

The Windsor Continuation Group

The Windsor Continuation Group was set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury following his [Advent Letter to the Primates in December 2007](#). It was asked to advise the Archbishop on the implementation of the recommendations of the Windsor Report, how best to carry forward the Windsor Process in the life of the Communion, and to consult on the "unfinished business" of the Report. At the Lambeth Conference 2008, it offered a [series of initial Observations](#) in order to facilitate conversations between the group and the bishops on the current situation of the Anglican Communion.

The [Report of the Group](#) was received by the Primates at their meeting in Alexandria February 2009, and published then. It will form part of the agenda at ACC-14 in Jamaica in May 2009.

Archbishop of Canterbury's Advent Letter

To: Primate of the Anglican Communion & Moderators of the United Churches

Greetings in the name of the One 'who is and was and is to come, the Almighty', as we prepare in this Advent season to celebrate once more his first coming and pray for the grace to greet him when he comes in glory.

You will by now, I hope, have received my earlier letter summarising the responses from Primates to the Joint Standing Committee's analysis of the New Orleans statement from the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church. In that letter, I promised to write with some further reflections and proposals, and this is the purpose of the present communication. Although I am writing in the first instance to my fellow-primates, I hope you will share this letter widely with your bishops and people.

As I said in that earlier letter, the responses received from primates differed in their assessment of the situation. Slightly more than half of the replies received signalled a willingness to accept the Joint Standing Committee's analysis of the New Orleans statement, but the rest regarded both the statement and the Standing Committee's comments as an inadequate response to what had been requested by the primates in Dar-es-Salaam.

So we have no consensus about the New Orleans statement. It is also the case that some of the more negative assessments from primates were clearly influenced by the reported remarks of individual bishops in The Episcopal Church who either declared their unwillingness to abide by the terms of the statement or argued that it did not imply any change in current policies. It should be noted too that some of the positive responses reflected a deep desire to put the question decisively behind us as a Communion; some of these also expressed dissatisfaction with our present channels of discussion and communication.

2.

Where does this leave us as a Communion? Because we have no single central executive authority, the answer to this is not a simple one. However, it is important to try and state what common ground there is before we attempt to move forward; and it is historically an aspect of the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury to 'articulate the mind of the Communion' in moments of tension and controversy, as the Windsor Report puts it (para. 109). I do so out of the profound conviction that the existence of our Communion is truly a gift of God to the wholeness of Christ's Church and that all of us will be seriously wounded and diminished if our Communion fractures any further; but also out of the no less profound conviction that our identity as Anglicans is not something without boundaries. What I am writing here is an attempt to set out where some of those boundaries lie and why they matter for our witness to the world as well as for our own integrity and mutual respect.

The Communion is a voluntary association of provinces and dioceses; and so its unity depends not on a canon law that can be enforced but on the ability of each part of the

family to recognise that other local churches have received the same faith from the apostles and are faithfully holding to it in loyalty to the One Lord incarnate who speaks in Scripture and bestows his grace in the sacraments. To put it in slightly different terms, local churches acknowledge the same 'constitutive elements' in one another. This means in turn that each local church receives from others and recognises in others the same good news and the same structure of ministry, and seeks to engage in mutual service for the sake of our common mission.

So a full relationship of communion will mean:

- i. *The common acknowledgment that we stand under the authority of Scripture as 'the rule and ultimate standard of faith', in the words of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral; as the gift shaped by the Holy Spirit which decisively interprets God to the community of believers and the community of believers to itself and opens our hearts to the living and eternal Word that is Christ.* Our obedience to the call of Christ the Word Incarnate is drawn out first and foremost by our listening to the Bible and conforming our lives to what God both offers and requires of us through the words and narratives of the Bible. We recognise each other in one fellowship when we see one another 'standing under' the word of Scripture. Because of this recognition, we are able to consult and reflect together on the interpretation of Scripture and to learn in that process. Understanding the Bible is not a private process or something to be undertaken in isolation by one part of the family. Radical change in the way we read cannot be determined by one group or tradition alone.
- ii. *The common acknowledgement of an authentic ministry of Word and Sacrament.* We remain in communion because we trust that the Lord who has called us by his Word also calls men and women in other contexts and raises up for them as for us a ministry which can be recognised as performing the same tasks – of teaching and pastoral care and admonition, of assembling God's people for worship, above all at the Holy Communion. The principle that one local church should not intervene in the life of another is simply a way of expressing this trust that the form of ministry is something we share and that God provides what is needed for each local community.
- iii. *The common acknowledgement that the first and great priority of each local Christian community is to communicate the Good News.* When we are able to recognise biblical faithfulness and authentic ministry in one another, the relation of communion pledges us to support each other's efforts to win people for Christ and to serve the world in his Name. Communion thus means the sharing of resources and skills in order to enable one another to proclaim and serve in this way. It is in this context that we must think about the present crisis, which is in significant part a crisis about whether we can fully, honestly and gratefully recognise these gifts in each other.

The debates about sexuality, significant as they may be, are symptoms of our confusion about these basic principles of recognition. It is too easy to make the debate a standoff between those who are 'for' and those who are 'against' the welcoming of homosexual people in the Church. The Instruments of Communion have consistently and very strongly repeated that it is part of our Christian and Anglican discipleship to condemn homophobic prejudice and violence, to defend the human rights and civil liberties of homosexual people and to offer them the same pastoral care and loving service that

we owe to all in Christ's name. But the deeper question is about what we believe we are free to do, if we seek to be recognisably faithful to Scripture and the moral tradition of the wider Church, with respect to blessing and sanctioning *in the name of the Church* certain personal decisions about what constitutes an acceptable Christian lifestyle. Insofar as there is currently any consensus in the Communion about this, it is not in favour of change in our discipline or our interpretation of the Bible.

This is why the episcopal ordination of a person in a same-sex union or a claim to the freedom to make liturgical declarations about the character of same-sex unions inevitably raises the question of whether a local church is still fully recognisable within the one family of practice and reflection. Where one part of the family makes a decisive move that plainly implies a new understanding of Scripture that has not been received and agreed by the wider Church, it is not surprising that others find a problem in knowing how far they are still speaking the same language. And because what one local church says is naturally taken as representative of what others might say, we have the painful situation of some communities being associated with views and actions which they deplore or which they simply have not considered.

Where such a situation arises, it becomes important to clarify that the Communion as a whole is not committed to receiving the new interpretation and that there must be ways in which others can appropriately distance themselves from decisions and policies which they have not agreed. This is important in our relations with our own local contexts and equally in our ecumenical (and interfaith) encounters, to avoid confusion and deep misunderstanding.

The desire to establish this distance has led some to conclude that, since the first condition of recognisability (a common reading and understanding of Scripture) is not met, the whole structure of mission and ministry has failed in a local church that commits itself to a new reading of the Bible. Hence the willingness of some to provide supplementary ministerial care through the adoption of parishes in distant provinces or the ordination of ministers for distant provinces.

Successive Lambeth Conferences and Primates' Meetings have, however, cautioned very strongly against such provision. It creates a seriously anomalous position. It does not appeal to a clear or universal principle by which it may be decided that a local church's ministry is completely defective. On the ground, it creates rivalry and confusion. It opens the door to complex and unedifying legal wrangles in civil courts. It creates a situation in which pastoral care and oversight have to be exercised at a great distance. The view that has been expressed by all the Instruments of Communion in recent years is that interventions are not to be sanctioned. It would seem reasonable to say that this principle should only be overridden when the Communion together had in some way concluded, *not only* that a province was behaving anomalously, but that this was so serious as to compromise the entire ministry and mission the province was undertaking. Without such a condition, the risk is magnified of smaller and smaller groups taking to themselves the authority to decide on the adequacy of a neighbour's ministerial life or spiritual authenticity. The gospels and the epistles of Paul alike warn us against a hasty final judgement on the spiritual state of our neighbours.

3.

While argument continues about exactly how much force is possessed by a Resolution of the Lambeth Conference such as the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution on sexuality, it is true, as I have repeatedly said, that the 1998 Resolution is the only point of reference clearly agreed by the overwhelming majority of the Communion. This is the point where our common reading of Scripture stands, along with the common reading of the majority within the Christian churches worldwide and through the centuries.

Thus it is not surprising if some have concluded that the official organs of The Episcopal Church, in confirming the election of Gene Robinson and in giving what many regard as implicit sanction to same-sex blessings of a public nature have put in question the degree to which it can be recognised as belonging to the same family by deciding to act against the strong, reiterated and consistent advice of the Instruments of Communion. The repeated requests for clarification to The Episcopal Church, difficult and frustrating as they have proved for that province, have been an attempt by the Communion at large to deal with the many anxieties expressed in this regard. The matter is further complicated by the fact that several within The Episcopal Church, including a significant number of bishops and some diocesan conventions, have clearly distanced themselves from the prevailing view in their province as expressed in its public policies and declarations. This includes the bishops who have committed themselves to the proposals of the Windsor Report in their Camp Allen conference, as well as others who have looked for more radical solutions. Without elaborating on the practical implications of this or the complicated and diverse politics of the situation, it is obvious that such dioceses and bishops cannot be regarded as deficient in recognisable faithfulness to the common deposit and the common language and practice of the Communion. If their faith and practice are recognised by other churches in the Communion as representing the common mind of the Anglican Church, they are clearly in fellowship with the Communion. The practical challenge then becomes to find ways of working out a fruitful, sustainable and honest relation for them both with their own province and with the wider Communion.

That challenge is not best addressed by a series of ad hoc arrangements with individual provinces elsewhere, as the Dar-es-Salaam communiqué made plain. The New Orleans statement, along with many individual statements by bishops in TEC, expresses the anger felt by many in the US – as also in Canada – about uncontrolled intervention, and it is evident that this is not doing anything to advance or assist local solutions that will have some theological and canonical solidity.

I believe that we as a Communion must recognise two things in respect of the current position in TEC. First: most if not all of the bishops present in New Orleans were seeking in all honesty to find a way of meeting the requests of the primates and to express a sense of responsibility towards the Communion and their concern for and loyalty to it. It is of enormous importance that the Communion overall does not forget its responsibility to and for that large body of prayerful opinion in The Episcopal Church which sincerely desires to work in full harmony with others, particularly those bishops who have clearly expressed their desire to work within the framework both of the Windsor Report and the Lambeth Resolutions, and that it does not give way to the temptation to view The Episcopal Church as a monochrome body. Second: it is

practically impossible to imagine any further elucidation or elaboration coming from TEC after the successive statements and resolutions from last year's General Convention onwards. A good deal of time and effort has gone into the responses they have already produced, and it is extremely unlikely that further meetings will produce any more substantial consensus than that which is now before us.

