the world's redemption?

Section C : Our Future Life Together

The Instruments of Unity

97. One matter that has struck us forcefully is the way in which the views of the Instruments of Unity have been ignored or sidelined by sections of the Communion. This has led the Commission to revisit the question of authority of the Instruments of Unity and their inter-relationship and we will make recommendations later in this report. *The Virginia Report* spoke of Anglicanism's core structures as "a complex and still-evolving network" of authority.[54] In many ways, such dispersed authority is a great strength, but in relation to the issues that have recently confronted the Communion, its inherent weakness has been illustrated only too clearly.

98. Very early on in the life of the emerging Anglican Churches, it became clear that there would need to be mechanisms by which the Churches could take common counsel. These have become the core structures of the Anglican Communion, together known as the Instruments of Unity. When we speak of the 'Instruments of Unity', we are referring (in historical order) to:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury
- The Lambeth Conference
- The Anglican Consultative Council
- The Primates' Meeting.

The Archbishop of Canterbury

99. From the beginning, the Archbishop of Canterbury, both in his person and his office, has been the pivotal instrument and focus of unity; and relationship to him became a touchstone of what it was to be Anglican.[55] It was to the Archbishop of Canterbury that American Anglicans first turned to seek consecration of new bishops after the American War of Independence.[56]

[54] See *The Virginia Report,* ch.3, p.42.
[55] Thomas Cranmer, as the first Archbishop of the Reformation period and author of the first *Book of Common Prayer*, set the tone and provided the model for his successors as *primus inter pares*; the primacy within both the Church of England and within the wider Communion has always been essentially a "primacy of honour".
[56] Although Archbishop Moore declined to consecrate Samuel Seabury himself for legal and political reasons, he considered Seabury's consecration by the Scottish Anglican Bishops in 1784 to be valid. Meanwhile, he pursued his own discussions with the English Government, enabling him to consecrate William White and Samuel Provoost as soon as the law had been changed in 1786. The story is helpfully described in PM Doll *Revolution, Religion and National Identity* (London 2000), ch.6.

Thereafter it was successive Archbishops of Canterbury who consecrated bishops for Canada, the West Indies, India and the developing English colonial territories, and it was to Archbishops of Canterbury that these churches tended to turn for assistance both in spiritual and political matters when problems arose.[57]

The Lambeth Conference

100. It was a natural development from this that the Archbishop of Canterbury should be the person to call the bishops of the Anglican Communion together to take counsel. Although the first Lambeth Conference was called amidst considerable controversy and resistance as to its significance,[58] its inception was very much the brainchild of Archbishop C T Longley.[59] The question of controversial teaching by a bishop of the emerging South African Church, William Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, was manoeuvred on to the agenda by pressure from participating bishops; in some ways, this was to be a foretaste of what would follow in international gatherings of Anglicans, when controversial topics arise.[60] Intercommunion was at the heart of its concerns:[61] perhaps unsurprisingly, its resolutions prefigure many of the issues which would recur (over a range of topics, decade by decade) in the succeeding century and a half.[62]

101. Given the understanding of the episcopal office within Anglicanism (see paragraphs 63-66 above), the Conference seemed the appropriate body to express a view on issues of doctrinal purity and orthodoxy. Prompted by the Colenso affair, it suggested that "... a committee [of bishops] be instructed to consider the constitution of a voluntary spiritual tribunal, to which questions of doctrine might be carried by appeal ..."[63]

102. It had been a precondition of its calling that the Conference should not regard itself as a pan-Anglican Synod, with legislative powers, but rather as an

[57] For a readable account of the developing Communion, see W.M. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, SPCK (1997). The earlier role of the Bishop of London (which had developed from the commercial expansion of the chartered companies of the City of London, and the work of their chaplains) was almost entirely eclipsed by the early nineteenth century.
[58] See AMG Stephenson, *The First Lambeth Conference*, SPCK (1967) especially ch.10; the Archbishop of York was the most prominent among those bishops who refused the summons to the 1867 Conference (for reasons based partly on Church-State issues, relating to questions about the status of the Conference as a "General Council", in contravention of Article XXI).
[59] "It is remarkable to observe how Longley managed to be present at each of the events which proved to be milestones in the early history of 'pan-Anglicanism'" (p. 91). Stephenson contrasts Longley's 'pan-Anglicanism' with his predecessors' 'pan-Protestantism' (the latter could be illustrated by the passage some years earlier of the Jerusalem Bishopric Act 1841).
[60] For the full story, see Stephenson *op cit* chapter 11.
[61] 'Intercommunion' issues took up approximately half of the time the bishops spent together (see Stephenson, *op cit* ch.12).
[62] Their Resolutions covered the process of episcopal appointment, establishment of new sees, intercommunion, synodical authority, and doctrinal and geographical boundaries ; for the full text of these and other resolutions up to 1988, see R Coleman, *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences* 1867-1988 (Toronto, 1992).
[63] Lambeth Conference 1867, Resolution 9.

advisory body;[64] though in the event it emphasised that "unity in faith and discipline will be best maintained among the several branches of the Anglican Communion by due and canonical subordination of the synods of the several branches to the higher authority of a synod or synods above them".[65] Whatever its intended significance, as Owen Chadwick has noted, "Meetings start to gather authority if they exist and are seen not to be a cloud of hot air and rhetoric. It was impossible that the leaders of the Anglican Communion should meet every ten years and not start to gather respect; and to gather respect is slowly to gather influence, and influence is on the road to authority".[66] From its inception, the Lambeth Conference has proved to be a powerful vehicle for the expression of a concept central to Anglican ecclesiology, the collegiality of the bishops.

The Anglican Consultative Council

103. The first Lambeth Conference was called before the advent of widespread lay participation in formal synodical government. The 1867 Conference had set up various committees, to undergird the work the bishops had begun. In 1897, it resolved to establish a permanent consultative body.[67] It developed over the years,[68] coming to fruition with the final establishment in 1968 of the Anglican Consultative Council. The Anglican Consultative Council was to give a voice to lay people who were now fully participating in the governance of their provinces across the world; although the Council, like the Lambeth Conference, has always disavowed any intention to develop a more formal synodical status.[69]

The Primates' Meeting

104. Finally, in 1978, the Lambeth Conference called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to work with all the primates of the Anglican Communion "to initiate consideration of the way to relate together the international conferences, councils and meetings within the Anglican Communion so that the Anglican Communion may best serve God within the context of one, holy, catholic and apostolic church".[70] Archbishop Coggan advocated "meetings of the Primates of the Communion reasonably often, for leisurely thought, prayer and deep

[64] In his letter of invitation, Longley had made clear (anticipating the Archbishop of York's misgivings) that "Such a Meeting would not be competent to make declarations, or lay down definitions on points of doctrine…" (See Stephenson, *op cit* p 188).
[65] Lambeth Conference 1867, Resolution 4. The meaning and intention of this statement have been the subject of continuing debates, up to the present.
[66] O Chadwick, Introduction, in *Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences 1867-1988*, ed, R Coleman, (Toronto 1992), p.xvii.
[67] Lambeth Conference 1897, Resolution 5.
[68] See Lambeth Conference 1908, Resolution 54, which defines the membership of the Consultative body, and Lambeth Conference 1920, Resolution 44, which makes clear that it is "a purely advisory body … and neither possesses nor claims any executive or administrative power; see also Lambeth Conference 1930, Resolution 50, Lambeth Conference 1948, Resolutions 80 and 81, and Lambeth Conference 1958, Resolution 61.
[69] Its Constitution defines its object as (*inter alia*) "…to advise on inter-Anglican, provincial and diocesan relationships…" (see Constitution Article 2(c), in *The Communion We Share (*Harrisburg, PA, 2000, p.23).
[70] Lambeth Conference 1978, Resolution 12.

consultation … perhaps as frequently as once in two years".[71] Recently, this has been increased on occasions to intervals of less than a year. The meetings have not always been leisurely, and they may not always have lived up to Archbishop Coggan's other aspirations. Like the other Instruments of Unity, however, the Primates' Meeting has refused to acknowledge anything more than a consultative and advisory authority. In part, it is the task of the present Commission to consider proposals made at the Lambeth Conferences in 1988 and 1998,[72] and reiterated in *To Mend the Net,*[73] for the primates to have an "*enhanced responsibility* in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters".[74]

Recommendations on the Instruments of Unity

105. We have concluded that there needs to be a clearer understanding of the expectations placed on provinces in responding to the decisions of these Instruments. We do not favour the accumulation of formal power by the Instruments of Unity, or the establishment of any kind of central 'curia' for the Communion. However, we do believe that there are several ways in which the nature of the moral authority of the Instruments of Unity could be more clearly articulated. The terminology we use to describe these 'Instruments of Unity' suggests that their primary purpose lies elsewhere; neither the concept nor the goal of 'unity' is made explicit, and it thus appears that they are not inter-related at all. We have a 'Council' which is 'consultative', a 'Conference' which meets once a decade, a 'Meeting' which has no prescribed timetable, and an 'Archbishop'. We recommend that the Archbishop of Canterbury be regarded as the focus of unity and that the Primates' Meeting, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and possibly others, be regarded more appropriately as the Instruments of Communion.

106. Further work is necessary on the relationship between those Instruments of Unity. At the moment, there is no clear demarcation indicating which responsibilities fall to which instrument; this is particularly true of the relationship between the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council. Which speaks with the more authoritative voice for worldwide Anglicanism? Should the Lambeth Conference, as the gathering of the chief pastors and teachers of the churches have a 'magisterium', a teaching authority of special status? Is the Anglican Consultative Council, as the sole instrument which has lay participation alongside ordained membership other than the episcopal order, and thus most closely resembles the synods and conventions of the provinces, more appropriately the body which can take something approaching binding decisions for the Communion? What is the relationship between the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting? When the Primates' Meeting began, it was envisaged as taking on certain responsibilities akin to a Standing Committee of the Lambeth Conference, providing the sort of

[71] Lambeth Conference 1978, Report, p123.
[72] Lambeth Conference 1988, Resolution 18.2(a), and Lambeth Conference 1998, Resolution III.6.
[73] Gomez, Drexel W & Sinclair, Maurice W, Ed. Carolton, TX: The Ekklesia Society, 2001.
[74] Commission's emphasis.

frequent meeting which would allow it to address emerging crises.[75] Has it, in fact, developed such an 'enhanced responsibility' as the Lambeth Conference and the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission have strongly recommended? It may be clearer if the 'Primates' Meeting' became known as the 'Primates' Conference – the Lambeth Standing Committee'.

107. We are aware that engagement with structural questions concerning the Instruments of Unity may be thought to take us beyond our mandate and, in any event, would be matters for the Instruments themselves (and especially the Anglican Consultative Council) to address. However, we offer our own thoughts and suggestions on these matters in Appendix One.

The Archbishop of Canterbury

108. The role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to each of the other Instruments of Unity is pivotal. The Archbishop convenes both the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting, and is *ex officio* the President of the Anglican Consultative Council. This places the Archbishop at the centre of each of the Instruments, and as the one factor common to all. If the Archbishop is to be enabled to play a critical role at the heart of the Communion, there are obvious implications for those who establish priorities in terms of the international ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He must be free to exercise his role fully in each of the Instruments of Unity.

