

The Virginia Report



The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission

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PREFACE

This Report is the work of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission which comprises theologians and church leaders who themselves represent the diversities of the Anglican Communion. Their task was to respond to the call of the Lambeth Conference of 1988 to consider in some depth the meaning and nature of communion. This response was to be set within the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, the unity and order of the Church and the unity and community of humanity. At the heart and center of the Anglican pilgrimage lies the concept of communion. From it we derive so much of our belief and practice. It is not itself a static concept. It has become with out pilgrimage a living and developing reality. Yet that fact alone demands understanding which cannot be tied to any one period of our history or to any single cultural approach. This Report is offered to the Anglican Communion as one more step in the process of seeking greater understanding of what communion means to the Body of Christ. In particular it seeks to suggest ways in which our Communion can respond in practical ways which touch and concern how we order our corporate life and lives as individuals. I wish to acknowledge with sincere gratitude the generosity and support given to the Commission by the Right Reverend Peter Lee, Bishop of Virginia, the Diocese of Virginia and the staff of the Virginia Theological Seminary. Their practical assistance and encouragement made the production of this Report possible. It has been a great privilege to chair the Commission and I acknowledge the support and work of all its members.

+ Robert Eames
Archbishop of Armagh

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INTRODUCTION

Origin and Mandate of the Commission

In 1988 the Lambeth Conference was faced with a question that challenged the unity of the Communion: the proposal by the Episcopal Church of the United States of America to consecrate a woman to the episcopate. In the light of its deliberations the Lambeth Conference passed resolution 1 on the ordination or consecration of women to the episcopate. In response to this resolution of the Conference the Archbishop of Canterbury, in consultation with the Primates, established a Commission on Communion and Women in the Episcopate under the leadership of the Most Revd Robert Eames, Archbishop of Armagh

(a) to provide for an examination of the relationships between Provinces of the Anglican Communion and ensure that the process of reception includes continuing consultation with other Churches as well;

(b) to monitor and encourage the process of consultation within the Communion and to offer further pastoral guidelines (The Truth Shall Make You Free, The Lambeth Conference 1988. Resolution 1, page 201).

The Eames Commission, as it came to be known, met five times and produced four reports which were published together in December 1994. Its last meeting was in December 1993 and its report will be presented to the 1998 Lambeth Conference. During its lifetime the Commission engaged in theological reflection on the nature of koinonia. It offered guidelines on how Anglicans might live together in the highest degree of communion possible while different views and practices concerning the ordination of women continued to be held within the Communion. The Eames Commission saw this as a way of enabling an ongoing process of reception both within the Anglican Communion and the wider ecumenical fellowship. Its guidelines are intended to support graceful and charitable relationships and to ensure proper pastoral care for one another. Before its last meeting, five women had been consecrated as bishops. Also in that period the ordination of women to the priesthood had received the necessary consents in the Church of England and over 1000 women were ordained as priests, and by then women had also been ordained as priests in Australia, Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Hong Kong and Macao, Ireland, Kenya, the Philippines, Scotland, Southern Africa, Uganda, the USA and West Africa.

The Eames Commission between 1988 and 1993 provided a model of how Anglicans can remain together in the highest degree of communion possible while endeavoring to come to a common mind on a matter which touches the fundamental unity of the Communion. The 1988 Conference recognized that there was a need to describe how the Anglican Communion makes authoritative decisions while maintaining unity and interdependence in the light of the many theological issues that arise from its diversity. To address this need, the Conference resolved that there should be:

As a matter of urgency further exploration of the meaning and nature of communion with particular reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, the unity and order of the Church, and the unity and community of humanity (Lambeth Conference 1988, Resolution 18, page 216. See Appendix I).

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Resolution 8 on the Final Report of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission also had a direct bearing on the exercise of authority in the Church. It encouraged ARCIC to explore the basis in Scripture and Tradition of the concept of a universal primacy, in conjunction with collegiality, as an instrument of unity, the character of such primacy in practice, and to draw upon the experience of other Christian Churches in exercising primacy, collegiality and conciliarity.

In implementing Resolution 18 of Lambeth 1988, and at the request of the Primates of the Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury invited a group of representative church leaders and theologians to meet in December 1991 at the Virginia Theological Seminary at Alexandria, USA to begin the exploration. The Consultation's report was called *Belonging Together*. The Report was circulated widely within the Communion between 1992 and 1994 with a request for critical comment. A number of Anglican member churches responded officially. There were also responses from theological institutions and individuals.

All the responses were considered by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, the successor of the 1991 Consultation, when it met in December 1994, and again in January 1996, on both occasions at the Virginia Theological Seminary. This report is the product of its consideration and further reflection on the issues.