The exact interpretation of the New Orleans statements, as the responses from around the Communion indicate, is disputable. I do not see how the commitment not to confirm any election to the episcopate of a partnered gay or lesbian person can mean anything other than what it says. But the declaration on same-sex blessings is in effect a reiteration of the position taken in previous statements from TEC, and has clearly not satisfied many in the Communion any more than these earlier statements. There is obviously a significant and serious gap between what TEC understands and what others assume as to what constitutes a liturgical provision in the name of the Church at large.

A scheme has been outlined for the pastoral care of those who do not accept the majority view in TEC, but the detail of any consultation or involvement with other provinces as to how this might best work remains to be filled out and what has been proposed does not so far seem to have commanded the full confidence of those most affected. Furthermore, serious concerns remain about the risks of spiralling disputes before the secular courts, although the Dar-es-Salaam communiqué expressed profound disquiet on this matter, addressed to all parties.

A somewhat complicating factor in the New Orleans statement has been the provision that any kind of moratorium is in place until General Convention provides otherwise. Since the matters at issue are those in which the bishops have a decisive voice as a House of Bishops in General Convention, puzzlement has been expressed as to why the House should apparently bind itself to future direction from the Convention. If that is indeed what this means, it is in itself a decision of some significance. It raises a major ecclesiological issue, not about some sort of autocratic episcopal privilege but about the understanding in The Episcopal Church of the distinctive charism of bishops as an order and their responsibility for sustaining doctrinal standards. Once again, there seems to be a gap between what some in The Episcopal Church understand about the ministry of bishops and what is held elsewhere in the Communion, and this needs to be addressed.

The exchange between TEC and the wider Communion has now been continuing for some four years, and it would be unrealistic and ungrateful to expect more from TEC in terms of clarification. Whatever our individual perspectives, I think we need to honour the intentions and the hard work done by the bishops of TEC. For many of them, this has been a very costly and demanding experience, testing both heart and conscience. But now we need to determine a way forward.

4.

The whole of this discussion is naturally affected by what people are thinking about the character and scope of the Lambeth Conference, and I need to say a word about this here. Thus far, invitations have been issued with two considerations in mind.

First: I have not felt able to invite those whose episcopal ordination was carried through against the counsel of the Instruments of Communion, and I have not seen any reason to revisit this (the reference in the New Orleans statement to the Archbishop of Canterbury's 'expressed desire' to invite the Bishop of New Hampshire misunderstands what was said earlier this year, when the question was left open as to whether the Bishop, as a non-participant, could conceivably be present as a guest at some point or at some optional event). And while (as I have said above) I understand and respect the good faith of those who have felt called to provide additional episcopal oversight in the USA, there can be no doubt that these ordinations have not been encouraged or legitimised by the Communion overall.

I acknowledge that this limitation on invitations will pose problems for some in its outworking. But I would strongly urge those whose strong commitments create such problems to ask what they are prepared to offer for the sake of a Conference that will have some general credibility in and for the Communion overall.

Second: I have underlined in my letter of invitation that acceptance of the invitation *must be taken as implying willingness to work with those aspects of the Conference's agenda that relate to implementing the recommendations of Windsor, including the development of a Covenant*. The Conference needs of course to be a place where diversity of opinion can be expressed, and there is no intention to foreclose the discussion – for example – of what sort of Covenant document is needed. But I believe we need to be able to take for granted a certain level of willingness to follow through the question of how we avoid the present degree of damaging and draining tension arising again. I intend to be in direct contact with those who have expressed unease about this, so as to try and clarify how deep their difficulties go with accepting or adopting the Conference's agenda.

How then should the Lambeth Conference be viewed? It is not a canonical tribunal, but neither is it merely a general consultation. It is a meeting of the chief pastors and teachers of the Communion, seeking an authoritative common voice. It is also a meeting designed to strengthen and deepen the sense of what the episcopal vocation is.

Some reactions to my original invitation have implied that meeting for prayer, mutual spiritual enrichment and development of ministry is somehow a way of avoiding difficult issues. On the contrary: I would insist that *only* in such a context can we usefully address divisive issues. If, as the opening section of this letter claimed, our difficulties have their root in whether or how far we can recognise the same gospel and ministry in diverse places and policies, we need to engage more not less directly with each other. This is why I have repeatedly said that an invitation to Lambeth does not constitute a certificate of orthodoxy but simply a challenge to pray seriously together and to seek a resolution that will be as widely owned as may be.

And this is also why I have said that the refusal to meet can be a refusal of the cross – and so of the resurrection. We are being asked to see our handling of conflict and

potential division as part of our maturing both as pastors and as disciples. I do not think this is either an incidental matter or an evasion of more basic questions.

This means some hard reflective work in preparation for the Conference - including pursuing conversations with each other across the current divisions. There will also be a number of documents circulating which will feed into the Conference's discussions, in particular the work of the Covenant Design Group, the resources available from the dialogues with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the Report of the Doctrinal commission and the papers coming from IASCER. Also significant will be the papers on the core elements of Anglican ministerial education and formation prepared by the group advising the Primates on Theological Education in the Anglican Communion, and the paper on the theology of inter faith relations prepared by the Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON), *Generous Love*.

But direct contact and open exchange of convictions will be crucial. Whatever happens, we are bound to seek for fruitful ways of carrying forward liaison with provinces whose policies cause scandal or difficulty to others. Whatever happens, certain aspects of our 'relational' communion will continue independently of the debates and decisions at the level of canons and hierarchies.

Given the differences in response to The Episcopal Church revealed in the responses of the primates, we simply cannot pretend that there is now a ready-made consensus on the future of relationships between TEC and other provinces. Much work remains to be done. But - once again, I refer back to my introductory thoughts - that work is about some basic questions of fidelity to Scripture and identity in ministry and mission, not only about the one issue of sexuality. It is about what it means for the Anglican Communion to behave with a consistency that allows us to face, both honestly and charitably, the deeply painful question of who we can and cannot recognise as sharing the same calling and task.

5.

Finally, what specific recommendations emerge from these thoughts?

I propose two different but related courses of action during the months ahead. I wish to pursue some professionally facilitated conversations between the leadership of The Episcopal Church and those with whom they are most in dispute, internally and externally, to see if we can generate any better level of mutual understanding. Such meetings will not seek any predetermined outcome but will attempt to ease tensions and clarify options. They may also clarify ideas about the future pattern of liaison between TEC and other parts of the Communion. I have already identified resources and people who will assist in this.

I also intend to convene a small group of primates and others, whose task will be, in close collaboration with the primates, the Joint Standing Committee, the Covenant Design Group and the Lambeth Conference Design Group, to work on the unanswered questions arising from the inconclusive evaluation of the primates to New Orleans and to take certain issues forward to Lambeth. This will feed in to the discussions at Lambeth about Anglican identity and the Covenant process; I suggest that it will also

have to consider whether in the present circumstances it is possible for provinces or individual bishops at odds with the expressed mind of the Communion to participate fully in representative Communion agencies, including ecumenical bodies. Its responsibility will be to weigh current developments in the light of the clear recommendations of Windsor and of the subsequent statements from the ACC and the Primates' Meeting; it will thus also be bound to consider the exact status of bishops ordained by one province for ministry in another. At the moment, the question of 'who speaks for the Communion?' is surrounded by much unclarity and urgently needs resolution; the people of the Communion need to be sure that they are not placed in unsustainable and damaging positions by any vagueness as to what the Communion as a whole believes and endorses, and so the issue of who represents the Communion cannot be evaded. The principles set out at the beginning of this letter will, I hope, assist in clarifying what needs to be said about this. Not everyone carrying the name of Anglican can claim to speak authentically for the identity we share as a global fellowship. I continue to hope that the discussion of the Covenant before, during and beyond Lambeth will give us a positive rallying-point.

6.

A great deal of the language that is around in the Communion at present seems to presuppose that any change from our current deadlock is impossible, that division is unavoidable and that any such division represents so radical a difference in fundamental faith that no recognition and future co-operation can be imagined. I cannot accept these assumptions, and I do not believe that as Christians we should see them as beyond challenge, least of all as we think and pray our way through Advent.

The coming of Christ in the flesh and the declaration of the good news of his saving purpose was not a matter of human planning and ingenuity, nor was it frustrated by human resistance and sin. It was a gift whose reception was made possible by the prayerful obedience of Mary and whose effect was to create a new community of God's sons and daughters. As we look forward, what is there for us to do but pray, obey and be ready for God's re-creating work through the eternal and unchanging Saviour, Jesus Christ?

'The Spirit and the bride say, "Come"... Amen. Come Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen' (Rev.22.17, 20-21).

Windsor Continuation Group

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS Part One

A Presentation at the Lambeth Conference

This document is NOT a report by the Windsor Continuation Group. It constitutes their preliminary observations on the life of the Communion and of the current state of responses to the recommendations of the Windsor Report, and offering some suggestions about the way forward. These observations are offered to the Lambeth Conference for conversation and testing. Are they an accurate description of the current state of our life together?

1. Where we are: the severity of the situation

- (a) **The reality of our current life is complex**; presenting issues are not always the issues that we are actually dealing with. Doctrine, theology, ecclesiology, ethics, anthropology, culture, history, political and global realities are all dimensions. There are competing value systems at work and a lack of clarity about a shared value framework.
- (b) **Much has been undertaken in the Communion through and in response to the Windsor Process**, but as a Communion, we appear to remain at an impasse. There is inconsistency between what has been agreed, and what has been done. A gap between promise and follow through. Cf.:
- Resolutions at General Convention (June 2006), HoB at Camp Allen (March 2005), New Orleans (September 2007)
 - Undertakings and affirmations of the primates (Dromantine, January 2005; Dar es Salaam, February 2007)
 - Resolutions and responses by the House of Bishops and General Synod in Canada (2004, 2006, 2007)

The gap is manifested in:

- Inconsistency between the stated intent and the reality – including the use and abuse of language, e.g. moratorium, “initiating interventions”.
 - The implications of requests and responses are either not fully thought through or they are disregarded. The consequences of actions have not always been adequately addressed.
- (c) **Breakdown of Trust**
- There are real fears of a wider agenda – over credal issues (the authority of scripture, the application of doctrine in life and ethics and even Christology and soteriology) and polity (comprehensiveness, autonomy and synodical government); other issues, such as lay presidency and theological statements that go far beyond the doctrinal definitions of the historic creeds, lie just over the horizon. Positions and arguments are becoming more extreme: not moving towards one another, relationships in the Communion continue to deteriorate; there

is little sense of mutual accountability and a fear that vital issues are not being addressed in the most timely and effective manner.