109. The Commission believes therefore that the historic position of the Archbishopric of Canterbury must not be regarded as a figurehead, but as the central focus of both unity and mission within the Communion. This office has a very significant teaching role. As *the* significant focus of unity, mission and teaching, the Communion looks to the office of the Archbishop to articulate the mind of the Communion especially in areas of controversy. The Communion should be able to look to the holder of this office to speak directly to any provincial situation on behalf of the Communion where this is deemed advisable. Such action should not be viewed as outside interference in the exercise of autonomy by any province. It is, in the view of the Commission, important to accept that the Archbishop of Canterbury is acting within the historic significance of his position when he speaks as a brother to the members of all member churches of the Anglican Communion, and as one who participates fully in their life and witness.

110. Furthermore, it has been noted that the Archbishop of Canterbury convenes the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting, and they are both dependent for their existence on his behest. We recommend that this dependence on the See of Canterbury remain, and indeed, that it be enhanced. At present, there is some lack of clarity about the level of discretion that the Archbishop has with respect to invitations to the Lambeth Conference and to the Primates' Meeting. This Commission is of the opinion that the Archbishop has the right to call or not to call to these gatherings whomsoever he believes is appropriate, in order to safeguard, and take counsel for, the well-being of the Anglican Communion.

[75] See Lambeth Conference 1978, Resolution 11.

The Commission believes that in the exercise of this right the Archbishop of Canterbury should invite participants to the Lambeth Conference on restricted terms at his sole discretion if circumstances exist where full voting membership of the Conference is perceived to be an undesirable status, or would militate against the greater unity of the Communion.

A Council of Advice

111. The Archbishop of Canterbury has a further distinction in relation to the Instruments of Unity, in that he alone is an individual, and not conciliar in nature. This can be a disadvantage when seeking clarity about the occasions when he might have authority to take an initiative in attempting to exercise authority on behalf of the entire Communion. Therefore, the way in which this ministry is supported by the Communion is of the utmost importance. The Commission concludes that the establishment of a Council of Advice would considerably enhance the foundations of any authority on which the Archbishop might feel truly enabled to act. In addition, the relationship between the Archbishop and the Secretariat of the Anglican Consultative Council must be reconsidered.

112. In order to perform the role which we have set out for the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop should be supported by appropriate mechanisms to ensure that he does not feel exposed and left to act entirely alone, but in a way which is informed by suitable persons, who would possess a knowledge of the life of the Communion, and of the theological, ecclesiological and canonical considerations which might apply to any given situation. We therefore recommend the establishment of a Council of Advice to the Archbishop to assist him in discerning when and how it might be appropriate for him to exercise a ministry of unity on behalf of the whole Communion. Such a body might be formed from any existing council of the Communion, possibly the Joint Standing Committees of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, or a smaller advisory council drawn from the membership of these bodies. However, it will need to be constituted with specific reference to the sorts of expertise upon which the Archbishop of Canterbury may wish to draw in the development of this particular ministry. This may mean that it is preferable to consider a small group of advisers brought together to fulfil this specific role, drawing on the primates of the Communion, and also on the specific expertise understood to be required.

Canon Law and Covenant

113. Recent years have seen a revival of interest in, and the academic study of, the Canon Law of Anglican churches (their constitutions, canons and other regulatory instruments). In particular, the Primates' Meeting at Kanuga 2001 considered acknowledgement of the existence of an unwritten *ius commune* of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and initiated a process leading to the Anglican Communion Legal Advisers' Consultation in Canterbury (March 2002). The Consultation concluded: there are principles of canon law common to the churches within the Anglican Communion; their existence can be factually established; each province or church contributes through its own legal

system to the principles of canon law common within the Communion; these principles have a strong persuasive authority and are fundamental to the self-understanding of each of the churches of the Communion; these principles have a living force, and contain in themselves the possibility of further development; and the existence of these principles both demonstrates unity and promotes unity within the Anglican Communion.

114. At their meeting in Canterbury, April 2002, "[t]he Primates recognised that the unwritten law common to the Churches of the Communion and expressed as shared principles of canon law may be understood to constitute a fifth 'instrument of unity'…to provide a basic framework to sustain the minimal conditions which allow the Churches of the Communion to live together in harmony and unity".[76] On the primates' recommendation, the Anglican Consultative Council (Hong Kong, September 2002) approved the establishment of the Anglican Communion Legal Advisers' Network "to produce a statement of the principles of canon law common to the churches, and to examine shared problems and possible solutions".[77] In October 2003, the primates urged the Network 'to bring to completion' this work.[78] This Commission fully endorses this and strongly recommends completion of the Statement of Principles of Canon Law as soon as possible, and is glad to learn of a Network meeting planned for the end of 2004.

115. The primates at Kanuga 2001 also considered the following propositions:

- The principles about communion, autonomy, discernment in communion and inter-Anglican relations, enunciated at global level by the Instruments of Unity, have persuasive moral authority for individual churches; they do not have enforceable juridical authority unless incorporated in their legal systems (and generally they are not incorporated).

- This may be contrasted with the juridical experience of the particular church, in which enforceable canon law, the servant of the church, seeks to facilitate and order communion amongst its faithful.

- The canon law of each church should reflect and promote global communion.

116. At present individual canonical systems are ambivalent to global communion, rarely centripetal (looking outward), mostly neutral (internal), and sometimes centrifugal (keeping other provinces at a distance). No church has a systematic body of 'communion law' dealing with its relationship of communion with other member churches. Surprisingly, then, inter-Anglican relations are not a distinctive feature of provincial laws. This may be contrasted with the increasing bodies of ecumenical law in Anglican churches facilitating communion relations between Anglicans and non-Anglicans.

[76] Report of the Meeting of Primates of the Anglican Communion, International Study Centre, Canterbury, 10-17 April 2002
[77] The Network maintains a website: www.acclawnet.co.uk.
[78] See Appendix Three/10.

117. This Commission recommends, therefore, consideration as to how to make the principles of inter-Anglican relations more effective at the local ecclesial level. This has been a persistent problem in Anglicanism contributing directly to the current crisis, and could be remedied by the adoption by each church of its own simple and short domestic 'communion law', to enable and implement the covenant proposal below, strengthening the bonds of unity and articulating what has to-date been assumed. Our opinion is that, as some matters in each church are serious enough for each church currently to have law on those matters - too serious to let the matter be the subject of an informal agreement or mere unenforceable guidance - so too with global communion affairs. The Commission considers that a brief law would be preferable to and more feasible than incorporation by each church of an elaborate and all-embracing canon defining inter-Anglican relations, which the Commission rejected in the light of the lengthy and almost impossible difficulty of steering such a canon unscathed through the legislative processes of forty-four churches, as well as the possibility of unilateral alteration of such a law.

118. This Commission recommends, therefore, and urges the primates to consider, the adoption by the churches of the Communion of a common Anglican Covenant which would make explicit and forceful the loyalty and bonds of affection which govern the relationships between the churches of the Communion. The Covenant could deal with: the acknowledgement of common identity; the relationships of communion; the commitments of communion; the exercise of autonomy in communion; and the management of communion affairs (including disputes). *A possible draft appears in Appendix Two*. We emphasise that this is only a preliminary draft and discussion document, and at this stage it would be premature for any church to adopt it. To the extent that this is largely descriptive of existing principles, it is hoped that its adoption might be regarded as relatively uncontroversial. The Covenant could be signed by the primates. Of itself, however, it would have no binding authority. Therefore the brief 'communion law' referred to above (paragraph 117) might authorise its primate (or equivalent) to sign the Covenant on behalf of that church and commit the church to adhere to the terms of the Covenant.[79] As it is imperative for the Communion itself to own and be responsible for the Covenant, we suggest the following long-term process, in an educative context, be considered for real debate and agreement on its adoption as a solemn witness to communion:

- discussion and approval of a first draft by the primates
- submission to the member churches and the Anglican Consultative Council for consultation and reception
- final approval by the primates
- legal authorisation by each church for signing, and
- a solemn signing by the primates in a liturgical context.

[79] Suggested form of law, for example: 'The Governing Body of the Church in Wales authorises the Archbishop of Wales to enter on behalf of this church the Anglican Covenant and commits the Church in Wales to comply and act in a manner compatible with the Covenant so entered'.

119. This Commission believes that the case for adoption of an Anglican Covenant is overwhelming:

- The Anglican Communion cannot again afford, in every sense, the crippling prospect of repeated worldwide inter-Anglican conflict such as that engendered by the current crisis. Given the imperfections of our communion and human nature, doubtless there will be more disagreements. It is our shared responsibility to have in place an agreed mechanism to enable and maintain life in communion, and to prevent and manage communion disputes.

- The concept of the adoption of a covenant is not new in the ecumenical context. Anglican churches have commonly entered covenants with other churches to articulate their relationships of communion. These ecumenical covenants provide very appropriate models from which Anglicans can learn much in their own development of inter-Anglican relations.

- Adoption of a Covenant is a practical need and a theological challenge, and we recognise the process may lead to complex debate. A Covenant incarnates communion as a visible foundation around which Anglicans can gather to shape and protect their distinctive identity and mission, and in so doing also provides an accessible resource for our ecumenical partners in their understanding of Anglicanism.

- The solemn act of entering a Covenant carries the weight of an international obligation so that, in the event of a church changing its mind about the covenantal commitments, that church could not proceed internally and unilaterally. The process becomes public and multilateral, whereas unilateralism would involve breach of obligations owed to forty-three other churches. The formality of ratification by the primates publicly assembled also affords a unique opportunity for worldwide witness.

- A worldwide Anglican Covenant may also assist churches in their relations with the States in which they exist. At such moments when a church faces pressure from its host State(s) to adopt secular state standards in its ecclesial life and practice, an international Anglican Covenant might provide powerful support to the church, in a dispute with the State, to reinforce and underpin its religious liberty within the State.

- As with any relational document of outstanding historical importance, which symbolises the trust parties have in each other, some provisions of a Covenant will be susceptible to development through interpretation and practice: it cannot predict the impact of future events. For this reason the draft Covenant is designed to allow the parties to it to adjust that relationship and resolve disputes in the light of changing circumstances.

120. Whilst the paramount model must remain that of the voluntary association of churches bound together in their love of the Lord of the Church, in their discipleship and in their common inheritance, it may be that the Anglican Consultative Council could encourage full participation in the Covenant project by each church by constructing an understanding of communion membership

which is expressed by the readiness of a province to maintain its bonds with Canterbury, and which includes a reference to the Covenant.

Section D : The Maintenance of Communion

General findings

121. The Communion has affirmed the importance of interdependence on very many occasions. The question that has been raised in relation to both the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada is that in relation to matters of real and acknowledged importance to them, they have not attached sufficient importance to the impact of their decisions on other parts of the Communion. This in turn has prompted reactions from other provinces and individual primates which offend our understanding of communion in significant ways.

122. The Commission has given long and careful consideration to the submissions made to it about the Episcopal Church (USA), the Diocese of New Westminster in the Anglican Church of Canada, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, and about various primates who (without consultation with their fellow primates) have accommodated clergy who are at odds with their own bishops. We cannot avoid the conclusion that all have acted in ways incompatible with the Communion principle of interdependence, and our fellowship together has suffered immensely as a result of these developments. Furthermore, we deeply regret that the appeals of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the primates and of this Commission for a period of "calm" to allow the Commission to complete its report have been ignored in a number of quarters, and that a number of primates and provinces have declared themselves in impaired or broken communion with the Episcopal Church (USA) or the Diocese of New Westminster.

123. The Commission regrets that without attaching sufficient importance to the interests of the wider Communion:

- the Episcopal Church (USA) proceeded with the consecration of Gene Robinson

- the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) declared that "local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions"[80]

- the Diocese of New Westminster approved the use of public Rites for the Blessing of same sex unions

- the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada issued a statement affirming the integrity and sanctity of committed same sex relationships

[80] General Convention 2003, Resolution C051 (see Appendix Three/9).