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEXT

1.1 Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed that his followers might be one, as He and the Father are one, so that the world might believe (Jn 17:20-21). Christians of every tradition struggle to respond in faith, life and witness, to the vision of unity expressed in the prayer of Jesus. At every level of Christian life, the call to graceful interdependence and unity in faith and doctrine challenge us.

1.2 From the earliest time in the history of the Christian community, an admonishing voice has been heard exhorting believers to maintain agreement with one another and thereby to avert divisions. From an almost equally early date they have found consensus, even on apparently major matters, singularly difficult to achieve. When the second century Churches evolved a collection of early Christian documents which came to be called the New Testament, they had a few documents which did not attest and reflect deep disagreements, and the formation of the collection itself was the product of controversies. Nevertheless the controversies themselves were stages on a road towards greater consensus.

1.3 What makes unity and interdependence particularly difficult today? In the last 200 years the world has seen extraordinary development in the political, scientific, economic and psychological spheres. These developments have brought many blessings to the peoples of the world. At the same time there has been the disintegration of traditional cultures, values and social structures and unprecedented threats to the environment. The tension between blessing and disintegration creates a challenge to the unity and interdependence that the peoples of the world face.

1.4 The authority of nineteenth and twentieth century notions of progress, economic growth and the free market economy, the omnipotence of scientific method and technology, and competitive individualism is no longer accepted without question. In many places there is a search for cultural, personal and social identity which honours the integrity and value of cultural roots.

1.5 Within this context, Anglicans strive to be faithful to the Gospel in their particular cultural contexts, and to face moral, doctrinal, social and economic exigencies which demand discernment and response if identity as the Christian community is to be maintained. For example, issues of justice and human rights including human sexuality, the family and the status of women, racial equality, religious freedom and the use and distribution of resources demand attention. Our response to these issues is conditioned by our particular cultural context, our way of interpreting the Bible, our degree of awareness of being part of a wider human community, and our attentiveness to the response of other ecumenical partners and to the concerns of those of other faiths.

1.6 The churches of the Anglican Communion struggle with these concerns within a life of communion and interdependence. Discernment has to be exercised about which concerns are best addressed by the local church, which provincially and which by the whole Communion. An added burden is placed on decision making when churches are separated from one another.

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1.7 New challenges to unity press impatiently upon all churches, not least those of the Anglican Communion. Today we might cite divisive issues in, for example, the Indian Ocean and Europe, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Nigeria and the Middle East, the United States, Australia and South East Asia.

1.8 When Christians find themselves passionately engaged in the midst of complex and explosive situations, how do they avoid alienation from those who by baptism are their brothers and sisters in Christ, who are embraced in the communion of God the Holy Trinity, but who disagree? How do they stay in communion with God and each other; how do they behave towards each other in the face of disagreement and conflict? What are the limits of diversity if the Gospel imperative of unity and communion are to be maintained?

1.9 In addressing issues raised by the complexities of contemporary life, solutions will in some cases be necessarily provisional. There are times when the path ahead is insufficiently clear for categorical claims to be made. Forming a mind entails learning from those within the Anglican Communion and being in partnership and dialogue with ecumenical and interfaith colleagues. There is merit in the Anglican approach of listening to others, of holding each other in the highest degree of communion possible with tolerance for deeply held differences of conviction and practice.

1.10 While we are aware of significant challenges to our unity as a Communion we recognise that we have received the gracious gift of God the Holy Trinity, the resources of our life in Christ in word and sacrament and the determination to develop appropriate and more effective structures for maintaining unity in service and mission.

1.11 The Commission has centered its study on the understanding of Trinitarian faith. It believes that the unity of the Anglican Communion derives from the unity given in the triune God, whose inner personal and relational nature is communion. This is our center. This mystery of God's life calls us to communion in visible form. This is why the Church is called again and again to review and to reform the structures of its life together so that they nurture and enable the life of communion in God and serve God's mission in the world.

1.12 The references in the Lambeth resolution to the Trinitarian doctrine and the unity and community of the whole human family make it clear that the concern of the Lambeth Conference was not simply for strengthening the peace and unity of the Anglican Communion, but also for the faithful and effective engagement of the Communion in God's mission of love and reconciliation in the world.

1.13 The mission and ministry of reconciliation entrusted by God to the Church are given in baptism to the whole people of God, the laos. While this report necessarily dwells on the structures of ministry in the processes of oversight, their interdependence and accountability, it does so in the conviction and hope that this reflection will open up the possibility of creative change which will strengthen the ministry and mission of the whole people of God.