- Through modern technology, there has been active fear-mongering, deliberate distortion and demonising. Politicisation has overtaken Christian discernment.
- Suspicions have been raised about the purpose, timing and outcomes of the Global Anglicanism Future Conference; there is some perplexity about the establishment of the Gafcon Primates' Council and of FOCA which, with withdrawal from participation at the Lambeth Conference, has further damaged trust.
- There are growing patterns of episcopal congregationalism throughout the communion at parochial, diocesan and provincial level. Parishes feel free to choose from whom they will accept episcopal ministry; bishops feel free to make decisions of great controversy without reference to existing collegial structures. Primates make provision for episcopal leadership in territories outside their own Province.
- There is distrust of the Instruments of Communion and uncertainty about their capacity to respond to the situation.
- Polarisation of attitudes in the Churches of the Communion, not just in North America
- The symptoms of this breakdown of trust are common to all parties in the current situation – felt and expressed by conservative and liberal alike.

(d) Turmoil in The Episcopal Church

- There has been development from individual members leaving congregations, to congregations leaving parishes and dioceses, to dioceses seeking to leave provinces.
- Parties within the Episcopal Church have sought allies within the wider Communion, who are seen as only too willing to respond.
- Litigation and interventions have become locked into a vicious spiral – each side seeing the actions of the other as provoking and requiring response
- At this time, it would appear that the divisions in the United States will play out in the wider Communion (particularly in Canada).

(e) All this amounts to a **diminishing sense of Communion** and impoverishing our witness to Christ, placing huge strains on the functioning of the Instruments of Communion.

(f) Such turmoil affects our relations with **our ecumenical partners**, many of whom face similar tensions. Some partners are beginning to raise questions about the identity of their Anglican partner. In the light of the ecumenical movement, there can no longer be tensions in one Communion that do not have wider repercussions across the whole Christian family.

Windsor Continuation Group

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS Part Two

A Presentation at the Lambeth Conference

2. Where would we like to be: Towards a Way Forward

If we are to survive as an international family of Churches, then the *Windsor Report's* suggestion of a shift of emphasis to 'autonomy-in-communion' might yet require a further step to 'communion with autonomy and accountability' cf. recommendations in the *Virginia Report* of the International Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, and the *Windsor Report*. The covenant process is intended to bring the Communion to a point where its understanding of Communion is renewed and deepened. There are a number of fundamental questions which need to be answered:

- i. **Can we recognise the Church in one another?**
 - Anglicans are currently failing to recognise Church in one another;
 - We value independence at the expense of interdependence in the Body of Christ
 - We denigrate the discipleship of others
 - This has led to internal fragmentation as well as to confusion among our ecumenical partners.
- ii. **What is a Communion of Churches?**
 - Recovering a common understanding of what it means to be a global communion
 - A common understanding of the place and role of the episcopal office within the *sensus fidelium* of the whole Church.
- iii. **What is our shared understanding of the role of a bishop in the communion of the Church?**

Towards the Shaping of the Future

(a) The Anglican Covenant

- The Covenant proposals are an important response to these issues. It is, therefore, crucially important that all Provinces engage seriously with the proposed Covenant. If the questions we have identified above are to be addressed they can be resolved most obviously by the implementation of the Covenant.
- In the past the Lambeth Quadrilateral provided Anglicans with a framework for understanding the identity and unity of the Church. The instruments of communion, rethought and strengthened alongside the Lambeth Quadrilateral, will help us to regain a sense of Anglican identity and unity and thus recognise Church in one another.
- The approval of the covenant needs a definite timeline to ensure confidence that the process has credibility.

(b) Work on the Instruments to enable them to sustain communion

- There is currently a lack of clarity about the role of each of the instruments and their relation to one another
 - **The Archbishop of Canterbury** - is described as having an 'extraordinary ministry of *episcopate*, support and reconciliation' (*Lambeth, 1988*); 'the central focus of unity and mission within the Communion [with authority] to speak directly to any provincial situation on behalf of the Communion where this is deemed to be advisable'. (*Windsor Report 2004*)

- **The Lambeth Conference** – There are questions concerning the authority of a Lambeth Conference and the nature and of the authority of its Resolutions.
- While acknowledging that resolutions of one Conference have been reviewed, and directions changed at a later Conference, nonetheless, like the resolutions taken by councils of bishops in primitive Christianity, they are of sufficient weight that the consciences of many bishops require them to follow or at least try to follow such resolutions. They are taken after due debate and after prayer by the ministers who represent the apostles to their churches (*cf Owen Chadwick, in “Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences”, ed. Coleman, 1992, p.xvii*).
- **The Anglican Consultative Council** - ACC is not to be understood as a synodical body at the Communion wide level. It is ‘*consultative*’. Its Constitution provides for the bringing together of bishops, clergy and laity in order to advise, encourage and inform the Provinces. It is particularly valued by those who emphasise the contribution of the whole people of God in the life, mission and the governance of the Church.
- There are questions about whether a body meeting every three years, with a rapidly changing membership not necessarily located within the central structures of their own Provinces, can fulfil adequately the tasks presently given to it.
- Not all believe that a representative body is the best way to express the contribution of the whole people of God at a worldwide level. There are many ways in which the voice of the whole body can be heard: diocesan and Provincial synods, networks, dialogues and commissions.
- **The Primates’ Meeting** - recognising the need and importance for collegial consultation and support for the Archbishop of Canterbury, it is a body that could be called together as occasion requires in between Lambeth Conferences.
- Recognising that different models of primacy exist, a great virtue of the Primates’ Meeting is that the Primates are in conversation with their own Houses of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures. They are, therefore, able to reflect the breadth and depth of the conversations and opinion in their Provinces.

In considering the future development of the Instruments of Communion it is vital to take account of their ecclesiological significance as well as whether they are fit to respond effectively to the demands of global leadership. There needs to be a process of communion wide reflection which leads towards a common understanding.

(c) Processes and Commissions:

- (i) The Listening Process
- (ii) The Hermeneutics Project – The Bible in the Church)
- (iii) The Principles of Canon Law Project
- (iv) A Faith & Order Commission

These four initiatives are already in hand, but we see them as vital for strengthening the life of our Communion. The Listening Process and conversation on issues of sexuality needs to continue. We also recommend the continuation of plans for The Bible in the Church. Such projects are urgent and vital if we are to regain a sense of common values and mutual understanding.

The Common Principles of Canon Law Project (Anglican Communion Legal Advisers Network) gives a sense of the integrity of Anglicanism and we commend the suggestion for the setting up of an Anglican Communion Faith and Order Commission that could give guidance on the ecclesiological issues raised by our current ‘crisis’.

Windsor Continuation Group

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS Part Three

A Presentation at the Lambeth Conference

3. How do we get from here to there?

The various initiatives set out in Part Two and the Covenant is a longer term process to reverse the trends described in Part One; to restore the sense of trust, fellowship and communion on which we thrive. In the period leading up to the establishment of a covenant, however, there are urgent issues which need addressing if we are going to be able to get to the point where such a renewal of trust even becomes possible.

The question of the moratoria

- The Windsor Report sets out requests for three moratoria in relation to the public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions, the consecration to the episcopate of those living in partnered gay relationships and the cessation of cross border interventions.
- There have been different interpretations of the sense in which “moratorium” was used in the Windsor Report. Our understanding is that moratorium refers to both future actions and is also retrospective: that is that it requires the cessation of activity. This necessarily applies to practices that may have already been authorised as well as proposed for authorisation in the future.
- The request for moratorium applies in this way to the complete cessation of (a) the celebration of blessings for same-sex unions, (b) consecrations of those living in openly gay relationships, and (c) all cross border interventions and inter-provincial claims of jurisdiction.
- The three moratoria have been requested several times: Windsor (2004); Dromantine (2005); Dar es Salaam (2007) and the requests have been less than wholeheartedly embraced on all sides.
- The failure to respond presents us with a situation where if the three moratoria are not observed, the Communion is likely to fracture. The patterns of action currently embraced with the continued blessings of same-sex unions and of interventions could lead to irreparable damage.
- The call for the three moratoria on these issues relates to their controversial nature. This poses the serious question of what response should be made to those who act contrary to the moratorium during the Covenant process and who should make a response.

New Ways of Responding

We make the following suggestions for situations which might arise in different parts of the Communion:

- the swift formation of a ‘**Pastoral Forum**’ at Communion level to engage theologically and practically with situations of controversy as they arise or divisive actions that may be taken around the Communion. Such a Forum draws upon proposals for a Council of Advice (Windsor), a Panel of Reference (Dromantine), a Pastoral Council (Dar es Salaam) and the TEC House of Bishops’ Statement (Sept 2007) acknowledging a ‘useful role for

communion wide consultation with respect to the pastoral needs of those seeking alternative oversight’.

- The existence of such a Forum might be included in the Covenant as a key mechanism to achieve reconciliation
- Part of the role of a Forum might be for some of its members, having considered the theological and ecclesiological issues of any controversy or divisive action, to travel, meet and offer pastoral advice and guidelines in conflicted, confused and fragile situations. There is a precedent in the method of the Eames’ Commission in the 1980s.
- The President of such a Forum would be the Archbishop of Canterbury, who would also appoint its episcopal chair, and its members. The membership of the Forum must include members from the Instruments of Communion and be representative of the breadth of the life of the Communion as a whole. Movement forward on this proposal must bear fruit quickly.
- We believe that the Pastoral Forum should be empowered to act in the Anglican Communion in a rapid manner to emerging threats to its life, especially through the ministry of its Chair, who should work alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury in the exercise of his ministry.
- The Forum would be responsible for addressing those anomalies of pastoral care arising in the Communion against the recommendations of the Windsor Report. It could also offer guidance on what response and any diminishment of standing within the Communion might be appropriate where any of the three moratoria are broken.
- We are encouraged by the planned setting up of the Communion Partners initiative in the Episcopal Church as a means of sustaining those who feel at odds with developments taking place in their own Province but who wish to be loyal to, and to maintain, their fellowship within TEC and within the Anglican Communion.
- The proliferation of *ad hoc* episcopal and archiepiscopal ministries cannot be maintained within a global Communion. We recommend that the Pastoral Forum develop a scheme in which existing ad hoc jurisdictions could be held “in trust” in preparation for their reconciliation within their proper Provinces. Such a scheme might draw on models derived from religious life (the relationship of religious orders to the wider Church), family life (the way in which the extended family can care for children in dysfunctional nuclear families) or from law (where escrow accounts can be created to hold monies in trust for their rightful owner on completion of certain undertakings. Ways of halting litigation must be explored, and perhaps the escrow concept could even be extended to have some applicability here.