- a number of primates and other bishops have taken it upon themselves to intervene in the affairs of other provinces of the Communion.

Our unanimous recommendations in relation to these matters are set out below.

On elections to the episcopate

124. Anglicanism has always maintained that a bishop is more than simply the chief pastor to a local church. Bishops are consecrated into an order of ministry in the worldwide Church of God. They represent the universal to the local, and the local to the universal.[81] Their acceptability to the wider Church is signified through 'confirmation of election' undertaken by the metropolitan bishop in consultation with the other bishops of the province.[82] In modern Anglican polity, provision is made for this confirmation in the constitutions of the provinces in a variety of ways, often involving synodical processes.[83] In the Episcopal Church (USA), such confirmation is undertaken by the consents of Diocesan Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction, or by General Convention.[84]

125. There are some areas in which the issue of acceptability is unclear. For example, practice varies across the Communion in relation to divorce and remarriage: there are provinces where it would be unthinkable to appoint a bishop who had been divorced and remarried; there are others where this would be regarded as a secondary issue. The fact of divorce and remarriage would therefore not seem *per se* to be a crucial criterion.[85]

126. There are some matters over which the Communion has expressed its mind. As we have seen,[86] the contentious issue of ordaining women as bishops was the subject of extensive debate and discussion in the Communion for some considerable time before a common mind was reached. After lengthy deliberation, the Instruments of Unity concluded that although the ministry of a

[81] "… a Bishop's ministry is 'representative' in several different senses. A Bishop represents the local church to the wider, but also the other way round. Bishops represent Christ to the people, but also bring the people and their prayers to God. Finally, they often represent God and his Church in the world at large." Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, 'Towards a theology of choosing bishops' in *Working with the Spirit: Choosing diocesan bishops* CHP (London 2001), p.107. See also, The Gift of Sexuality: A theological perspective, Report of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, offered for study and reflection by the House of Bishops, 18 March 2003, paragraph 7.1, http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/presiding-bishop/pdf/theologycomreport.pdf.

[82] A helpful recent summary of the process (by reference to the Church of England) may be found in *Working with the Spirit: Choosing diocesan bishops*, CHP (London, 2001).

[83] See N Doe, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion* (Oxford 1998), pp.109-113.

[84] Because General Convention meets on a three-yearly cycle, if a bishop is elected more than three months before its next meeting, confirmation is dealt with by consent of a majority of the Standing Committees of the dioceses of the Episcopal Church (see ECUSA *Constitution and Canons*, Title III, Canon 21).

[85] There are Lambeth Conference resolutions on the subject of divorce and remarriage, but not relating to the issue of the ordination of divorcees.

[86] See above paragraphs 12-21.

woman as bishop might not be accepted in some provinces, that represented a degree of impairment which the Communion could bear.[87]

127. The Communion has also made its collective position clear on the issue of ordaining those who are involved in same gender unions;[88] and this has been reiterated by the primates through their endorsement of the 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution.[89] By electing and confirming such a candidate in the face of the concerns expressed by the wider Communion, the Episcopal Church (USA) has caused deep offence to many faithful Anglican Christians both in its own church and in other parts of the Communion.

128. We do not believe that those involved in the election of a bishop to the See of New Hampshire and the consent to the election are entirely or exclusively blameworthy in relation to this: not everyone involved in the processes will necessarily have been fully acquainted with the contents of the resolutions we have quoted. Since there is no doubt that in terms of its constitutional proprieties, the Episcopal Church (USA) was at liberty to take the steps that it did,[90] it will not have been straightforward for those involved to weigh up the criteria that they should apply. It seems to us that this reinforces the need for much greater awareness around the Communion of the views expressed by the Instruments of Unity, and of the impact of decisions taken in one church upon another.

129. However, it remains true that bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) subsequent to the Primates' Meeting in October 2003 must be taken to have acted in the full knowledge that very many people in the Anglican Communion could neither recognise nor receive the ministry as a bishop in the Church of God of a person in an openly acknowledged same gender union. This inevitably raises the question of their commitment to the Episcopal Church (USA)'s interdependence as a member of the Anglican Communion to which its own Constitution and Canons makes reference.[91]

130. In terms of the wider Communion, and our wider relationships with a number of key ecumenical partners, the consecration has had very prejudicial consequences. In our view, those involved did not pay due regard, in the way they might and, in our view, should have done, to the wider implications of the decisions they were making and the actions they were taking. We believe that there is an important lesson here, which has implications for the process of appointment and election throughout the whole Communion.

[87] See *Women in the Anglican Episcopate: theology guidelines and practice*, The Eames Commission and the Monitoring Group Reports, IV:57 (Toronto, 1998).

[88] See Lambeth Conference 1998, Resolution 1.10, reproduced in Appendix Three/6.

[89] See the Statement by the Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting in Lambeth Palace, 16 October 2003 (included in Appendix Three/10).

[90] We do not agree with the argument put to us in one submission, that the consecration was invalid since it was lacking in appropriate intention (see 'The current crisis in the Anglican Communion: What are the ecclesiological issues involved?', reproduced at: http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/commissions/lambeth/documents/200406dgecclesiology.pdf

[91] The Preamble to the ECUSA *Constitution and Canons* characterises the Church as "…a constituent member of the Anglican Communion…"

131. In our view, all those involved in the processes of episcopal appointment, at whichever level, should in future in the light of all that has happened pay proper regard to the acceptability of the candidate to other provinces in our Communion; the issue should be addressed by those locally concerned at the earliest stages, by those provincially involved in the confirmation of any election, and not least by those who, acting on those decisions, consecrate the individual into the order of bishop. The question of acceptability could be posed in a number of ways. Is there any reason to expect that the appointment or election of a particular candidate might prejudice our relations with other provinces? Would the ministry of this individual be recognised and received if he or she were to visit another province? Would the individual be 'translatable'?[92]

132. The Commission does not believe it necessary to introduce any new tier of formal process, or forum in which these questions should be addressed, but we take seriously the question of acceptability, and would want to emphasise that it goes far beyond the question of homosexuality. What is needed is a change of outlook on the part of those involved in the process of appointment to take account of our bonds of affection and interdependence.

133. We accept and respect the position taken up by the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to the current incumbent of the See of New Hampshire.[93] In view of the widespread unacceptability of his ministry in other provinces of the Communion, we urge the proposed Council of Advice to keep the matter of his acceptability under close review. We also urge the Archbishop, unless and until the Council of Advice (or, if the Council should not come into being, the Primates' Meeting) indicate to the contrary, to exercise very considerable caution in inviting or admitting him to the councils of the Communion.

134. Mindful of the hurt and offence that have resulted from recent events, and yet also of the imperatives of communion - the repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation enjoined on us by Christ - we have debated long and hard how all sides may be brought together. We recommend that:

- the Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to express its regret that the proper constraints of the bonds of affection were breached in the events surrounding the election and consecration of a bishop for the See of New Hampshire, and for the consequences which followed, and that such an expression of regret would represent the desire of the Episcopal Church (USA) to remain within the Communion

- pending such expression of regret, those who took part as consecrators of Gene Robinson should be invited to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican

[92] See above paragraphs 12-21 and 126 for the reasons why exceptional arrangements apply to women bishops.

[93] At the press conference on 16 October 2003 which followed the Primates' Meeting, the Archbishop of Canterbury said, in answer to a question, "It is also a fact that because of the present discipline of the Church of England, Gene Robinson would not be in a position to be received as a bishop here – to be licensed to exercise episcopal functions here."

Communion. We urge this in order to create the space necessary to enable the healing of the Communion. We advise that in the formation of their consciences, those involved consider the common good of the Anglican Communion, and seek advice through their primate and the Archbishop of Canterbury. We urge all members of the Communion to accord appropriate respect to such conscientious decisions

- the Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to effect a moratorium on the election and consent to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in a same gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges.

135. Finally, we recommend that the Instruments of Unity, through the Joint Standing Committee, find practical ways in which the 'listening' process commended by the Lambeth Conference in 1998 may be taken forward, so that greater common understanding might be obtained on the underlying issue of same gender relationships. We particularly request a contribution from the Episcopal Church (USA) which explains, from within the sources of authority that we as Anglicans have received in scripture, the apostolic tradition and reasoned reflection, how a person living in a same gender union may be considered eligible to lead the flock of Christ. As we see it, such a reasoned response, following up the work of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA), and taken with recent work undertaken by the Church of England[94] and other provinces of the Communion, will have an important contribution to make to the ongoing discussion.

On public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions

136. Recent developments within the Diocese of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church (USA), which both took synodical action to authorise public Rites for the Blessing of same sex unions, are one of the presenting causes for the current tensions within the Anglican Communion, and thus it is part of the mandate of the Lambeth Commission to address this issue.

137. The synod of the diocese of New Westminster in 1998 approved a resolution to develop a public Rite for the Blessing of same sex unions. The diocesan bishop withheld his consent. In 1999, the bishop commissioned theological and canonical evaluations of the proposal, and these reports were all available on the diocesan website, but there is no record of any formal attempt to consult the wider province or Communion on the theological issues, or to delay processes to allow such consultation to take place, beyond participation in an emergency debate at ACC-12 in Hong Kong in September 2002.[95] Indeed, despite the statement of the Lambeth Conference in 1998 that it could not "advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions", the conclusions of the Cadman Report was that this was not a matter of theology but of pastoral care, and competent of resolution at the diocesan level.[96] The Task Force on Jurisdiction,

[94] See *Some Issues in Human Sexuality* (London, 2003)

[95] The resolution is reproduced in Appendix Three/8.

[96] *Diocese of New Westminster Dialogue on Same Sex Unions*, Report of the Legal

which was established by the Canadian General Synod at the request of the House of Bishops, concluded in 2003 that "when jurisdiction in a contentious matter is not specified, it will be decided at the highest level that has the will to decide it".[97] After withholding consent to the synodical resolution again in 2001, the bishop did give consent when it was approved for the third time in 2002. The first such public Rite was held in 2003, a few days after the meeting of the primates in Gramado.

138. Without commenting on the constitutional propriety of steps that have been taken, we would want to observe that normally in the churches of the Communion there is not unqualified freedom on the part of any bishop or diocese to authorise liturgical texts if they are likely to be inconsistent with the norms of liturgical and doctrinal usage extant in the province's *Book of Common Prayer* or other provincially authorised texts.

139. In the Canadian church, a process of discernment is underway to ascertain to what extent the blessing of same sex unions is a doctrinal matter, thus requiring, constitutionally, decisions at least at the national level. At its meeting in June 2004, the Canadian General Synod referred the question of whether or not the matter of same sex blessings is a matter of doctrine to the Canadian Primate's Theological Commission, whose report will be considered throughout the church before the question returns to the General Synod meeting of 2007. The Canadian General Synod in June also adopted as part of a larger resolution that it affirmed "the integrity and sanctity of committed same sex relationships". While this statement has been viewed by some as a change of teaching on the part of the Anglican Church of Canada, the reference to the Theological Commission includes a review of the theology behind this statement and thus the main thrust of action by the General Synod is to defer decisions until 2007 until due consultation can take place.[98]

140. Within the Episcopal Church (USA), the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops concluded as late as March 2003, that

> "Because at this time we are nowhere near consensus in the Church regarding the blessing of homosexual relationships, we cannot recommend authorizing the development of new rites for such blessings. For these reasons, we urge the greatest caution as the Church continues to seek the mind of Christ in these matters."[99]

but in August of that year, the 74th General Convention commended the development of public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions as being within the

and Canonical Commission, by George E H Cadman, QC (Chair), Linda Barry-Hollowell (Diocese of Calgary), Stephen J Toope (Diocese of Montreal), April 2001.