1.14 The instruments of communion which are a gift of God to the Church help to hold us in the life of the triune God. These are the instruments which we seek to renew within the Anglican Communion. They are also the structures we seek to share with all those who have been baptised into the life of the Triune God. Our hope is that this theological reflection may contribute not only to the Anglican Communion but to the ecumenical goal of full visible unity.

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1.15 In reflecting on the structures of Anglican unity and authority, we are aware that discernment, decision making and teaching with authority are today, sadly, in the context of separated Churches, and are therefore only partial reflections of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This requires Anglicans to listen to the experience of other ecclesial communities and to continue to deepen the work of ecumenical dialogue on the nature of authority and its exercise in the Church and to renew our Anglican structures in line with the emerging ecumenical convergence.

1.16 Having referred in this chapter to the context and the challenges that face Christians today, the report goes on in chapter two, to a theological reflection on the gracious gift of love in the triune God and how the Church responds to that gift in the ministry that the Church has received from Christ. Chapter three examines the bonds of interdependence: what holds Anglicans together. Chapter four explores the principle of subsidiarity, identifying the ways in which the bonds of unity are appropriately expressed at the different levels the Church's life. Chapter five identifies the principles which undergird our life together and chapter six offers some observations about how Anglican international institutions of unity might be strengthened and improved in order to strengthen our life together for the sake of God's mission in the world.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGY OF GOD'S GRACIOUS GIFT: THE COMMUNION OF THE TRINITY AND THE CHURCH

I. The Understanding of Gracious Gift 2.1-2.12

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I. The Understanding of Gracious Gift

2.1 God's gracious gift of steadfast loving kindness was from the beginning known by the people of God in the form of covenant. From the prophets came the conviction that God's faithfulness was never ending even when God's people were forgetful and betrayed the divine trust.

2.2 God's love and faithfulness was understood as having been an act of creation. God's promise to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature on the earth (Gen 9:17) was a promise which was renewed again and again through the ages.

2.3 God's word to Moses in Exodus 3:14 expresses the divine promise which forever grounds the hope of inter-relational communion between God and the people of God in an everlasting and personal relationship even in the midst of tragedy.

2.4 The people of God interpreted the memory of the Sinai Covenant in words remembered as spoken by Moses, words which would forever define God's sacred relationship with his chosen people:

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you - for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors. (Deut. 7:6-8a).

2.5 God's chosen, the people of Israel, would tell the story of God's never failing love in intimate longing and passion. So the prophet is moved to proclaim:

You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married.

For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you (Is. 62:4-5).

And in the midst of despair and anguish Jeremiah speaks of God's loving act of restoration:

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:33).

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2.6 Jesus spoke of this God of steadfast loving kindness and faithfulness as his Father. He prayed: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. 11:25-27).

2.7 The good news of the Christian Gospel is that Jesus' life among us is God's life - God breaking down the barriers of our bondage and sinfulness. In Jesus, God is with us in all our human helplessness; with us in our life and in our death. In Jesus, God is faithful to us even on a cross. In the risen Jesus, God is with us to transfigure and set free all those who are bound by fear and sin. Jesus is God with us, and to know Jesus is to be with God. God has shared our human world with us, and through the great events of cross and resurrection we are empowered and invited to share God's life, to share God's glory and freedom, to proclaim God's holiness and mercy in word and act. We know God as we live with Jesus: so that we can and must say that Jesus' life is the act and expression of God (The Lambeth Conference 1988, page 82).

2.8 The climax of the Son's revelation of the Father occurs in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. On the night before he died, Jesus revealed that the communion of love he shared with the Father would be shared by the community of his disciples. John's Gospel remembers the intimate moment of God's gracious gift of love.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another (John 15, 9, 13, 15-17).

2.9 The love with which the Father loves Jesus is the love with which Jesus loves us. On the night before he died Jesus prayed (Jn. 17) that all who follow him should be drawn into that love and unity which exists between the Father and the Son. Thus our unity with one another is grounded in the life of love, unity and communion of the Godhead. The eternal, mutual self-giving and receiving love of the three persons of the Trinity is the source and ground of our communion, of our fellowship with God and one another. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are drawn into a divine fellowship of love and unity. Further, it is because the Holy Trinity is a unique unity of purpose, and at the same time a diversity of ways of being and function, that the Church is called to express diversity in its own life, a diversity held together in God's unity and love (The Lambeth Conference 1988, page 130).

2.10 At the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus promised the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. He prayed that God would come to the community as the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would bear witness to the truth of all that Jesus said and did.

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides in you, and he will be in you .
Jesus goes on,

On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them (John 14:16-17; 20-21).