Windsor Continuation Group
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS A Coda
A Presentation at the Lambeth Conference

Why bother with all this?

Much faithful witness continues – converts are baptised; disciples are nurtured; vocations are encouraged; the scriptures are studied; the Gospel is proclaimed.

Anglicanism as a distinctive global expression of Reformed Catholicism: not only in its content, but in its processes – diverse, patient, hospitable and tolerant.

“We believe in this Communion”; a Communion which contributes to the wider life of the Church in the ecumenical community, and gives witness in a world of many faiths.

The bishops at the Lambeth Conference need to take the opportunity to explore large questions concerning authority, accountability, Communion with Autonomy and discipline and to examine the Instruments of Communion and what relation between the instruments would most faithfully reflect and strengthen the ecclesiology of the Anglican Communion as well as taking the opportunity to affirm the direction of the covenant process.

At the Indaba on the work of the Windsor Continuation Group,
a focus question could be:

What might mutual accountability under God in life and mission look like at its best in the period between now and the completion of the Covenant process?

What personal sacrifices might it involve for each of us?

The Windsor Continuation Group

Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury

A. Context: the Tradition we have received

1. Anglicanism is a tradition of Christian faith which affirms the revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It acknowledges the unique revelation of God in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It affirms the primary authority of the Holy Scriptures; and - guided by the Holy Spirit - it acknowledges the interplay of scripture, tradition and reason in the continuing work of interpretation, understanding and discernment.

2. The Anglican Communion is a family of autonomous Churches. It finds its identity in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Churches of the Communion, which are self-governing, share something of a common history, and have traditionally set their faces against centralised government in favour of regional autonomy¹. The Anglican tradition was fashioned in the turmoil of reformation in Western Europe in the sixteenth century. Its historic formularies acknowledge the circumstances in which it emerged as a distinctive church polity. The non-negotiable elements in any understanding of Anglicanism - the scriptures, the creeds, the gospel sacraments of baptism and eucharist, and the historic episcopate - are to be found in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral²; and the Instruments of Communion - the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates Meeting - provide an evolving framework within which discussion and discernment might take place. It remains to be seen if the circumstances in which the Communion finds itself today - externally and internally - might require over the years a shift of emphasis *from* “autonomy with communion” *to* “communion with autonomy and accountability”.

3. It is a primary concern of the Anglican Communion that its Churches and its congregations shall be “formed by scripture, shaped by worship, ordered for communion, and directed by God’s mission”³. It follows nonetheless that the Anglican way of being the Church, of doing theology, of exercising pastoral care, of engaging in evangelism, of voicing the prophetic priorities of God’s Kingdom of righteousness recognise the wide variety of circumstances in which Christian people find themselves and the different insights and emphases within the Anglican tradition of faith and prayer and practice. It represents a discreet balance between authority and freedom, between the universal and the local, and between traditions of inter-dependence, autonomy and accountability.

4. The Anglican tradition attempts to be sensitive to the opportunities and the challenges presented in different places and at different times by the context and the culture in which we live. These challenges are addressed - and can only be addressed

¹ Cf the statements of the 1930 Lambeth Conference

² Originally fashioned as a basis for the reunion of Churches, the Quadrilateral has tended to become a statement of the irreducible minimum elements of the Anglican tradition.

³ See Lambeth Indaba §100-103 on the elements of “the Anglican Way”, itself derived from the work of the Primates’ Theological Education in the Anglican Communion Working Group (TEAC).

- in the light of our understanding of Scripture, the perceived guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of shared experience and informed conscience.

5. It is an escapable consequence of living in the world that issues will arise from time to time where the conflict between continuity and change - *continuity* in doctrine and in pastoral practice and *change* in the discernment of new insights - raises urgent (and potentially divisive and destructive) questions concerning the received tradition, the *consensus fidelium*, and the limits of the diversity that can be sustained within the life of the Communion.

6. The Anglican Communion, which has evolved in recent generations, represents a model of reformed Catholicism which may yet make a distinctive and necessary contribution to the life of the wider church. It is unquestionably the case that the global context in which all institutions, all faith communities, are required to work demands appropriate structures, disciplines and traditions. It is necessary to recognise, however, that traditions of tolerance which are merely permissive, can so easily be abused; and yet a rediscovery of traditions of courtesy, patience and generosity, which are grounded in the scriptures and in the traditions of the church, will be required if the Communion in its entirety is to allow the Spirit of truth to lead us into a greater understanding of God's purposes for his church and for his world.

7. We believe that this tradition is now under threat to the grave disservice of our Communion and of the wider *oikumene*.

B. The Seriousness of the present Situation

8. The reality of our current life is complex; the divisions and differences are not always explicit in the presenting issues: doctrine, theology, ecclesiology, ethics, anthropology, culture, history, post-colonialism, post-modernity, post-denominationalism, political and global realities are all dimensions. There are competing value systems at work and a lack of clarity about a shared understanding of the nature and obligations of Communion. There is also a lack of mutual understanding about what is meant by "authority".

9. Much has been undertaken in the Communion through and in response to the Windsor Process, but as a Communion, we appear to remain at an impasse. There is inconsistency between what has been agreed, and what has, in the end, actually been done. This appears to create a gap between promise and follow through. The resolutions at General Convention (June 2006), the mutual Covenant of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church (TEC) at Camp Allen (March 2005), and the Bishop's Statement at New Orleans (September 2007) all point in the direction of accepting the recommendations of the Windsor Report (TWR), and yet some dioceses still proceed with the development of Rites of Blessing for same sex unions. There were serious undertakings and affirmations by the primates at their meetings in Dromantine (January 2005) and Dar es Salaam (February 2007) concerning interventions in other provinces, the spirit of which have not been honoured. There have been generous resolutions and responses by the House of Bishops and General Synod in Canada (2004, 2006, 2007) to the requests of the wider Communion, but still some dioceses and bishops feel that they can move in a contrary direction.

10. The gap is manifested in inconsistency between the stated intent and the reality – including the use and abuse of language, e.g. moratorium, “initiating interventions”. The implications of requests and responses are either not fully thought through or they are disregarded. The consequences of actions have not always been adequately addressed, e.g. there appear to have been no consequences following the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire as envisaged by the Primates’ Statement of October 2003, or as a result of primatial interventions.

Breakdown of Trust

11. There are real fears of a wider agenda – over credal issues (the authority of scripture, the application of doctrine in life and ethics and even Christology and soteriology) and polity (comprehensiveness, autonomy and synodical government); other issues, such as lay presidency and theological statements that go far beyond the doctrinal definitions of the historic creeds, lie just over the horizon. Indeed, in recent months, the Diocese of Sydney has raised the issue of diaconal presidency at the Eucharist. Positions and arguments are becoming more extreme: not moving towards one another, relationships in the Communion continue to deteriorate; there is little sense of mutual accountability and a fear that vital issues are not being addressed in the most timely and effective manner.

12. Through modern technology, there has been active fear-mongering, deliberate distortion and demonising. Politicisation has overtaken Christian discernment. There is distrust of the Instruments of Communion and uncertainty about their capacity to respond to the situation. Polarisation of attitudes in the Churches of the Communion, not just in North America, but throughout the Communion, has developed, and the complexity of situations and attitudes caricatured.

13. There are growing patterns of congregationalism throughout the communion at parochial, diocesan and provincial level: for example, parishes feel free to choose from whom they will accept episcopal ministry; bishops feel free to make decisions of great controversy without reference to existing collegial structures. Primates make provision for episcopal leadership in territories outside their own Province. The symptoms of this breakdown of trust are common to all parties in the current situation – felt and expressed by conservative and liberal alike.

Turmoil in The Episcopal Church

14. There has been development from individual members leaving congregations, to congregations leaving parishes and dioceses, to dioceses seeking to leave provinces. Parties within The Episcopal Church have sought allies within the wider Communion, who are seen as only too willing to respond. Litigation and interventions have become locked into a vicious spiral – each side seeing the actions of the other as provoking and requiring response. At this time, it would appear that the divisions in the United States are playing out in the wider Communion, and already impacting in Canada.

15. All this amounts to a diminishing sense of Communion and impoverishing our witness to Christ, placing huge strains on the functioning of the Instruments of Communion. Such turmoil affects our relations with our ecumenical partners, many of whom face similar tensions. Some partners are beginning to raise questions about

the identity of their Anglican partner. In the light of the ecumenical movement, there can no longer be tensions in one Communion that do not have wider repercussions across the whole Christian family.

The Lambeth Conference and Gafcon

16. The bishops who attended the Lambeth Conference overwhelmingly experienced an increase in mutual understanding and mutual loyalty, as noted in the Lambeth Indaba Document issued at the conclusion of the Conference. Of the twelve topics included in the agenda, the Reflections Group was able to report that the bishops found strong agreement in nine of the areas - on mission, the concern for human and social justice, the environment, ecumenism and inter-faith relations, on Anglican identity, scripture and addressing situations of injustice.

17. Areas of ongoing concern and with less agreement include Human Sexuality, the Windsor Process, and the proposed Anglican Covenant. Adding to the seriousness and tensions of the present time was the timing of the Global Anglicanism Future Conference (Gafcon) in June. While some bishops who attended Gafcon also attended Lambeth, many others did not. In fact, approximately 190 bishops of the Communion did not attend Lambeth either because of reasons of conscience or synodical or primatial decision in their Provinces, a situation we regret both for their sakes and ours.

18. Anxieties have been expressed about the purpose, timing and outcomes of the Gafcon; there is some perplexity about the establishment of the Gafcon Primates' Council and of the Fellowship of Confessing Christians (FOCA) which, with withdrawal from participation at the Lambeth Conference, has further damaged trust.

19. For some time now therefore the issue of human sexuality has been the spark to the flame exposing tensions concerning the life of the Anglican Communion. The Instruments of Communion have sought to address these tensions through the Windsor Report and the process of reception of its ideas and recommendations. It has been the purpose of this group to assess where the Communion has arrived as a result of the Windsor Process, and to make recommendations about the next steps that could be taken to renew the Communion's life.