[97] *In Service of Communion*, Final Report of the General Synod Task Force on Jurisdiction to the Council of General Synod and the Canadian House of Bishops, February 2002

[98] Resolution A134 *Blessing of Same Sex Unions* - reproduced in Appendix Three/12.

[99] The Gift of Sexuality: A theological perspective, Report of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, offered for study and reflection by the House of Bishops, 18th March 2003, quotation from paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 (see http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/presiding-bishop/pdf/theologycomreport.pdf).

bounds of the Episcopal Church (USA)'s common life (see above, paragraphs 27 and 123) without formal theological justification or consultation in the Communion.

141. The clear and repeated statements of the Instruments of Unity have also been to advise against the development and approval of such rites.[100] Whilst proponents of actions in the Diocese of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church (USA) may argue that such advice has only moral authority, we believe that it must be recognised that actions to move towards the authorisation of such rites in the face of opposition from the wider Anglican Communion constitutes a denial of the bonds of Communion. In order for these bonds to be properly acknowledged and addressed, the churches proposing to take action must be able, as a beginning, to demonstrate to the rest of the Communion why their proposal meets the criteria of scripture, tradition and reason. In order to be received as a legitimate development of the tradition, it must be possible to demonstrate how public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions would constitute growth in harmony with the apostolic tradition as it has been received.

142. Whilst there have been the beginnings of such demonstration, at present it would be true to say that very many people within the Communion fail to see how the authorisation of such a rite is compatible with the teaching of scripture, tradition and reason. In such circumstances, it should not be surprising that such developments are seen by some as surrendering to the spirit of the age rather than an authentic development of the gospel.

143. We believe that to proceed unilaterally with the authorisation of public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions at this time goes against the formally expressed opinions of the Instruments of Unity and therefore constitutes action in breach of the legitimate application of the Christian faith as the churches of the Anglican Communion have received it, and of bonds of affection in the life of the Communion, especially the principle of interdependence. For the sake of our common life, we call upon all bishops of the Anglican Communion to honour the Primates' Pastoral Letter of May 2003, by not proceeding to authorise public Rites of Blessing for same sex unions. The primates stated then:

> "The question of public rites for the blessing of same sex unions is still a cause of potentially divisive controversy. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for us all when he said that it is through liturgy that we express what we believe, and that there is no theological consensus about same sex unions. Therefore, we as a body cannot support the authorisation of such rites.
>
> This is distinct from the duty of pastoral care that is laid upon all Christians to respond with love and understanding to people of all sexual

[100] For example, Lambeth Conference 1998 Resolution 1.10 *Human Sexuality*; the statements of the Primates' Meetings in March 2000, May 2003 (quoted in paragraph 142) and October 2003 (see Appendix Three/10), and, on procedure, ACC-12 Resolution 34 *Province-wide and Communion-wide consultation* (see Appendix Three/8).

orientations. As recognised in the booklet *True Union*,[101] it is necessary to maintain a breadth of private response to situations of individual pastoral care."

144. While we recognise that the Episcopal Church (USA) has by action of Convention made provision for the development of public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions, the decision to authorise rests with diocesan bishops. Because of the serious repercussions in the Communion, we call for a moratorium on all such public Rites, and recommend that bishops who have authorised such rites in the United States and Canada be invited to express regret that the proper constraints of the bonds of affection were breached by such authorisation. Pending such expression of regret, we recommend that such bishops be invited to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican Communion. We recommend that provinces take responsibility for endeavouring to ensure commitment on the part of their bishops to the common life of the Communion on this matter.

145. We urge all provinces that are engaged in processes of discernment regarding the blessing of same sex unions to engage the Communion in continuing study of biblical and theological rationale for and against such unions. Such a process of study and reflection needs to include clarification regarding the distinction, if such exists, between same sex unions and same sex marriage. This call for continuing study does not imply approval of such proposals.

146. We remind all in the Communion that Lambeth Resolution 1.10 calls for an ongoing process of listening and discernment, and that Christians of good will need to be prepared to engage honestly and frankly with each other on issues relating to human sexuality. It is vital that the Communion establish processes and structures to facilitate ongoing discussion. One of the deepest realities that the Communion faces is continuing difference on the presenting issue of ministry by and to persons who openly engage in sexually active homosexual relationships. Whilst this report criticises those who have propagated change without sufficient regard to the common life of the Communion, it has to be recognised that debate on this issue cannot be closed whilst sincerely but radically different positions continue to be held across the Communion. The later sections of Lambeth Resolution 1.10 cannot be ignored any more than the first section, as the primates have noted.[102] Moreover, any demonising of homosexual persons, or their ill treatment, is totally against Christian charity and basic principles of pastoral care. We urge provinces to be pro-active in support of the call of Lambeth Resolution 64 (1988) for them to "reassess, in the light of … study and because of our concern for human rights, its care for and attitude toward persons of homosexual orientation".[103]

[101] *True Union in the Body?*, a paper commissioned by Archbishop Drexel Gomez, published privately and circulated at the Primates' Meeting in May 2003.
[102] Statement by the Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting in Lambeth Palace, 16 October 2003, reproduced in Appendix Three/10.
[103] The full resolution is included in Appendix Three/3.

On care of dissenting groups

147. The Commission has been made aware of the hurt and alienation felt by individual Anglicans, parishes and dioceses as a result of decisions made and actions taken by autonomous provinces within which there is profound disagreement. In some cases, there is a long history of suspicion and division over a range of issues, and the concern over homosexuality has merely provided the focus for reaction on the part of Anglican Christians whose motivation is to be faithful to Christian truth and values as they have understood them. But in all cases, this is a situation which cries out for healing and reconciliation.

148. In addressing this situation, the Commission recognises and wishes to uphold the importance and relevance of the historically sanctioned role of the bishop as a core principle of Anglican ecclesiology. Tensions are particularly acute when parishes or dioceses feel that the spiritual leadership of their church has been compromised.

149. In some instances, this breach of trust has been felt so keenly that a parish or diocese has found itself unwilling to accept the ministry of a bishop associated with such contrary action, and has invited bishops from elsewhere in the province or beyond to provide pastoral and sacramental oversight. In some cases, there are primates and bishops who have acceded to these requests with or without reference to the proper authorities of the diocese concerned. We want to make quite clear that we fully understand the principled concerns that have led to those actions even though we believe that they should have been handled differently.

150. In these circumstances we call upon the church or province in question to recognise first that dissenting groups in their midst are, like themselves, seeking to be faithful members of the Anglican family; and second, we call upon all the bishops concerned, both the 'home' bishops and the 'intervening' bishops as Christian leaders and pastors to work tirelessly to rebuild the trust which has been lost.

151. In only those situations where there has been an extreme breach of trust, and as a last resort, we commend a conditional and temporary provision of delegated pastoral oversight for those who are dissenting. This oversight must be sufficient to provide a credible degree of security on the part of the alienated community, so that they do not feel at the mercy of a potentially hostile leadership. While the temporary provision of pastoral oversight is in place there must also be a mutually agreed commitment to effecting reconciliation.

152. During this period it would be axiomatic that the incumbent bishop would delegate some of his or her functions, rights and responsibilities to the 'incoming' bishop. In this regard, we commend the proposals for delegated episcopal pastoral oversight set out by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) in 2004.[104] We believe that these proposals are entirely

[104] *Caring for all the Churches: A response of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church to an expressed need of the Church*, March 2004, reproduced in Appendix Three/11.

reasonable, if they are approached and implemented reasonably by everyone concerned. We particularly commend the appeal structures set out in the House of Bishops' policy statement, and consider that these provide a very significant degree of security. We see no reason why such delegated pastoral and sacramental oversight should not be provided by retired bishops from within the province in question, and recommend that a province making provision in this manner should maintain a list of bishops who would be suitable and acceptable to undertake such a ministry. In principle, we see no difficulty in bishops from other provinces of the Communion becoming involved with the life of particular parishes under the terms of these arrangements in appropriate cases.

153. We are conscious that the Anglican Church of Canada is considering the adoption of a broadly similar scheme, and we ask that their proposals too should be marked by and received with a willingness to co-operate together in accordance with the principles we have outlined above.

154. The Anglican Communion upholds the ancient norm of the Church that all the Christians in one place should be united in their prayer, worship and the celebration of the sacraments. The Commission believes that all Anglicans should strive to live out this ideal. Whilst there are instances in the polity of Anglican churches that more than one jurisdiction exists in one place, this is something to be discouraged rather than propagated. We do not therefore favour the establishment of parallel jurisdictions.

155. We call upon those bishops who believe it is their conscientious duty to intervene in provinces, dioceses and parishes other than their own:

- to express regret for the consequences of their actions
- to affirm their desire to remain in the Communion, and
- to effect a moratorium on any further interventions.

We also call upon these archbishops and bishops to seek an accommodation with the bishops of the dioceses whose parishes they have taken into their own care.

We further call upon those diocesan bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) who have refused to countenance the proposals set out by their House of Bishops to reconsider their own stance on this matter. If they refuse to do so, in our view, they will be making a profoundly dismissive statement about their adherence to the polity of their own church.

Conclusion

156. We call upon all parties to the current dispute to seek ways of reconciliation, and to heal our divisions. We have already indicated (paragraphs 134 and 144) some ways in which the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Diocese of New Westminster could begin to speak with the Communion in a way which would foster reconciliation. We have appealed to those intervening in provinces and

dioceses similarly to act with renewed respect.[105] We would expect all provinces to respond with generosity and charity to any such actions. It may well be that there need to be formal discussions about the path to reconciliation, and a symbolic Act of Reconciliation, which would mark a new beginning for the Communion, and a common commitment to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to a broken and needy world.

157. There remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together. Should the call to halt and find ways of continuing in our present communion not be heeded, then we shall have to begin to learn to walk apart. We would much rather not speculate on actions that might need to be taken if, after acceptance by the primates, our recommendations are not implemented. However, we note that there are, in any human dispute, courses that may be followed: processes of mediation and arbitration; non-invitation to relevant representative bodies and meetings; invitation, but to observer status only; and, as an absolute last resort, withdrawal from membership. We earnestly hope that none of these will prove necessary. Our aim throughout has been to work not for division but for healing and restoration. The real challenge of the gospel is whether we live deeply enough in the love of Christ, and care sufficiently for our joint work to bring that love to the world, that we will "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4.3). As the primates stated in 2000, "to turn from one another would be to turn away from the Cross", and indeed from serving the world which God loves and for which Jesus Christ died.

[105] See above, paragraph 155.

Appendix One : Reflections on the Instruments of Unity

The Anglican Consultative Council

(1) Recent attempts to restructure the membership of the Anglican Consultative Council have foundered, partly on grounds of lack of finance, and partly because of a perceived imbalance between the orders of laity, clergy and bishops. This is particularly true of a suggestion that each province be represented on the Anglican Consultative Council by its primate. Some provinces in fact do this as a matter of policy, but ordinary membership of the Anglican Consultative Council is restricted to the duration of three ordinary meetings of the full Anglican Consultative Council, and then any primate so elected is forced to relinquish membership. The present membership of the Anglican Consultative Council could be made more effective, and more accountable, by being required to be drawn from those persons who have a voice within the highest executive body of each province. Members who ceased to hold such office while serving as members of the Anglican Consultative Council would be required to stand down and be replaced unless that member church made other arrangements. Such a requirement would allow for greatly improved mutual accountability and a sense of responsibility between the Anglican Consultative Council and each province. Should the Anglican Consultative Council move to assume a more synodical role, its authority would be strengthened if the episcopal house were to consist of the primates of the Communion.