C. The Windsor Process

20. The Windsor Report 2004 responded to the developing situation by setting out a number of initiatives to address the tensions. While they remained recommendations of the Windsor Report, they carried only the authority of the members of the Commission. But many of these recommendations were picked up and adopted by the Primates, either in the Communiqué of the Dromantine Meeting (January 2005), or at the Dar es Salaam Meeting (February 2007). This does not entirely answer the question of their continuing authority in the Communion (see further the section below on *Ecclesial Deficit*) but it does at least give them purchase in the life of the Communion: these recommendations carry the weight of being the unanimous advice of the primates of our Churches - at the very least, the recommendations carry the authority of our chief pastors carrying back these recommendations to their own Church or Province with the voice of authority which they carry in that Province.

C(i). The Listening Process

21. The 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 remains fundamental as the standard of teaching on matters of sexuality in the life of the Communion; but the Windsor Report also offered an acknowledgement that while there are divergent views on this, the discussion has to go on (TWR §146). Indeed, Lambeth 1.10 recognised this in the very terms of the resolution⁴, echoing earlier resolutions at the 1978 and 1988 Conferences.

22. To enable this conversation to happen, space has to be created in which all sides can listen for the voice and leading of God; can listen to gay and lesbian Christians and learn of their experience; can listen to one another and the insights we bring to discernment on this issue. This was the end to which the *moratoria* recommended in the Windsor Report were shaped. They were conceived as a way of halting development in the situation while a conversation, together with an articulation of the purpose and ends of that conversation, could be undertaken.

23. The Listening Process has so far produced a significant amount of resources - an overview of the reflection on this issue taking place in each of the Provinces, which is set out on the Anglican Communion website⁵, and a book of resources to encourage and inform the discussion⁶. Yet the listening process has not been totally embraced consistently across the Communion.

Recommendation:

24. Only if the dialogue is seen to continue, and if there is an all-round readiness to engage in conversation and discernment on this issue, is there a hope of persuading the advocates of revision in the teaching of the Anglican Churches on this matter to remain committed to the period of “gracious restraint”, in which mutual conversation can take place. On both sides, we need to move from intransigence and the conviction that “our” interpretation is the right one to a shared waiting upon God. There is something profoundly important about the Anglican way here - a readiness to acknowledge that Christian disciples discern God’s truth by learning to wait upon one another, and that it takes the whole Church to know the whole truth.

⁴ Lambeth 1.10.3: 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. See also: Resolution 64 of the 1988 Conference: (1) Reaffirms the statement of the Lambeth Conference of 1978 on homosexuality, [Resolution 10] 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.

⁵ <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/reports/index.cfm>

⁶ The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality – A resource to enable listening and dialogue (London, SPCK, 2008) Published June 2008

25. We request that the Instruments of Communion commit themselves to a renewal of the Listening Process, and a real seeking of a common mind upon the issues which threaten to divide us.

C(ii). The Moratoria

26. The moratoria then arose from the necessity of gaining commitment to “gracious restraint” all round in which conversation and discernment could take place. Such a season was also envisaged as a period in which the Covenant process (see below) could come to fruition. The Windsor Report identified three areas in which “gracious restraint” would be necessary:

- Consecration of Bishops living in a same gender union
- Permission for Rites of Blessing for Same Sex unions
- Interventions in Provinces

27. One of the most difficult areas of the life in the Communion at the moment arise from the differing extent to which the requests for such moratoria, recommended in the Windsor Report, and reflected in the requests of the Primates to their Churches in the Dromantine Communiqué (2005), have been adopted and are in force in the life of the Communion.

28. Nor do these moratoria rest on the authority of the Windsor Report or the requests of the Primates alone: it has been the unanimous advice of all four Instruments of Communion⁷ that the consecration of a bishop in a same gender union or permission or authorisation of Rites of Blessing for same sex unions are moves beyond what the Communion can, as a whole, approve or accept. They are therefore actions which “tear the fabric of our Communion”⁸.

29. It was the judgement of the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates and Moderators of the Anglican Communion (JSC)⁹ that the first moratorium (*On the Consecration of Bishops*) is effectively in place in the communion. Although there continues to be some debate whether the wording of the resolution B033 of the 75th General Convention and its subsequent interpretation by the TEC House of Bishops at New Orleans in 2007 exactly meets the wording of the recommendation in the Windsor Report, such a moratorium does, in fact, exist; an interpretation agreed by both the strongest supporters and opponents of B033.

30. It is the judgement of WCG (Windsor Continuation Group) that the same is significantly, but not universally, true of the second moratorium on the authorisation

⁷ Cf. “... 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, and subsequently; the statements of the Primates in May and October 2003; the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and Resolution 10 of ACC-13 (2005).

⁸ Cf. Statement of the Primates’ Meeting at Lambeth, October 2003.

⁹ The Report of the Joint Standing Committee to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Response of The Episcopal Church to the Questions of the Primates articulated at their meeting in Dar es Salaam and related Pastoral Concerns, published October 2007.

of public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions. In The Episcopal Church up to a dozen dioceses out of the 110 dioceses of the Church are actively pursuing the exploration of such Rites within the life of the Church (10%). They do this with only the passive consent of General Convention¹⁰, which has until now refused to take positive steps towards the recognition of such Rites. The remainder of the dioceses of TEC either explicitly or implicitly are living by the Windsor recommendation. While this situation cannot be characterised as a wholehearted embrace of the Windsor recommendation by TEC, neither should it be characterised as a determined movement by the whole Church to carry forward the agenda to see such Rites firmly established in the life of the Church. It remains a pattern of isolated instances.

31. Of course, the situation could change with a Resolution of a future Convention - as indeed General Convention could decide to revoke B033 - but for the present WCG believe that TEC should receive some credit for substantially holding back from the development of such Rites. We note however that the structures of TEC have not shown any inclination to discipline those dioceses in which further steps have been taken.

32. This would seem to indicate that a differentiated approach towards the dioceses of TEC is necessary. Not all are acting contrary to the expressed wishes of the Instruments of Communion; action which penalises the whole Church would therefore appear to be inappropriate.

33. It is in respect to the third moratorium (on interventions) that there has been the least discernable response. As noted in the JSC Report of October 2007, there has apparently been an increase in interventions since the adoption of the Windsor/Dromantine recommendations by the unanimous voice of the primates. The adoption of dioceses into the Province of the Southern Cone, inconsistent with the Constitutions both of TEC and the Southern Cone; the consecration of bishops for ministry in various forms by different Provinces and the vocal support of such initiatives by the Primates associated with the Gafcon have all taken place, apparently in contradiction of the 2005 Dromantine Statement, although in each case, the primates involved would cite a conviction that their actions were provisional, born of necessity, and reactive rather than taking the initiative. From their perspective, some of the intervening primates have indicated that they will hand back those within their care as soon as the underlying causes have been resolved.

34. One of the aggravating factors in these circumstances has been the fact that a fourth moratorium requested by the unanimous voice of the Primates at Dar es Salaam in 2007 - to see the end of litigation¹¹ - has also been ignored.

¹⁰ Resolution C051 of the 74th General Convention, sub-section 4: "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."

¹¹ "The Primates urge the representatives of The Episcopal Church and of those congregations in property disputes with it to suspend all actions in law arising in this situation. We also urge both parties to give assurances that no steps will be taken to alienate property from The Episcopal Church without its consent or to deny the use of that property to those congregations." - from the Key Principles set out in the Appendix to the Dar es Salaam Statement.

35. It has to be noted as well that the epicentre of the tensions arising out of the moratoria is located within North America, and largely within TEC. It is here that bishops and dioceses has shown themselves ready to set aside the entreaties of the Instruments of Communion with respect to Rites of Blessing. It is here that actions have been taken that exacerbate the sense of hostility and persecution perceived by some conservatives, including the recent action of the TEC House of Bishops to depose Bishop Bob Duncan of Pittsburgh. It is here that advocates of intervention have invited primates to initiate new forms of intervention.

36. In the Anglican Church of Canada the moratorium on the authorization of same sex blessings is being observed in the majority of the twenty-nine dioceses. While the Diocese of New Westminster has permitted the blessing of same sex unions using a rite authorized at the diocesan level since 2002, in six of its parishes, although the bishop has indicated that he would not authorise any further parishes to use the Rite. Three other diocesan bishops, following their attendance at Lambeth Conference 2008, have indicated their decision to proceed with the blessings of civilly married same sex couples in a small number of parishes. In the Diocese of Ottawa one parish only will be permitted to proceed with blessings of married same gender couples. In 2007, at the last General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the House of Bishops presented new guidelines, which did not include the Blessing of Unions, for the pastoral care of gays and lesbians, and the reception by parishes of same gendered married couples. This continues to be upheld by the bishops as a whole in 2008.

37. The moratorium on the consecration of non-celibate gay and lesbian bishops is being observed.

38. Twenty-three parishes under the episcopal leadership of two formerly retired Canadian Anglican bishops have sought and received membership in the Province of the Southern Cone and are now claiming membership in the newly proposed, but not recognized North American Anglican Province.

39. The recent advent of the “Anglican Church of North America” (ACNA) changes the context and the balance of any discussion about interventions. Those caught up in the various patterns of intervention are beginning to look to resource their protest and their identity from within an American ecclesial body. This development could bring to an end formal cases of intervention, but give rise to a new and equally intractable problem - parallel jurisdictions based on theological difference¹².

40. Faced with the fact that despite several calls for observance of the moratoria requested by Windsor/Dromantine, rearticulated by the primates in Dar es Salaam in 2007, and winning a high degree of support at the Lambeth Conference¹³, the moratoria have not received comprehensive support, WCG has to ask how to achieve genuine progress. Has the time come when it has to be recognised that the moratoria cannot be enforced absolutely in the life of the Communion? Does it therefore follow that the focus will have to be on holding the degree of restraint that can be achieved,

¹² There are instances of parallel jurisdictions in the life of the Anglican Communion - ministry to armed forces or ethnic minorities being the most obvious examples. What is distinctive in this new development is the theological and ideological difference with the geographical province in which they are situated.

¹³ Lambeth Indaba Document, §145

while acknowledging that reversing some of the recent developments may not be possible?

41. The inability of the Communion in recent years to be able to respond appropriately and effectively in a timely manner to a blatant disregard of the moratoria which had been called for gives rise to a degree of sadness, irritation, frustration and even anger which are unhelpful in the life of the Communion. Such feelings and responses are probably responsible for the way in which more extreme reactions and measures have been generated. The disillusion has almost arrived at the point of cynicism about the effectiveness of the Instruments of Communion.