(2) The role and frequency of meetings of the Primates' Standing Committee and the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council need to be regularised. The members of the Anglican Consultative Council Standing Committee are currently the trustees of the funds of the Anglican Communion, with charitable status conferred under the laws of the United Kingdom. As such the Anglican Consultative Council Standing Committee has to make some decisions which carry financial implications quite independently of the Primates' Standing Committee, even though the two bodies generally meet as one 'Joint Standing Committee'. If the Primates' Meeting is to continue to meet on an annual basis, it would seem that the Joint Standing Committee of the primates and the Anglican Consultative Council should meet in close proximity, in order to allow for clear communication and understanding. If this is so, the Commission takes the view that the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council should be amended to ensure that members of the Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting become members *ex officio* of the Anglican Consultative Council, and in turn become also members *ex officio* of its Standing Committee, and trustees of the Communion. This would give structural and constitutional reality to the present arrangements of meeting annually, but with unresolved questions of differing responsibilities.

The Lambeth Conference

(3) It will help the life of the Anglican Communion if there is a clearer understanding of the ecclesiological foundations of our life as Anglicans and in particular of our theology of episcopacy and its relationship to both its local context and the wider

communion. The much-used phrase that we are "episcopally led but synodically governed" fails to explain adequately the relationship between the exercise of episcopacy and synodical government within and between provinces and begs the question as to what are the boundaries between leadership and governance. In clarifying this it might then be possible to reach agreement on the nature of 'corporate episcopacy' and the extent to which bishops meeting at Lambeth provide worldwide leadership, and on the nature of their authority over their own and other provinces of the Communion. While the decisions of Lambeth Conferences do not have canonical force, they do have moral authority across the Communion. Consequently, provinces of the Communion should not proceed with controversial developments in the face of teaching to the contrary from all the bishops gathered together in Lambeth Conferences. This might go to the heart of receiving what was said about synodality in *The Virginia Report*.[106] It is a fact that just as bishops of a particular province meet together from time to time to take counsel together as guardians both of the unity and teaching of the Church, so too bishops in the past have come together in council to give leadership to the Church on important issues. The Lambeth Conference follows this tradition.

(4) Whilst this Commission does not wish to bring forward proposals to change the formal status of resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, we would like to suggest that there should be some level of distinction between different kinds of motion at the Conference. It might be helpful if there were a special category of Lambeth Resolutions which could be stated to "touch upon the definition of Anglicanism", or upon "the authentic proclamation of the Gospel"; these motions could be subject to a distinctive procedure to demonstrate their differentiated status, and therefore for the special attention of the Communion. Clearly some process would need to be established whereby such issues could be identified. Such motions would also require a clear process by which they could be adopted - the extended consideration of the whole conference; to require an increased majority for passing or to trigger stated methods of reception, in order to be seen as the definitive teaching of the Anglican Communion.

The Primates' Meeting

(5) The Commission is convinced that the Primates' Meeting should continue to provide an important element in the life of the Communion as the body which affirms the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference in the life of Anglicanism. In that respect, the Primates' Meeting should serve formally as the Standing Committee of the Lambeth Conference and as such should monitor developments in furtherance of resolutions of the Lambeth Conference in addition to the process of reception. This will allow the Primates' Meeting to begin the enhanced responsibility which successive Lambeth Conferences have recommended. It should be a primary forum for the strengthening of the mutual life of the provinces, and be respected by individual primates and the provinces they lead as an instrument through which new developments may be honestly addressed. In order to fulfil this role, it must be enabled to meet regularly. The Commission believes that greater attention should be paid to the organisation of the Primates'

[106] See *The Virginia Report*, ch.4.

Meeting to facilitate greater participation by the primates and to provide for more formal and businesslike sessions.

The Anglican Communion Office

(6) The role and the particular responsibilities of the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion in relation to the Instruments of Unity and the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury need to be carefully evaluated and set out. In particular the relationship and the accountability between the holder of that office and the Archbishop of Canterbury as well as the Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council needs fundamental reappraisal. Some forms of regular meetings or the ability to communicate in person quickly and easily have to be established and maintained.

(7) Any committee or body of trustees that is made up of persons located in a wide variety of countries spread around the Anglican Communion experiences peculiar difficulties in holding regular and effective meetings and in being able to communicate easily. This makes for particular difficulties in relating to the executive staff of the Anglican Communion Office in order to offer support, encouragement and advice, or suggest directions in which to move. Closer oversight and accountability is required in both directions. There should be regular reviews of staff performance and remuneration. The recent appointment of a new Secretary General also offers an opportunity for a reappraisal of staffing structures in both St Andrew's House for the Anglican Communion staff and at Lambeth Palace for those who assist the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to Anglican Communion affairs. Duplication of roles is to be avoided wherever possible.

(8) It is clear to the Commission that any effective attempt to enhance the synodality of the member churches of the Anglican Communion will require a vehicle whereby liaison and monitoring of the developments across the Communion can be afforded the importance they deserve. Apart from any Council of Advice which may be established, the Commission views as a matter of urgent priority a reassessment of the work of the Anglican Communion Office in London in this respect. This office functions as a secretariat for the entire Anglican Communion, including the three conciliar Instruments of Unity, even if it is technically only the secretariat of the Anglican Consultative Council. The demands on staff and time and the financial foundation of the Office at present are entirely unacceptable as a means of fulfilling these roles.

(9) We recommend therefore a rethinking of the strategic role of the Anglican Communion Office. It should be understood to serve all Instruments of Unity, and have sufficient staffing and resourcing from across the Communion to be able to act in a neutral and unbeholden way for the good of the whole Communion. In addition to all its current tasks, the office should be able to monitor the development in all the provinces, from information provided by the provinces designed to assist the Instruments of Unity to be aware of the development in the life of the Communion. This has financial implications which will need to be addressed by each member church of the Anglican Communion in reviewing and increasing their contributions to the inter-Anglican budget to enhance the effectiveness of the Instruments of Unity.

Appendix Two : Proposal for the Anglican Covenant

The Anglican Covenant

Preamble

We, the churches of the Anglican Communion, in order to foster greater unity and to consolidate our understandings of communion, solemnly establish this Covenant, entered on our behalf by designated signatories and to which we shall adhere as authorised by laws enacted by each of our churches for these purposes, so that our communion may be made more visible and committed, and agree as follows as to our:

(1) Common identity;

(2) Relationships of communion;

(3) Commitments of communion;

(4) Exercise of autonomy in communion;

(5) Management of communion issues.

Part I: Common Identity

Article 1: Common Catholicity, Apostolicity and Confession of Faith

Each member church: (1) belongs to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ; (2) participates in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God; (3) affirms Holy Scripture, as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith, and holds the essentials of the apostolic faith, as summed up in the Creeds; and (4) seeks to preach God's Word authentically.

Article 2: Common Sacraments and Liturgical Tradition

Each member church: (1) holds and duly administers the sacraments of baptism and eucharist as instituted by Christ; and (2) practises the common patterns of Anglican liturgical and ritual tradition as adapted to the needs of each generation and the particular circumstances of each local ecclesial community.

Article 3: Common Ministry and Mission

In every member church: (1) the threefold ordained ministry of bishops, priests and deacons and the ministry of the laity are ministries given by God as instruments of his grace; and (2) we share a common life of service in the apostolic mission entrusted by Christ, serving in the world his purposes of mission, justice and peace.

Article 4: Common Understanding

(1) Each member church belongs to each other in mutual reciprocity and forbearance in the Body of Christ. (2) Communion does not require acceptance by every church of all theological opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice that is characteristic of the other. (3) Every member church has the intention to listen, speak, act and strive to obey the gospel. (4) Every church has the same concern for a conscientious interpretation of scripture in the light of tradition and reason, to be in dialogue with those who dissent from that interpretation, and to heal divisions.

Article 5: Common Autonomous Polity

(1) Each member church is autonomous, episcopally led and synodically governed. (2) Decisions in every church are to be presumed as duly authorised but such decisions do not bind outside that church. (3) Every church shares the same concern for good government for the fulfilment of its mission and for the common good of the Anglican Communion and the Church universal.

Part II: Relationships of Communion

Article 6: The Divine Foundation of Communion

(1) Communion is a gift of God, who is a communion of three persons, to all member churches of the Anglican Communion. (2) Our ecclesial communion is animated in the experience of God's work of redemption, and furthered or hampered by human action. (3) The divine call to communion is inviolable and no member church may declare unilaterally irreversible broken communion with any fellow church.

Article 7: Communion in Membership, Relation and Purpose

(1) The Anglican Communion is a community of interdependent churches and consists of relations between each church, the See of Canterbury, and the fellowship of member churches worldwide. (2) Each church acknowledges its Communion membership, and is constituted by, exists in and receives fullness of life in its relations to the other member churches. (3) Ordained and lay persons in each church are in personal communion with those of other member churches. (4) Each church shall serve the purposes of the Communion, which include: (a) proclaiming to the world in common witness the good news of the Kingdom of God; (b) fostering and protecting a common mind in essential matters; and (c) achieving greater unity.

Article 8: The Process and Substance of Communion

(1) Communion, never perfected until God's Kingdom is all in all, involves unity, equality of status, and a common pilgrimage towards truth, each church in partnership with its fellow churches learning what it means to become interdependent and thus more fully a communion. (2) Communion subsists in the mutual acknowledgement by churches of their common identity. (3) Communion involves responsibilities so that each church may be more fully completed in, through and by its relations with other member churches, having regard for their common good.

Part III: Commitments of Communion

Article 9: Catholicity and Common Good of the Anglican Communion

(1) Each church shall act in a manner compatible both with its belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and with its membership of the Anglican Communion. (2) In all essential matters of common concern in the Anglican Communion, no member church shall act without consideration of the common good of the Communion and fundamental compliance with all of the Parts of this Covenant.

Article 10: Obligations of Confession of the Faith

Each church shall: (1) uphold and act compatibly with the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, and moral values and vision of humanity received by and developed in the fellowship of member churches; and (2) primarily through its bishops, ensure that biblical texts are handled respectfully and coherently, building on our best traditions and scholarship believing that scriptural revelation must continue to illuminate, challenge and transform cultures, structures and ways of thinking.

Article 11: Sacramental Commitments

Each church shall: (1) maintain and administer the sacraments of baptism and eucharist; (2) welcome members of all other member churches to join in its own celebration of the sacraments; and (3) enjoin its members to eucharistic sharing in a fellow church in accordance with the canonical discipline of that host church.

Article 12: Apostolic and Ministerial Commitments

Each church shall: (1) uphold the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; (2) recognise the canonical validity of orders duly conferred in every member church; (3) welcome persons episcopally ordained in any member church to minister in the host church subject to the necessary consents required by and in accordance with the law of that church; and (4) permit any person ordained in that church to seek ministry in any other member church subject to its law and discipline.

Article 13: Ministerial Obligations of Unity

(1) Each minister, especially a bishop, shall be a visible sign of unity and shall maintain communion within each church and between it, the See of Canterbury and all other Communion churches. (2) No minister, especially a bishop, shall: (a) act without due regard to or jeopardise the unity of the Communion; (b) neglect to co-operate with ministers, especially bishops, of member churches for the good of the Communion and Church universal; (c) unreasonably be the cause or focus of division and strife in their church or elsewhere in the Communion; (d) if in episcopal office, unreasonably refuse any invitation to attend meetings of the Instruments of Unity.

Article 14: Hospitality and Availability of Ministrations

Each church shall: (1) welcome members of every Communion church to share in the spiritual benefits, ministrations and worship available in that church in the manner prescribed by its law; (2) provide, as practicable, for the pastoral care and wellbeing of any member of a fellow church during a visit to that church; and (3) through the relevant authority, from time to time invite, as practicable, bishops of member churches to participate at ordinations administered in the host church as a sign of ecclesial unity and continuity.

Article 15: Commitments to Mission and Prayer

Each church shall: (1) share in the mission of the Anglican Communion entrusted by Christ to his church in a common life of service; (2) co-operate, so far as is practicable, with other member churches to develop a common understanding of mission and evangelism and to promote mission through practical schemes to serve the needs of the world; (3) pray for the needs of and with fellow member churches and their faithful; (4) offer its spiritual, intellectual, material and financial resources to assist with the needs of any other member church or of the Communion as a whole; and (5) promote in theological education, an understanding of the relationships of communion between the member churches.

Article 16: The Bonds of Mutual Loyalty

Each church shall: (1) in essential matters of common concern to the Communion place the interests and needs of the community of member churches before its own; (2) in such cases, make every effort to resolve disputes by reconciliation, mediation or other amicable and equitable means; (3) respect the counsels of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primates' Meeting, Lambeth Conference, and Anglican [Communion] Council; and (4) respect the principles of canon law common to the churches of the Anglican Communion.

Article 17: Ecumenical Commitments

Each church recognises that: (1) if a member church enters a relation of communion with a non-member church, this effects a relationship between each member church and the non-member to the extent provided in our laws and the regulatory instruments of the ecumenical partner; and (2) before a member church enters any agreement with a non-member church, that church shall consult the appropriate Instrument of Unity.

Part IV: Exercise of Autonomy in Communion

Article 18: The Principle and Nature of Autonomy

(1) Autonomy is a fundamental principle of Anglicanism. (2) Autonomy is the right of a church to self-government. (3) An autonomous church has authority only to make decisions for itself in relation to its own affairs at its own level. (4) Autonomy expresses subsidiarity: decision-making at the appropriate level. (5) Autonomy is exercised by a church in the context of the wider community of which it forms part. (6) There are limits on the exercise of autonomy imposed by the relationships of

communion, the acknowledgement of common identity, the commitments of communion, and the principles applicable to the management of communion affairs.

Article 19: The Autonomy of Each Church

(1) Each autonomous church has the right to order and regulate its own affairs through its own system of government and law. (2) Each member church shall be free from control by any decision of any ecclesiastical body external to itself in relation to its exclusively internal affairs unless that decision is authorised under or incorporated in its own law. (3) The validity within each autonomous church of any ecclesiastical act relating to such internal affairs is governed by the law of that church.

Article 20: Autonomy and Communion Issues

(1) Some issues treated within each church may have a dual character and consist of mixed elements of internal (domestic) concern and of external (common) concern to the Anglican Communion. (2) Autonomy includes the right of a church to make decisions on issues in those of its affairs which may also touch the Anglican Communion of which it forms part, provided those decisions are compatible with the interests and standards of the wider Communion (as determined in accordance with Part V). (3) What touches all should be approved by all.

Article 21: Autonomy in Communion

(1) Each church has a fiduciary duty to honour and not to breach the trust put in it by the Communion to exercise its autonomy in communion. (2) In essential matters of common concern, each church shall in the exercise of its autonomy have regard to the common good of the Anglican Communion. (3) In such matters, each church shall exercise its autonomy in communion, prior to any implementation, through explanation, dialogue, consultation, discernment and agreement with the appropriate Instruments of Unity.

Article 22: Autonomy, Diversity and Mutual Respect

(1) Diversity is a desirable dimension of the catholicity of the church, a feature of the historic development of Anglicanism, and inherent to the particularity of each member church. (2) Each autonomous church has the greatest possible liberty to order its life and affairs, appropriate to its Christian people in their geographical, cultural and historical context, compatible with the unity and good order of the Communion. (3) Each church shall respect and maintain the autonomy of all churches in the Anglican Communion and shall not permit any authority or person within it to intervene in the internal affairs of another member church without its consent.

Part V: Management of Communion Issues

Article 23: Communion Issues of Common Concern

(1) Communion issues are those essential matters of common concern to the member churches of the Communion, and include the affairs, actual and prospective decisions, of a member church which touch fundamentally the fellowship and mission of the Anglican Communion, the relations of its churches, and the compatibility of such decisions with this Covenant and the unity and good order of the Communion. (2) The Instruments of Unity shall set out formally their composition, functions, relations one with another, and procedures for matters arising under this Part. (3) A matter is a communion issue if so designated by the Instruments of Unity, where appropriate in dialogue with any member church involved in the matter, subject to the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury under Article 27.

Article 24: The Instruments of Unity

(1) The Instruments of Unity serve in communion to discern our common mind in communion issues, and foster our interdependence and mutual accountability, but exercise no jurisdiction over autonomous member churches save to the limited extent provided in this Covenant and the laws of member churches. (2) The Archbishop of Canterbury enjoys a primacy of honour and is a personal sign of our unity and communion, and shall be assisted by a Council of Advice. (3) The Lambeth Conference, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressing episcopal collegiality worldwide, gathers for common counsel, consultation and encouragement and to provide direction to the whole Communion. (4) The Anglican Consultative Council has such membership and functions as are prescribed by its constitution. (5) The Primates' Meeting, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assembles for mutual support and counsel, monitors global developments and exercises collegial responsibility in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters.

Article 25: The Anglican Communion Officer in Each Church

Each church shall (1) designate a person to act as its own Anglican Communion Liaison Officer, appointed to defend the bonds of communion expressed in this Covenant, and accountable to its central assembly; and (2) have a system to identify and process within that church contentious communion issues for submission to that Officer.

Article 26: Process in Contentious Communion Issues

(1) On discernment by the Officer of any contentious communion issue, the Anglican Communion Liaison Officer shall liaise with the Primate and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. (2) Following such liaison, the Officer or Secretary General may submit the matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. (3) The Archbishop may issue such guidance as he deems fit or, as appropriate, refer the matter to the Council of Advice for guidance and, if necessary, the Primates' Meeting, the Anglican Consultative Council, or the Lambeth Conference to resolve the issue having regard to the common good of the Communion and compatibility with this covenant.

Article 27: Interpretation and Periodic Review

(1) The Archbishop of Canterbury shall decide all questions of interpretation of this Covenant, consulting the Council of Advice, and seeking the advice of any other body as he deems appropriate. (2) If approved by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting and Anglican Consultative Council, the decision of the Archbishop shall be regarded as authoritative in the Communion until altered in like manner. (3) The Council of Advice shall carry out periodic reviews of the administration of this Covenant for submission to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who shall act upon such reviews as he deems appropriate, so that our churches may more completely embrace the life in communion to which all are called by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Appendix Three : Supporting documentation

1. Extract from 'The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral', 1886/1888

2. Lambeth Conference 1978:
   Resolution 10 *Human relationships and sexuality*

3. Lambeth Conference 1988:
   Resolution 64 *Human rights for those of homosexual orientation*

4. Lambeth Conference 1988:
   Resolution 72 *Episcopal responsibilities and diocesan boundaries*

5. Ten Principles of Partnership, 1993

6. Lambeth Conference 1998:
   Resolution I.10 *Human sexuality*

7. Lambeth Conference 1998:
   Resolution III.2 *The unity of the Anglican Communion*

8. ACC-12 2002:
   Resolution 34 *Province-wide and Communion-wide consultation*

9. Episcopal Church (USA) General Convention 2003:
   Resolution C051 Liturgy/Music: Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships

10. A Statement by the Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting in Lambeth Palace, 16 October 2003

11. Caring for all the Churches: A response of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church to an expressed need of the Church, March 2004

12. Anglican Church of Canada General Synod 2004: Resolutions concerning the blessing of same sex unions

1. Extract from 'The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral', 1886/1888

…As inherent parts of this sacred deposit, and therefore as essential to the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom, we account the following, to wit:

(a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God.

(b) The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.

(c) The two Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

(d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

2. Lambeth Conference 1978: Resolution 10 Human Relationships and Sexuality

The Conference gladly affirms the Christian ideals of faithfulness and chastity both within and outside marriage, and calls Christians everywhere to seek the grace of Christ to live lives of holiness, discipline, and service in the world, and commends to the Church:

1. The need for theological study of sexuality in such a way as to relate sexual relationships to that wholeness of human life which itself derives from God, who is the source of masculinity and femininity.

2. The need for programmes at diocesan level, involving both men and women, (a) to promote the study and foster the ideals of Christian marriage and family life, and to examine the ways in which those who are unmarried may discover the fullness which God intends for all his children; (b) to provide ministries of compassionate support to those suffering from brokenness within marriage and family relationships; (c) to emphasise the sacredness of all human life, the moral issues inherent in clinical abortion, and the possible implications of genetic engineering.

3. While we reaffirm heterosexuality as the scriptural norm, we recognise the need for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research. The Church, recognising the need for pastoral concern for those who are homosexual, encourages dialogue with them. (We note with satisfaction that such studies are now proceeding in some member Churches of the Anglican Communion.)

3. Lambeth Conference 1988: Resolution 64 Human rights for those of homosexual orientation

This Conference:

1. Reaffirms the statement of the Lambeth Conference of 1978 on homosexuality, recognising the continuing need in the next decade for "deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research."

2. Urges such study and reflection to take account of biological, genetic and psychological research being undertaken by other agencies, and the socio-cultural factors that lead to the different attitudes in the provinces of our Communion.

3. Calls each province to reassess, in the light of such study and because of our concern for human rights, its care for and attitude towards persons of homosexual orientation.

4. Lambeth Conference 1988: Resolution 72 Episcopal responsibilities and diocesan boundaries

This Conference:

1. reaffirms its unity in the historical position of respect for diocesan boundaries and the authority of bishops within these boundaries; and in light of the above

2. affirms that it is deemed inappropriate behaviour for any bishop or priest of this Communion to exercise episcopal or pastoral ministry within another diocese without first obtaining the permission and invitation of the ecclesial authority thereof.

3. urges all political and community leaders to seize every opportunity to work together to bring about a just and peaceful solution.

With the number of issues that could threaten our unity it seems fair that we should speak of our mutual respect for one another, and the positions we hold, that serves as a sign of our unity.

5. Ten Principles of Partnership

From *Towards Dynamic Mission: Renewing the Church for Mission*, Mission Issues and Strategy Advisory Group II (MISAG II), 1993

Introduction

Partners in Mission is a continuing process by which the Churches of the Communion contribute to each other's local mission. It assists Churches in sharpening their mission priorities and setting goals. They can share with others from their resources such as experience of poverty and weakness, acting for justice, spirituality and prayer, friendship, enthusiasm, patterns of development, liturgy, dance and song, people and money. They can receive from the resources of others. In so doing all participate in God's mission in the world.

These principles of partnership can also be seen as characteristics of a healthy partnership in mission process.

The idea of mutual responsibility and interdependence in the body of Christ for the purpose of fulfilling the great commission is at the heart of New Testament missiology and practice. It has been a constant theme at ACC gatherings over the years (ACC-2 pp.53-54; ACC-4 pp.25-27; ACC-5 pp.30-34; ACC-7 pp.30-33). In short, the Partners in Mission (PIM) process is designed to create and sustain relationships and continuous interdependence and not just to promote a single or isolated consultation (ACC-7 p.30). Various ACC consultations have identified the following principles as essential to any meaningful or healthy partnership in mission process:

1. Local initiative

"The responsibility for mission in any place belongs primarily to the church in that place" (ACC-2 p.53). Thus the initiative for establishing a new missionary venture in any given place belongs to the local church. Partnership therefore implies respect for the authority of the local church.