42. If there is to be a situation where not all the moratoria are respected universally, the question arises as to how those bishops and provinces should be handled where there is a positive decision to live by another standard than that commended by the Communion as a whole. The Windsor Report had recommended that:

“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 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” (TWR §134)

43. Does this provide a way forward? It seems to the WCG that where a bishop elects to live in a way contrary to the morally authoritative discernment of the Communion, his or her actions damage Communion, and put a distance between the life of his or her see and the rest of the Communion. What, however, should be the relational consequences of such a decision?

44. Considering this question, the Covenant Design Group in their Lambeth Commentary offered these observations:

The language of “teeth” and “police” and even “sanction” risks distorting the Covenant’s overall purpose. A better way of approaching this matter is through the language of “consequences” that devolve from assumed “responsibilities”, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled: covenantal responsibilities fulfilled lead to a deeper common life in Christ - an intensification; responsibilities left unfulfilled have as a consequence a thinning out of such common life, perhaps even a dissolving of it. But in either case, it is a matter of organic outcome, rather than juridical impositions, however these results are formally embodied or stated.

Within the scriptures, the divine covenants are always linked to consequences in their fulfilment or breaking (cf. Deut. 27-28). Even the covenant of baptism, though a gift from God, can be broken, and with it comes a radical loss (Heb. 6:4-8). In the service of the Gospel, Peter’s renegeing of the agreement made at Jerusalem with Paul results in a public confrontation and shaming (Gal. 2:11), while the Corinthians’ fulfilment of their pledge will result in an overflowing gift of grace (2 Cor. 8-9). It is simply the case that those who choose to keep the promises they have made in love for one another in Christ take hold of the gifts of that deeper love,

while those who choose to let go of these promises take hold of its lack or diminution, and live with its stunted fruit. Even this result is one that stands open to the hope for transformation and renewal of relationship (1 Cor. 5:4-5).

The language of “sanction” does not adequately describe this reality of covenantal consequence, making it appear as an external law imposed upon us. Still, we should not mitigate the substance of this language: commitments are valued because of their fruit, and the declaration of such an outcome represents not only an honest appraisal of what is at stake in a commitment to another, but also points to the promise of its fulfilment. A covenant without consequences is, by definition, not a covenant at all, but an empty word. It is because our words matter, however, that we can testify to the power of God’s faithfulness before the world (Mt. 5:37; 23:22)¹⁴.

45. We agree with this model. A deliberate decision to act in a way which damages Communion of necessity carries consequences. This is quite distinct from the language of sanction or punishment, but acknowledges that the expression and experience of our Communion in Christ cannot be sustained so fully in such circumstances. A formal expression of the distance experienced would therefore seem to be appropriate.

46. The WCG spent some time discerning whether any such formal expression of impairment of communion should apply at the diocesan or provincial level. On one level, it is the local Church and its bishop who have acted to damage Communion; on another, it is the Province that bears responsibility if it does not act to restrain or discipline the bishop in question.

Recommendation:

47. We recommend that the request for the moratoria expressed in Windsor/Dromantine be maintained in the life of the Communion, and that urgent conversations are facilitated with those Provinces where the application of the moratoria gives rise for concern.

48. In cases where a see has, by its actions, impaired Communion, it has now become appropriate to explore what relational consequences should be formally expressed or put in place by the Instruments of Communion. The possible nature of such consequences are explored in relation to the Covenant in the Lambeth Commentary on pages 24 and 25. Further work remains to be done on who should take action to formalise any such consequences and whether they should be applied at the level of diocese or Province.

49. Although breaches of the three moratoria may not have moral or doctrinal equivalence, as acknowledged by the Primates at Dar es Salaam¹⁵, yet the WCG agrees with the assessment of TWR that breaches of the moratoria are equal threats to our life in Communion, and that therefore there must be seen to be an equal and commensurate response in addressing breaches of all three moratoria.

¹⁴ The Lambeth Commentary, Answer to Question 13, page 12

¹⁵ Dar es Salaam 2007 Communiqué, §10

D. Addressing the Ecclesial Deficit

D(i). An Ecclesial Deficit

50. The way in which the moratoria have been challenged or ignored in the life of the Communion raises a painful and sharp question: how can any decisions or recommendations be given authority or force in the life of the Communion?

51. Indeed, for some commentators, a central deficit in the life of the Communion is its inability to uphold structures which can make decisions which carry force in the life of the Churches of the Communion, or even give any definitive guidance to them. Other commentators will argue that such mechanisms are entirely unnecessary, but this touches upon the heart of what it is to live as a Communion of Churches.

52. To be a communion, as opposed to a federation or association, is fundamentally to acknowledge that the fellowship of Churches is not a human construct; it is the gracious gift of God. Churches are enabled to live in communion because they recognise one another as truly an expression of the One Church of Jesus Christ. If mutual recognition of faithful discipleship, the preaching of the Word of God or the ordered administration of the Sacraments is threatened, then the entire foundation of the Communion is undermined. This is why although Anglicans remain committed to a generous accommodation of diversity, there must ultimately be some limit to the extent of the diversity which can be embraced. This limit is the point where the fellowship of Churches can no longer recognise in one of its members the faithfulness to Christ which flows from communion with the Father, in the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit. If the recognition of one another as Churches is to be sustained, it implies a level of mutual accountability in the handling of the life of each Church.

53. The question of the limits of diversity becomes acute when major differences arise in the life of the communion of the Churches which concern the faith, order or moral life of the Communion. It is then that Anglicans need a common understanding of how together, in communion, they can, guided by the Spirit, discern and decide together. What are the sources that need to be brought to bear on any issue? What are the structures through which discernment takes place? What is the nature of their authority to guide discernment, to speak the mind of the Communion and even to request restraint while open reception takes place and the Churches of the Communion come to discover the mind of Christ for them?

54. Maintaining and nurturing communion between Churches, at whatever level, requires more than instruments of consultation. Guidance is at times required, and also decisions have to be made for the sake of unity. Organs of authority must be present and recognised as able to speak for and to the Churches of the Communion. In good times things will be easy - but when there is severe dispute within or between churches, the test of an authority's acceptance as an instrument of communion is whether its judgements are heeded, even when unwelcome; whether restraint is accepted while the matter is put to reception in the life of the Communion of churches.

55. The principle of autonomy-in-communion described in the *Windsor Report* makes clear that the principle of subsidiarity has always to be borne in mind. If the

concern is with communion in a diocese, only diocesan authority is involved; if communion at a provincial level then only provincial decision. But if the matter concerns recognising one another as sharing one communion of faith and life, then some joint organs of discernment and decision, which are recognised by all, are required. It is this necessity which led the WCG to articulate the move to “communion with autonomy and accountability” as being a better articulation of the ecclesiology which is necessary to sustain Communion.

56. These are matters that have engaged Anglicans in their internal conversations and with their ecumenical partners particularly in the last 30 years. The discussions of the 1988 Lambeth Conference led to the *Virginia Report* with its sharp questions about the instruments of communion. The events following the 1998 Lambeth Conference led to the *Windsor Report* which raised many of the same issues.

57. The Commentary of the Covenant Design Group on the discussions on the Covenant at the Lambeth Conference 2008 reflects again on the ways in which the Instruments of Communion articulate and sustain the Communion: “enabling the Churches to take counsel together, and to discern the responsibilities and obligations of interdependence.”¹⁶

58. The challenge remains for Anglicans to come to a common stance and acceptance of the authority which we will give to the instruments, structures and processes of the Communion which can lead to decisions that carry force in the life of the Churches of the Communion, regardless of circumstances.

59. To a certain extent, the Covenant is designed to address the expectations that one Province in the Communion can appropriately and legitimately expect in terms of mutual accountability and responsibility one for the other. But below this, there is a fundamental ecclesiological question: do the Churches of the Communion wish to live as a Communion?

D(ii). The Instruments of Communion and the life of the Church

60. In order to make sense of the instruments of communion at the world level it is perhaps most instructive to consider first the role of the episcopate in an episcopally ordered church. Anglicans agree that bishops are a fundamental bond of unity linking the local to the universal and *vice versa*¹⁷. Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, are the ones who are charged with a special responsibility for the unity, mission, faithful teaching and governance of the Church.

61. But the ministry of bishops is never to be exercised apart from, but in, with and among the faithful. ARCIC¹⁸ documents talk about episcopal ministry as enabling the symphony of the whole church, always helping to draw out and discover the *sensus fidelium*. Many ecumenical and Anglican texts talk of the ministry of oversight as having personal, collegial and communal dimensions. All of this has implications for understanding Anglican Instruments of Communion at the world level and as we

¹⁶ The Lambeth Commentary, Question 13, page 12

¹⁷ Cf The Virginia Report, “one who represents the part to the whole and the whole to the part, the particularity of each diocese to the whole Communion and the Communion to each diocese.”

¹⁸ Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission

consider how the present instruments can be developed to give authoritative leadership.

The Archbishop of Canterbury

62. The fact that resolution crafting was not part of the processes of the Lambeth Conference 2008 put massive weight upon the role of Archbishop of Canterbury as *primus inter pares* to articulate what was happening within the Conference, as marked by his three presidential addresses. His ministry to the Communion through these words have highlighted the extent to which there is scope for the ministry of a personal primacy at the level of the worldwide Communion.

63. The WCG understands this primacy as being exercised in personal, collegial, communal ways¹⁹. While ministry at the global level needs to be personal, it must also have collegial and communal dimensions . The collegial and communal dimensions of primatial ministry locate it firmly within the life of the whole Church and firmly within a specific community. The collegiality of a bishop is exercised from among his or her clergy, and in conjunction with the whole *laos* or people of God in that place. Primatial ministry is also collegial, in that the Archbishop's primacy should be exercised in conjunction with the college of bishops, a collegiality which is focused in the Lambeth Conference and also with other primates of the Anglican Communion. All primates are the first amongst the bishops of their churches; together they can articulate the common counsel of the Churches of the Communion, informing and guiding discernment. It is communal, in that each bishop exercises the ministry of oversight in, with and among the faithful and so enables the *sensus fidelium* to be discerned. The communal dimension is reflected in synods and councils of the Church and is symbolised for Anglicans at the world level in the Anglican Consultative Council presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

64. We believe that ways of strengthening the collegial aspects of the Archbishop's ministry in a way that increases the links with the wider Communion. We believe that the Archbishop of Canterbury must have the freedom to draw round himself from time to time, as occasion requires, persons, sometimes on *ad hoc* basis, who can respond and act quickly. (This relates to the concept of Pastoral Visitors explored below).