2. Mutuality

Mutuality is underscored by a deep sense of open and joint accountability. `To be open to one another as friends on the basis of common commitment, mutual trust, confession and forgiveness, keeping one another informed of all plans and programmes and submitting ourselves to mutual accountability and correction' (Sharing Life - El Escorial - Guidelines for sharing: 1987 World Council of Churches, p.29)

Mutuality in partnership affirms the oneness of the people of God, their unity and interrelatedness as the children of one Father. In this relationship each person and community is recognized, valued, affirmed and respected.

In decision making, mutuality means sharing power. For example, major decisions affecting partners (in the South), should not be taken without their participation in the decision whether by their presence when it is made or by prior consultation.

3. Responsible stewardship

Responsible stewardship in partnership means that partners see their resources as jointly owned and held in trust by each member for the common good (I Cor 12:7).

The giving, receiving and use of resources must be controlled by judiciousness, selflessness, maturity and responsibility (II Cor 8:9).

God's gifts to any one part of the universal Church are given in trust for the mission of the whole church. No mission agency, diocese, province or national Church `owns' its resources.

4. Interdependence

"Interdependence means to represent to one another our needs and problems in relationships where there are no absolute donors, or absolute recipients, but all have needs to be met and gifts to give." (WCC Ibid p29)

We need each other. We are incomplete and cannot be a called the Church of God if the diversity implicit in our catholicity is over taken by a parochial, cultural or racial, homogeneity. In practice, three consequences follow:

- every cultural group has something to give or something others can learn from them;
- all cultures need redeeming and therefore no culture can be said to be fundamentally Christian and thus superior to others;
- every one has needs that can only be met by others. There is an African saying addressed to arrogant and selfish rich people: "no one buries himself - if he does one of his hands will be outside the grave".

5. Cross fertilisation

Cross-fertilisation requires a willingness to learn from one another. It produces an enrichment that results from being open to one another's ideas, experiences and respecting one another's cultural and contextual peculiarities in a process of give and take. `If we once acted as though there were only givers who had nothing to receive and receivers who had nothing to give, the oneness of the missionary task must now make us both givers and receivers' (ACC-2 p53).

6. Integrity

A healthy partnership calls for integrity at all levels. It involves a recognition that all partners are essentially equal. This implies a commitment to be real and honest. We do not always have to say 'yes' to everything the other partner says for fear of offending or out of a false sense of guilt. A healthy partnership requires that we take each other seriously, raise creative and loving challenges that could lead to positive re-evaluation of long held traditions and assumptions. The result is a healthier and more enriching relationship. This includes both listening to each other and being willing to repent and change where we have been in error.

7. Transparency

Transparency involves openness and honesty with one another. It also involves risks. The risk of being hurt. The risk of being misunderstood and the risk of being taken advantage of.

Information needs to be fully shared with one another; not only information connected with our specific relationship with one another but information about all of our relationships. Full disclosure of financial information to one another is one of the marks of a transparent relationship.

8. Solidarity

We are part of each other. We are committed to one another in Christ's body. What touches one member touches the others. Thus no one member must be left to suffer alone. In many non-western cultures, group cohesion and solidarity are thought to be central to existence and crucial to the progress and survival of society. In spite of their strong belief in the rights and individuality of the individual, the Igbo of Nigeria, for example, argue that 'igwe bu ike' ('our strength has its source and sustenance in group solidarity'). In parts of East Africa, the Harambee motif has been successfully harnessed in political, social and religious spheres to achieve astounding results. Missiologically speaking the church needs to act in solidarity "so that the world may see and believe" (John 17:21).

9. Meeting together

The concept of mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ implies that the Church in every place should find a forum for periodic evaluation, self assessment and cross-cultural fertilization. Thus while a PIM Consultation is not the fulfilment of a PIM vision, it is essential to it (ACC-2 p53). We need to meet together.

10. Acting ecumenically

Our mission relationships as Anglicans must be seen as part of the wider mission relationships of all Christians. In this Decade MISAG-II underlines the importance of the Lambeth call for Anglicans to explore ways of being involved in mission co-operatively with other Christians. We need the stimulation, the critique and the encouragement of sisters and brothers in Christ of other traditions. A constant question before us must be, to what extent are those of other traditions invited to participate in advising and working with us in our outreach?

6. Lambeth Conference 1998: Resolution I.10 Human Sexuality

This Conference:

1. commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality;

2. in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage;

3. recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;

4. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;

5. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;

6. requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;

7. notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.

7. Lambeth Conference 1998: Resolution III.2 The unity of the Anglican Communion

This Conference, committed to maintaining the overall unity of the Anglican Communion, including the unity of each diocese under the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop,

(a) believes such unity is essential to the overall effectiveness of the Church's mission to bring the Gospel of Christ to all people;

(b) for the purpose of maintaining this unity, calls upon the provinces of the Communion to uphold the principle of 'Open Reception' as it relates to the ordination of women to the priesthood as indicated by the Eames Commission; noting that "reception is a long and spiritual process." (Grindrod Report);

(c) in particular calls upon the provinces of the Communion to affirm that those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to, the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans;

(d) therefore calls upon the Provinces of the Communion to make such provision, including appropriate episcopal ministry, as will enable them to live in the highest degree of Communion possible, recognising that there is and should be no compulsion on any bishop in matters concerning ordination or licensing;

(e) also affirms that "although some of the means by which communion is expressed may be strained or broken, there is a need for courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect, and prayer for one another, and we confirm that our desire to

know or be with one another, remains binding on us as Christians". (Eames, p.119).

8. *ACC-12 Resolution 34 Province-wide and Communion-wide consultation*

This Anglican Consultative Council, being concerned about a range of matters of faith and order which have arisen since we last met, and having in mind the constant emphasis on mutual responsibility and interdependence in the resolutions of successive Lambeth Conferences, from the call in 1867 for "unity in faith and discipline … by due and canonical subordination of synods" (1867, IV) to the call in 1998 for a "common mind concerning ethical issues where contention threatens to divide …" (1998, IV 5 (c)) calls upon:

1. dioceses and individual bishops not to undertake unilateral actions or adopt policies which would strain our communion with one another without reference to their provincial authorities; and

2. provincial authorities to have in mind the impact of their decisions within the wider Communion; and

3. all members of the Communion, even in our disagreements to have in mind the "need for courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect and prayer for one another" (1998, III.2 (e)).

9. *Episcopal Church (USA) General Convention 2003 Resolution C051 Liturgy/Music: Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships*

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention affirm the following:

1. That our life together as a community of faith is grounded in the saving work of Jesus Christ and expressed in the principles of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral: Holy Scripture, the historic Creeds of the Church, the two dominical Sacraments, and the Historic Episcopate.

2. That we reaffirm Resolution A069 of the 65th General Convention (1976) that "homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church."

3. That, in our understanding of homosexual persons, differences exist among us about how best to care pastorally for those who intend to live in monogamous, non-celibate unions; and what is, or should be, required, permitted, or prohibited by the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church concerning the blessing of the same.

4. That we reaffirm Resolution D039 of the 73rd General Convention (2000), that "We expect such relationships will be characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God," and that such relationships exist throughout the church.

5. That we recognize that local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions.

6. That we commit ourselves, and call our church, in the spirit of Resolution A104 of the 70th General Convention (1991), to continued prayer, study, and discernment on the pastoral care for gay and lesbian persons, to include the compilation and development by a special commission organized and appointed by the Presiding Bishop of resources to facilitate as wide a conversation of discernment as possible throughout the church.

7. That our baptism into Jesus Christ is inseparable from our communion with one another, and we commit ourselves to that communion despite our diversity of opinion and, among dioceses, a diversity of pastoral practice with the gay men and lesbians among us.

That it is a matter of faith that our Lord longs for our unity as his disciples, and for us this entails living within the boundaries of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. We believe this discipline expresses faithfulness to our polity and that it will facilitate the conversation we seek, not only in The Episcopal Church, but also in the wider Anglican Communion and beyond.

10. *A Statement by the Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting in Lambeth Palace, 16 October 2003*

The Primates of the Anglican Communion and the Moderators of the United Churches, meeting together at Lambeth Palace on the 15th and 16th October, 2003, wish to express our gratitude to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, for calling us together in response to recent events in the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada, and the Episcopal Church (USA), and welcoming us into his home so that we might take counsel together, and to seek to discern, in an atmosphere of common prayer and worship, the will and guidance of the Holy Spirit for the common life of the thirty-eight provinces which constitute our Communion.

At a time of tension, we have struggled at great cost with the issues before us, but have also been renewed and strengthened in our Communion with one another through our worship and study of the Bible. This has led us into a deeper commitment to work together, and we affirm our pride in the Anglican inheritance of faith and order and our firm desire to remain part of a Communion, where what we hold in common is much greater than that which divides us in proclaiming Good News to the world.

At this time we feel the profound pain and uncertainty shared by others about our Christian discipleship in the light of controversial decisions by the Diocese of New Westminster to authorise a public Rite of Blessing for those in committed same sex relationships, and by the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) to confirm the election of a priest in a committed same sex relationship to the office and work of a Bishop.

These actions threaten the unity of our own Communion as well as our relationships with other parts of Christ's Church, our mission and witness, and our relations with other faiths, in a world already confused in areas of sexuality, morality and theology, and polarise Christian opinion.

As Primates of our Communion seeking to exercise the "enhanced responsibility" entrusted to us by successive Lambeth Conferences, we re-affirm our common understanding of the centrality and authority of Scripture in determining the basis of our faith. Whilst we acknowledge a legitimate diversity of interpretation that arises in the Church, this diversity does not mean that some of us take the authority of Scripture more lightly than others. Nevertheless, each province needs to be aware of the possible effects of its interpretation of Scripture on the life of other provinces in the Communion. We commit ourselves afresh to mutual respect whilst seeking from the Lord a correct discernment of how God's Word speaks to us in our contemporary world.

We also re-affirm the resolutions made by the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 on issues of human sexuality as having moral force and commanding the respect of the Communion as its present position on these issues. We commend the report of that Conference in its entirety to all members of the Anglican Communion, valuing especially its emphasis on the need "to listen to the experience of homosexual persons, and … to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ"; and its acknowledgement of the need for ongoing study on questions of human sexuality.

Therefore, as a body we deeply regret the actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church (USA) which appear to a number of provinces to have short-circuited that process, and could be perceived to alter unilaterally the teaching of the Anglican Communion on this issue. They do not. Whilst we recognise the juridical autonomy of each province in our Communion, the mutual interdependence of the provinces means that none has authority unilaterally to substitute an alternative teaching as if it were the teaching of the entire Anglican Communion.

To this extent, therefore, we must make clear that recent actions in New Westminster and in the Episcopal Church (USA) do not express the mind of our Communion as a whole, and these decisions jeopardise our sacramental fellowship with each other. We have a particular concern for those who in all conscience feel bound to dissent from the teaching and practice of their province in such matters. Whilst we reaffirm the teaching of successive Lambeth Conferences that bishops must respect the autonomy and territorial integrity of dioceses and provinces other than their own, we call on the provinces concerned to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight of dissenting minorities within their own area of pastoral care in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the Primates.