Recommendation:

65. We recommend that a number of possibilities could be explored: the Archbishop might revisit the idea of a bishop, appointed from the wider Communion, to work closely with him and act on his behalf in Communion affairs. It may even be that a number of regional appointments from the local episcopate to represent the interests of the Communion along the lines of the *apokrisarioi* would be helpful. Exploration could be given to the idea of refocusing the position of Secretary General of the Anglican Communion as the executive officer of the communion who works alongside the Archbishop in carrying through the recommendations of the Instruments of Communion efficiently and rapidly; and to the formation of a small Executive

¹⁹ see Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry (The "Lima Text") Faith and Order Paper 111 of the WCC.

Committee which could work with the Archbishop in responding to emerging situations.

The Lambeth Conference

66. The Lambeth Conference expresses the collegiality of bishops. The bishops at Lambeth cannot make legally binding decisions. Nevertheless, the fact that it is a body composed of those who by their ordination to the episcopate have been given apostolic responsibility to govern means that the resolutions of a Lambeth Conference may be considered to have an intrinsic authority which is inherent in their members gathered together. It may be time for Anglicans to articulate the teaching role of the bishops gathered around the Archbishop of Canterbury. Such recognition would still mean that decisions of a Conference would require the response and reception in the local Churches. It would mean that restraint might be required in a process of open reception. Some Lambeth Conference resolutions have been received by synodical action of individual member Churches other resolutions have not found such resonance and have been reversed by later conferences.

67. For collegiality to function most effectively in the Lambeth Conference then there are matters that require consideration such as the frequency of Conferences; the relationship of Lambeth Conferences to the Primates' meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council, how matters are dealt with in a conference, the preparation for a conference, the accountability from one conference to another for decisions taken, the mode of conference procedures following on the discovery of the immense value of indaba, the relation of indaba to formal decision making when required and other matters.

Recommendation:

68. For a conference of bishops to provide the mutuality of counsel required of them, there is a need to ensure a high level of fellowship and sense of mutual responsibility. Quite simply, the bishops need to know one another. New patterns of Lambeth Conferences must therefore be considered: a shorter cycle of meetings, perhaps smaller meetings between plenary conferences, perhaps involving diocesan bishops only, or a system of regional or representative meetings.

The Primates' Meeting

69. Collegiality is also expressed in meetings of primates gathered together with the Archbishop of Canterbury where the primates offer support and advice to one another and in the life of the Communion. They have the potential to give some means of ongoing oversight between Conferences. The Primates' Meeting may be the most appropriate body to monitor the progress of resolutions and recommendations of Lambeth Conferences and to take note of and to guide the reception process. However, it has to be recognised that more than one model of primacy exists in the Anglican Communion and the diverse expressions of primatial authority can lead to some having concerns about the primates' meeting. The authority of the Primates arises from the fact that they are in conversation with their own House of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures. They are, therefore, able to reflect the breadth and depth of the conversations and opinions of their episcopates and

provinces. Because of this intrinsic relation with their episcopates and the faithful of their provinces, the Primates' Meeting may be thought to have a 'weight' - not from the individual primates but from their representative role.

Recommendation:

70. The Primates' Meeting has sometimes been accused of overreaching its authority, and it is important to note the principle articulated in the Lambeth Indaba Document that the primates collectively should not exercise more authority than properly belongs to them in their own Provinces. However, the primates also have a high degree of responsibility as the chief pastors of their respective Provinces to articulate the concerns of that Church in the counsels of the Communion. When they speak collectively, or in a united or unanimous manner, then their advice - while it is no more than advice - nevertheless needs to be received with a readiness to undertake reflection and accommodation.

The Anglican Consultative Council

71. The great value of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, is that it brings together at a world level bishops, clergy and laity thereby symbolising the communal dimension of the life of the Church. It is not understood as a synodical body, as its name indicates. It is consultative. The ACC tends to be accorded particular significance by those provinces whose liturgies emphasize the baptismal covenant and who therefore desire to find the contribution of the whole people of God in the life, mission and also governance of the Church at every level of the Church's life expressed in a conciliar gathering at the world level. However, there are questions about whether a body meeting every three years, with rapidly changing membership can fulfil adequately the tasks presently given to it. There may be other ways in which the involvement of the laity should be made effective in the discernment and guidance of the Communion and not only at the world level.

72. Related to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting is the work of the Joint Standing Committee, which is the meeting together of the Standing Committee of the ACC with the Standing Committee of the Primates. It is not a separate Instrument of Communion, but it does contain representatives of all four Instruments - presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with representatives of the Primates, of the bishops, and of the clergy and lay members of the Council. The crux is how the committee works and the various parts dovetail. In many senses, it is still in an early stage of development. As it develops, it will be important to stress the links to all four instruments so that it is not just seen as a branch of the ACC. It will also be important to ensure that the membership reflects the breadth of opinion in the Communion. If the membership becomes polarised, it will lose its ability to act effectively on behalf of the whole Communion. It would be strengthened by the Archbishop of Canterbury being present throughout the meeting.

Recommendation:

73. A review should be commissioned of how the Anglican Consultative Council's effectiveness and confidence in its work can be enhanced. In particular, the WCG

would like to see work done on exploring the effectiveness and role of the Joint Standing Committee in the life of the Communion. In order for it to be able to do this, questions need to be addressed about its membership and the extent to which Provinces are prepared to invest in its work. The JSC needs to be constituted in a way which is seen as fully representative; at which the primatial members are fully participating, and at which the Archbishop of Canterbury is fully present throughout its meetings.

The Instruments as a Whole

74. One of the great insights of the Anglican Communion may prove to be the way it holds to the Episcopal ordering of the Church and therefore an understanding of the distinctive role of bishops but within the context of the value it places on the *symphonia* of bishops, clergy and laity working together as the whole people of God. Anglicans struggle to express this in the instruments of Communion at a world level. What is needed now is a clear definition of the role of each instrument of the Communion. This should take into account the specific gifts and responsibilities for governance as well as the representative functions entrusted to bishops and the how these might best work together with the whole body of the faithful. An important component of our present needs is also an articulation of the best ways in which the instruments can work together, each with its own specific tasks for the good of the Communion.

75. A deeper understanding of the Instruments of Communion at world level, their relationship to one another and to the other levels of the churches life should lead to a more coherent and inclusive functioning of oversight and authority in the service of the communion of the Church. The global nature of the Communion also needs to be grasped. The functioning of the Instruments must be adapted to accommodate global perspectives and participation.

Recommendation:

76. IASCUFO (The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith and Order - for which, see below), as a priority, should be invited to produce a concise statement on the Instruments of Communion, their several roles and the authority inherent in them and to offer recommendations for developing the effectiveness of the instruments. This statement should be discussed by the Primates' Meeting and the ACC and sent jointly by them to the provinces for study and response. Although provincial responses could be collated by IASCUFO and brought to the next Lambeth Conference for expressing the mind of the Communion, it will be important to move to a common articulation of the role of the Instruments as swiftly as possible, and consideration should be given to whether these reflections could be incorporated into an ongoing development or revision of the text of the Covenant.

E. The Covenant

77. The Windsor Report made another recommendation: the production of an Anglican Covenant. If the "bonds of affection" were not clearly articulated; if there was no clear and shared sense of the extent of true inheritance of common faith to be discerned in one another and what could be described as essential Anglicanism; of the

rights and responsibilities of “autonomy-on-communion”, then TWR argued that the development of an agreed text to which the Anglican Churches explicitly bound themselves would go a long way to addressing this ecclesial deficit.

78. The covenant has been recognised as a development by which the Communion could be given a long term articulation of its identity and of the mutual responsibilities that arose from being a Communion of Churches: the Communion can only continue if we can continue to recognise the Church of Jesus Christ in one another. The Covenant has its value in seeking to articulate the essential elements of inheritance, mission and interdependence which can sustain our life in communion.

Recommendation:

79. The WCG would like to affirm strongly that the covenant process is an essential element in rebuilding the confidence in our common life. We also recognise that ACC-14 will be a critical point in the process, since Provinces are being asked to give their “in principle” response at this stage.

F. Other Initiatives

80. The WCG wishes to commend the ongoing work of other projects or bodies within the life of the Communion which can help to repair or strengthen our common life:

- *The Bible in the Church Project*, which is being commended to ACC-14 next May.
- *The Principles of Canon Law Project*, the first fruits of which were published at the Lambeth Conference. A process of study, education and reflection is now needed on this project so that its nature may be properly understood and its applicability to the life of the Communion correctly discerned.
- The recent establishment of the *Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order* (IASCUFO) by the JSC as a body in succession to IASCER and IATDC to advise on ecumenical engagement and on key issues of faith and order within the life of the Communion. The agenda for such a body is already extensive and pressing.

G. Timely Processes of Response: Pastoral Forum and Pastoral Visitors

81. It is one of the realities of the current life of the communion that situations or matters are arising in the life of one or more of the provinces that affect the quality of the communion experienced between all the Churches of the Communion. In order to address the mechanisms which might be developed to assist the Churches to respond to such matters, several proposals or ideas have been raised or implemented in the recent past. The Windsor Report 2004 recommended the appointment of a *Council of Advice* to assist and support to the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Primates Meeting in Dromantine (2005) advocated the establishment of a *Panel of Reference*; the Dar es Salaam Communiqué (2007) called for the establishment of a *Pastoral Council*. The TEC House of Bishops acknowledged the need for a mechanism of *informal consultation* with the other Provinces of the Communion, and indeed, the Presiding Bishop has recently moved forward with the appointment of a

Deputy for Anglican Communion Affairs. We believe that this move closely parallels what we are proposing in terms of pastoral visitors.

82. Some of these ideas have found favour, some have not; those which have been established that have experienced varying degrees of success. The WCG wish to commend their proposal for a Pastoral Forum has some similarities with all of the foregoing, and yet it is distinct from them. Before describing what the Pastoral Forum could be therefore, it may be helpful to begin by saying what it is *not*:

- the Pastoral Forum is not envisaged as a juridical or quasi-judicial body in the life of the Anglican Communion with a constitutional or quasi-constitutional nature or authority;
- the Pastoral Forum would not have any jurisdiction;
- the Pastoral Forum would not act as a “court of appeal”;
- the Pastoral Forum could not override or supersede the Canons and Constitutions of any Province or the role of any of the Instruments of Communion.

83. The Pastoral Forum *is* conceived as an agency, which could be established with the co-operation of the lawful authorities of the Churches of the Communion to work with them in a pastoral, relational and advisory capacity in the addressing particular issues of tension between them. As the Observations Document of the Windsor Continuation Group puts it, its aim would be “to engage theologically and practically with situations of controversy as they arise or divisive actions that may be taken around the Communion”. There was a broad welcome to such an idea at the Lambeth Conference 2008.

84. The Forum would have a pastoral, relational and advisory role, working consultatively and collaboratively with the parties involved in situations of tension or disagreement around the Communion. It would aim to move parties “towards reconciliation” through careful consultation and responsible accountability (cf. The Lambeth Indaba Document, §146) It could, however, with the co-operation of the parties, suggest, advance and, with their consent, develop models or mechanisms of pastoral care and relationship to assist in any situation.

85. There was a broad measure of support at the Lambeth Conference for this proposal.

“There is clear majority support for a Pastoral Forum along the lines advocated by the Windsor Group, and a desire to see it in place speedily. There is agreement that it should be pastoral and not legal and should be able to respond quickly. It was also clearly stated that this process should always be moving towards reconciliation. There is concern about mandate, membership, appointment process and authority. Some wondered whether the Pastoral Forum should have members from outside the Communion. Many felt strongly that the forum could operate in a Province only with the consent of that Province and in particular with the consent of the Primate or the appropriate body. It is essential that this should be properly funded and resourced if it has any chance of being productive. There was some support for an alternative suggestion: to appoint in any dispute a Pastoral Visitor, working with a professional arbitrator and to create in the Communion a “pool” of such visitors.” (LI §146)

86. Since the establishment of such a Pastoral Forum would need authorisation and legitimacy within the Communion, and questions of “mandate, membership, appointment process and authority” will have to be addressed, it would seem appropriate that the proposal is given time for development by the Archbishop of Canterbury in consultation with the Joint Standing Committee and the Primates in preparation in advance of the fourteenth Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in May 2009.

87. However, the need for such a ministry of reconciliation is urgent in the life of the Communion. The WCG welcomes the fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury intends to move ahead with the appointment of a small number of “Pastoral Visitors” as proposed by the bishops at the Lambeth Conference (see above), and who could be called upon “in any dispute” or situation of tension between now and next May, as the proposal for a full Pastoral Forum is taken forward.

88. These Pastoral Visitors could be be:

- Appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the limited period of twelve months in the first instance.
- Drawn from senior leaders of the Communion, present or retired, or other notable individuals with specific skills in mediation and arbitration.
- Available to the Archbishop to be commissioned as his emissary for specific work to assist in maintaining the highest degree of Communion possible in situations of disagreement or tension.
- Available as well to the Primates of the Anglican Communion to act on their behalf in situations of disagreement or tension as go-betweens, arbitrators or conciliators, as deemed appropriate by those primates.
- Available for appointment to particular positions or roles within the Anglican Communion which would be consistent with their work and the constitutional requirements or conventions of the body for which they are nominated.
- Required to act in a manner consistent with the Constitutions and Canons of those Provinces with which they relate in the pursuance of any matter referred to them.

89. The WCG affirms the decision of the Archbishop that it is an integral element in their ministry that Pastoral Visitors would **not** have any authority to make dispositions or proposals for structural solutions to any situation, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Primate or other lawful authority of the particular Provinces with which they have been asked to work.

90. The scope of the activity that the Pastoral Visitors will be able to undertake will depend on the availability of funding. In all matters referred to the Pastoral Visitors, it will be helpful if the Provinces concerned would be willing to nominate a colleague who would be committed to working alongside them.

Recommendation:

91. The WCG wish to commend the proposals for a Pastoral Forum, and for Pastoral Visitors as an interim measure, in the form discussed above, and urges their adoption without further delay.

H. Parallel Jurisdictions

92. The advent of the ACNA is a serious and unprecedented development in the life of the Communion. It is proposed that eight different organisations - and different types of organisations - shall come together to create “a network based Province” encompassing a variety of geographical and non-geographical associations. Its existence is predicated on the assumption that the current Anglican presences in North America - The Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada - are no longer adequate to represent their understanding of faithful biblical Anglicanism, and this new association is intended to make such provision. Within ACNA are entities not formally part of the Anglican Communion or whose status within the Communion is disputed - the Reformed Episcopal Church, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, the Anglican Mission in America and the Anglican Coalition in Canada - together with associations such as Forward in Faith in America and the American Anglican Council.

93. It is unclear to what extent this new body is seeking recognition within the Anglican Communion. On one level, the leaders of ACNA state that they seek a place within the Communion, but at the same time say that the approval of the Instruments of Communion or recognition by the Archbishop of Canterbury are unnecessary for them to proceed with the formation of the Province. They have sought recognition, however, from the Primates’ Council of Gafcon. On the other hand, they include participants who clearly hold to their identity as Anglicans, and indeed, have only taken the steps they have because they believe that this is the only way to be faithful to the Anglicanism which they inherited.

94. There will undoubtedly be Primates and Provinces, such as those involved with Gafcon, which will wish to give recognition to the new body. Equally, there will be primates and Provinces for whom even consideration of the request would be untoward, and involve the accommodation of schism.

95. If indeed it is the desire of the “province-in-formation” to seek formal membership of the Anglican Communion, the WCG foresees formidable problems in the way ahead. They believe that such a proposal should only be entertained through the official channels which exist, namely according to the principles which were established and set out by ACC-9. Any move to recognise the new Province outside of these formal channels would further undermine our common life in Communion.

96. For such an approach to be successful, there would be very significant obstacles to be overcome. In the first place, the Communion would have to decide whether it could live with a parallel non-geographical Province based on theological ideology. This would be a significant change in the Catholic ecclesiological tradition upheld by the Communion throughout its history.

97. In the second place, the new Province-in-formation would have to reassure the Instruments of Communion that it does have the “ecclesial density” appropriate to the life of a Province: that is, a Province is more than a loose confederation. Does the new Province-in-formation have a unified jurisdiction, a common canon law, and shared norms of worship and liturgy?

98. Thirdly, if it can be successfully argued that a new Province can be formed on doctrinal and ideological lines, what reassurances can be given about its relationship to the existing jurisdictions in North America, particularly in the life of those dioceses where bishops and synods have expressed their solidarity with the standards commended in the Windsor Report. TWR set its face against the concept of parallel jurisdictions²⁰; it would be especially tragic if a generous accommodation of the new entity were to be seen as *carte blanche* for the new Province to establish a presence in localities where no cogent theological basis for differentiation could be advanced.

99. In reflecting upon the emerging situation, WCG is mindful of three of the principles articulated by the Primates at their Dar es Salaam Meeting in 2007:

- to encourage healing and reconciliation within The Episcopal Church, between The Episcopal Church and congregations alienated from it, and between The Episcopal Church and the rest of the Anglican Communion;
- to respect the proper constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding the interdependent life and mutual responsibility of the Churches, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole;
- to respond pastorally and provide for those groups alienated by recent developments in the Episcopal Church.

and believe that these principles should continue to guide the thinking of the Instruments.

100. One way forward - although initially dismissed by some of the parties concerned - would be for ACNA to seek for some clear provisional recognition which seeks to keep it in relation to the Communion, but which acknowledges its provisional and anomalous nature. WCG has explored on previous occasions the idea of “escrow” - the creation of a body which could take on the oversight of these groups on behalf of the Communion, but which recognises the provisionality of such bodies. The group wonders whether there is any mileage in the model of extra-Provincial jurisdictions? In at least one case, such jurisdictions have been recognised as provisional - e.g. in Sri Lanka. Such a provision is fraught with difficulties. Such a scheme could not guarantee any particular outcome, the nature of which would be dependent on many factors, including the progress of the Covenant process. The provision would have to be hedged around with all sorts of restrictions, to avoid such a scheme becoming a haven for discontented groups, and institutionalising schism in the life of the Communion. Who would be the metropolitan authority? If all other obstacles were overcome, the WCG would favour a Metropolitan Council similar to that which operates for Cuba rather than linking the new entity to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Recommendation:

101. The WCG therefore recommends that the Archbishop of Canterbury, in consultation with the Primates, establish at the earliest opportunity a professionally mediated conversation at which all the significant parties could be gathered. The aim would be to find a provisional holding arrangement which will enable dialogue to take place and which will be revisited on the conclusion of the Covenant Process, or the

²⁰ TWR §154

achievement of long term reconciliation in the Communion. Such a conversation would have to proceed on the basis of a number of principles:

- There must be an ordered approach to the new proposal within, or part of a natural development of, current rules.
- It is not for individual groups to claim the terms on which they will relate to the Communion.
- The leadership of the Communion needs to stand together, and find an approach to which they are all committed.
- Any scheme developed would rely on an undertaking from the present partners to ACNA that they would not seek to recruit and expand their membership by means of proselytisation. WCG believes that the advent of schemes such as the Communion Partners Fellowship and the Episcopal Visitors scheme instituted by the Presiding Bishop in the United States should be sufficient to provide for the care of those alienated within the Episcopal Church from recent developments.

I. The Life of the Communion

102. Throughout its work, the WCG were undergirded by a deep sense of the value of the Anglican Communion as a particular expression of the providence of God's grace, and of its value to the proclamation of the Gospel and the life of the *oikumene*. We believe that the life of the Anglican Communion must not be allowed to falter. We call upon all Anglicans to look again to the value of the existing fellowship into which God has called us all; to embrace again the charity and forgiveness to which Our Lord entreats us in our dealings with one another; to be joined in working together for the healing of the Communion and the service of God's mission. We do not believe that the moment for division or excommunication has come, although we recognise that a critical point in the life of the Communion has been reached. We urge the Archbishop of Canterbury to be bold in gathering the leaders of the Communion for prayer and common discernment. We urge all those, from the Primates to the bishops, clergy and faithful of the Communion, to be ready to think afresh, and to seek in Christ to be One so that the world might believe.

Bishop Clive Handford, former Primate, Jerusalem & the Middle East, *Chair*
Archbishop John Chew, Primate of South East Asia
Bishop Gary Lillibridge, Bishop of West Texas
Bishop Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Christchurch
Dean Emeritus John Moses, former Dean of St. Paul's, London
Bishop Donald Mtetemela, Bishop of Ruaha, former Primate of Tanzania

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Canon Gregory K Cameron, *Secretary*
Canon Andrew Norman
Dame Mary Tanner

Mustang Island, 17th December 2008