The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (USA) has explained to us the constitutional framework within which the election and confirmation of a new bishop in the Episcopal Church (USA) takes place. As Primates, it is not for us to pass judgement on the constitutional processes of another province. We recognise the sensitive balance between provincial autonomy and the expression of critical opinion by others on the internal actions of a province. Nevertheless, many Primates have pointed to the grave difficulties that this election has raised and will continue to raise. In most of our provinces the election of Canon Gene Robinson would not have been possible since his chosen lifestyle would give rise to a canonical impediment to his consecration as a bishop.

If his consecration proceeds, we recognise that we have reached a crucial and critical point in the life of the Anglican Communion and we have had to conclude that the future of the Communion itself will be put in jeopardy. In this case, the ministry of this one bishop will not be recognised by most of the Anglican world, and many provinces are likely to consider themselves to be out of Communion with the Episcopal Church (USA). This will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division on this and further issues as provinces have to decide in consequence whether they can remain in communion with provinces that choose not to break communion with the Episcopal Church (USA).

Similar considerations apply to the situation pertaining in the Diocese of New Westminster.

We have noted that the Lambeth Conference 1998 requested the Archbishop of Canterbury to establish a commission to consider his own role in maintaining communion within and between provinces when grave difficulties arise.[107] We ask him now to establish such a commission, but that its remit be extended to include urgent and deep theological and legal reflection on the way in which the dangers we have identified at this meeting will have to be addressed. We request that such a commission complete its work, at least in relation to the issues raised at this meeting, within twelve months.

We urge our provinces not to act precipitately on these wider questions, but take time to share in this process of reflection and to consider their own constitutional requirements as individual provinces face up to potential realignments.

Questions of the parity of our canon law, and the nature of the relationship between the laws of our provinces with one another have also been raised. We encourage the Network of Legal Advisers established by the Anglican Consultative Council, meeting in Hong Kong in 2002, to bring to completion the work which they have already begun on this question.

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[107] In view of the very grave difficulties encountered in the internal affairs of some provinces of the Communion, [this conference] invites the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a commission to make recommendations to the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council, as to the exceptional circumstances and conditions under which, and the means by which, it would be appropriate for him to exercise an extraordinary ministry of episcope (pastoral oversight), support and reconciliation with regard to the internal affairs of a province other than his own for the sake of maintaining communion with the said province and between the said province and the rest of the Anglican Communion. (IV.13.b)

It is clear that recent controversies have opened debates within the life of our Communion which will not be resolved until there has been a lengthy process of prayer, reflection and substantial work in and alongside the Commission which we have recommended. We pray that God will equip our Communion to be equal to the task and challenges which lie before it.

"Now I appeal to the elders of your community, as a fellow elder and a witness to Christ's sufferings, and as one who has shared in the glory to be revealed: look after the flock of God whose shepherd you are." (1 Peter 5.1,2a)

11. Caring for all the Churches: A response of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church to an expressed need of the Church, March 2004

The church is the Body of Christ. Our life in this Body is a continuing action of God's grace among us, by whose power alone we are "joined together" in Christ and grow "into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21). Through the church's common life in Christ, God intends to signify to the world the beginning of a new and reconciled creation.

We know the unity with God that Christ has won for humanity, he won through the victory of his passion. We are mindful of the suffering of Jesus who, on the Cross and through his resurrection, reaches into every corner of alienated human life, reconciling and restoring to the household of God all who come to him in faith. By God's grace the church is continually called, in repentance and hope, to be a trustworthy sign to the world of this costly reconciling power of God. We understand that, in obedience to Christ and putting our whole trust in him, we may share in his unity with the Father through the Holy Spirit. Communion in the Trinity is the salvation of the world. The church, thus, exists for the sake of the world. Therefore, for the sake of the world, we have been called "to serve before God day and night in the ministry of reconciliation", (BCP, p.521) which is to be carried out "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:2-3)

We as bishops are not of a common mind about issues concerning human sexuality. Different points of view on these matters also exist within our dioceses and congregations. In some instances there are significant differences between congregation(s) and the bishop and few of our congregations are themselves of one mind. As we exercise pastoral leadership in our dioceses, we pledge ourselves to work always towards the fullest relationship, seeking, as the Archbishop of Canterbury has said, "the highest degree of communion." We are grateful for his leadership and share the pastoral concerns expressed by the Primates of the Anglican Communion in their statement of October 2003, "for those who in all conscience feel bound to dissent from the teaching and practice of their province in such matters." We have committed ourselves to living through this time of disagreement in love and charity and with sensitivity to the pastoral needs of all members of our church.

In the circumstance of disagreement regarding the actions of the 74th General Convention on issues of human sexuality, we commit ourselves to providing and to making provision for pastoral care for dissenting congregations, and we recognize that there may be a need for a bishop to delegate some pastoral oversight. Oversight means the episcopal acts performed as part of a diocesan bishop's ministry either by the diocesan bishop or by another bishop to whom such responsibility has been delegated by the diocesan bishop. In other Anglican provinces, the term "pastoral oversight" signifies what we mean by "pastoral care." In our Episcopal Church polity, "oversight" does not confer "jurisdiction." We are aware of current examples of the delegation of pastoral oversight in the gracious accommodations which have occurred in some dioceses.

As we together commit to a process for Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight, we also recognize the constitutional and canonical authority of bishops and the integrity of diocesan boundaries. We are in accord with the statement of the primates: "Whilst we affirm the teaching of successive Lambeth Conferences that bishops must respect the autonomy and territorial integrity of dioceses and provinces other than their own, we call on the provinces concerned to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight of dissenting minorities within their own area of pastoral care in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the Primates."

Sensitive pastoral care does not presuppose like-mindedness. Bishops and congregations have frequently disagreed about particular articulations and interpretations of scripture and the Creeds while being able to transcend their differences through common prayer and celebration of the sacraments of the new covenant. The notion that the bishop's views must be in accord with those of a particular rector or congregation for the bishop to be received as chief pastor opens the way to undermining the bishop's pastoral ministry, which must embrace all and "support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries." Our theology and practice hold that ordination and consecration provide the gifts and grace necessary for the sacramental acts of a bishop to be effectual. (See article XXVI of the Articles of Religion: Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments.)

As bishops we share a ministry of episcopé as stewards of the mystery of faith that none of us possesses alone. We believe it is our particular charge to nourish, guard and represent in the church this "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We understand this to be for the sake of the world and in fidelity to our Lord who gave his life to restore all to unity with God. We recognize and repent of our failures of charity towards one another in this shared ministry of episcopé, and we pledge ourselves to a sacrificial ministry with one another, valuing in each the presence of the Crucified and Risen Christ. While our unity may be strained, we continue to strive for godly union and concord. Our task requires humility, charity, mutual respect and a willingness to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In March of 2002 the House of Bishops adopted the following covenant:

"We believe that the present Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church are sufficient for dealing with questions of episcopal oversight, supplemental episcopal

pastoral care, and disputes that may arise between the bishop and a congregation. We encourage that their provisions be used wisely and in the spirit of charity.

"The provision of supplemental episcopal pastoral care shall be under the direction of the bishop of the diocese, who shall invite the visitor and remain in pastoral contact with the congregation. This is to be understood as a temporary arrangement, the ultimate goal of which is the full restoration of the relationship between the congregation and their bishop."

Expanding on this previous agreement, and working always towards "the highest degree of communion," we offer the following recommendations in order to provide Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight. We expect that the first priority in a relationship between a diocesan bishop and congregation is a striving for unity. As such, it is incumbent upon both the bishop and the rector/congregation to meet together, with a consultant, if needed, to find ways to work together. If for serious cause in the light of our current disagreements on issues of human sexuality, the bishop and rector/congregation cannot work together, we propose the following process for Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight.

1) In the spirit of openness, the rector and vestry, or the canonically designated lay leadership shall meet with the bishop to seek reconciliation. After such a meeting, it is our hope that in most instances a mutually agreeable way forward will be found.

2) If reconciliation does not occur, then the rector and two-thirds of the vestry, or in the absence of a rector, two-thirds of the canonically designated lay leadership, after fully engaging the congregation, may seek from their diocesan bishop, (or the diocesan bishop may suggest) a conference regarding the appropriateness and conditions for Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight.

3) After such a conference the bishop may appoint another bishop to provide pastoral oversight.

4) If no reconciliation is achieved, there may then be an appeal to the bishop who is president or vice-president of the ECUSA province in which the congregation is geographically located, for help in seeking a resolution. Those making such an appeal must inform the other party of their decision to appeal.

5) When such an appeal has been made, the provincial bishop may request two other bishops, representative of the divergent views in this church, to join with the provincial bishop to review the situation, to consider the appeal, and to make recommendations to all parties. If an episcopal visitor is to be invited, that bishop shall be a member in good standing in this Church.

6) When an agreement is reached with respect to a plan, it shall be for the purpose of reconciliation. The plan shall include expectations of all parties, especially mutual accountability. The plan shall be for a stated period of time with regular reviews.

The provincial bishop shall periodically inform the Presiding Bishop, the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice, and the House of Bishops at its regular meetings of the progress and results of this process.

As bishops of this church, we pledge ourselves to pray and work for patience and the generosity of spirit that can enable a pastoral resolution as we live with our differences. As well, we will strive for Godly union and concord as together we seek to be led by the Spirit of truth who, as Jesus tells us, "will guide us into all the truth." (John 16:13)

The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church

23 March 2004

12. Anglican Church of Canada General Synod 2004: Resolutions concerning the blessing of same sex unions

A134 Blessing of Same Sex Unions

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1) Affirm that, even in the face of deeply held convictions about whether the blessing of committed same sex unions is contrary to the doctrine and teaching of the Anglican Church of Canada, we recognize that through our baptism we are members one of another in Christ Jesus, and we commit ourselves to strive for that communion into which Christ continually calls us;

2) Affirm the crucial value of continued respectful dialogue and study of biblical, theological, liturgical, pastoral, scientific, psychological and social aspects of human sexuality; and call upon all bishops, clergy and lay leaders to be instrumental in seeing that dialogue and study continue, intentionally involving gay and lesbian persons;

3) Affirm the principle of respect for the way in which the dialogue and study may be taking place, or might take place, in indigenous and various other communities within our church in a manner consistent with their cultures and traditions;

4) Affirm that the Anglican Church is a church for all the baptized and is committed to taking such actions as are necessary to maintain and serve our fellowship and unity in Christ, and request the House of Bishops to continue its work on the provision of adequate episcopal oversight and pastoral care for all, regardless of the perspective from which they view the blessing of committed same sex relationships; and

5) Affirm the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same sex relationships.

CARRIED

MOTION TO DEFER

That Resolution A134 be amended by:

Deferring consideration of section 2 until the meeting of General Synod in 2007; and during the period of deferral:

Request that the Primate ask the Primate's Theological Commission to review, consider and report to the Council of General Synod, by its spring 2006 meeting, whether the blessing of committed same sex unions is a matter of doctrine;

That on receipt of such a report, the Council of General Synod distribute it to each province, diocese and the House of Bishops for consideration.

CARRIED

"The deferred section 2 reads "That this General Synod affirm the authority and jurisdiction of any diocesan synod, with the concurrence of its bishop, to authorize the blessing of committed same sex unions."

A135 Blessing of Same Sex Unions – Resources for the Church

That this General Synod request the Faith Worship and Ministry Committee in the next triennium to prepare resources for the church to use in addressing issues relating to human sexuality, including the blessing of same sex unions and the changing definition of marriage in society.

CARRIED

Appendix Four : List of published works referred to in the Report

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