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2.11 The sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost created the Church, the community of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit lifted up the community into the very life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowered the community to pray "Abba, Father" as free, adopted, children of God (Romans 8:15-17, Gal. 4:4-7). "Clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49), the community is empowered to go forth to proclaim the Good News of God to all peoples and nations. The Holy Spirit is the unifying force of God in the community. The unity of the Church which is given, and yet which it seeks to deepen, is grounded in the very unity of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:3-14, 4:1-6).

2.12 Every act of God is an act of the undivided Holy Trinity. The very being of the Church is thus dependent upon the outpouring of God's gracious love, the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The experience of the truth of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ came to the disciples as a gracious gift. What the disciples experienced at Pentecost in Jesus Christ was that communion of life with God which was present at creation and which will be perfected in the fullness of time.

II. The Communion of the Trinity and the Life of the Church

2.13 By the power of the Holy Spirit the Church is born into history as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27). The Church is called the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16), a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God claims as his own (1 Pet. 2:9). These images of the Church speak of a communion with God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Christians are participants in the divine nature. This communion also determines our relationship with one another. "We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Communion with God and one another is both gift and divine expectation for the Church (Eames I, *Koinonia and the Mystery of God*, 21-22).

2.14 Because the Church as communion participates in God's communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it has an eschatological reality and significance. The Church is the advent, in history, of God's final will being done "on earth as it is in heaven." That will was revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and is continually inspired by the work of the Spirit in the life and mission of the Church. The Church is the icon of the future toward which God is directing the history of the world. A faithful church signifies by its life that it is the living promise of God's purpose in the midst of today's history. The Church lives in the present, remembering again and again (making anamnesis) the Christ event and receiving in hope the promise of the Kingdom. In this way, the saving events of Christ's death and resurrection and the foretaste of the Kingdom are brought into the present experience of the Church.

2.15 The Church looks forward in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to that day when God's name will be made holy, God's Kingdom come, when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. The seventh century theologian St. Maximus the Confessor put it this way: "The things of the past are shadow; those of the present icon; the truth is to be found in the things of the future" (Scolion on the ecclesiastical hierarchy, 3,3:2). Faithful Christian community with God the Holy Trinity, is focused in a vision of the final and ultimate reign of God. Its mission is to be the living and visible sign of that divine reign, when He will dwell with them as their God; "they will be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more; for the first things have passed away (Revelation 21:3-4).

III. The Communion of the Trinity and Mission and Ministry

2.16 A living faith in the God of Jesus Christ draws us into the life of the Holy Trinity. This means living as Jesus lived his life, empowered by God's Spirit:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18-19).

2.17 The same Spirit of the Lord rests upon the Church and dwells in the hearts of the believers, empowering the community to go forth as Christ did to proclaim the reign of God. The mission of the Church is to be the icon of God's life. By prayer and praise, mercy and peace, justice and love, constantly welcoming the sinner, the outcast, the marginalised into her sanctuary, the Church is revealed as communion and is faithful to its mission. As Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27), Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:16), God's own people (1 Pet. 2:9) the Church lives in mutual love and is sent forth as a missionary community to gather all of creation into God's reconciling love, restore and renew it in the life of the triune God (Rom. 8:19-25).

2.18 The mission of Christ and the Church is celebrated and proclaimed in the liturgy, which shapes the trinitarian faith of the people of God and empowers them for a life of ministry and mission. This is especially true of holy baptism and holy eucharist.

2.19 As the sacrament of initiation into the life of the Church, baptism is related not only to a single experience, but to lifelong growth in Christ and participation in his ministry. Those who are baptized are called upon to reflect the glory of the Lord with ever increasing splendour as they are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into his likeness. As they grow in the Christian life of faith, baptized believers demonstrate that humanity can be regenerated and liberated. They have a common responsibility to bear witness in the Church and the world to the Gospel of Christ, "the Liberator of all human beings." (BEM, Baptism 9, 10).

2.20 The eucharist also embraces all aspects of life. It is a representative act of thanksgiving and offering on behalf of the whole world. The eucharistic celebration demands reconciliation and sharing among those who are brothers and sisters in the one family of God, and constantly challenges those who participate to search for appropriate relationships in social, economic and political life (Matt 5:23f. I Cor 10:16f; 11:20-22. Gal 3:28). All injustice, racism, separation and denial of freedom are radically challenged when Christians share in the body and blood of Christ. Through the eucharist the grace of God penetrates, restores and renews human personality and dignity. The eucharist involves believers in the central event of the world's history, the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, and sends them into the world in peace to love and serve the Lord (BEM, Eucharist 20).

2.21 Jesus Christ manifests and carries out for us God's creative, reconciling and perfecting mission and ministry to the world. All Christian ministry is rooted in that unique ministry of Jesus Christ. The centre of Jesus's ministry is his self-offering on the cross for the reconciliation of God and humanity and the healing of the whole human family (Colossians 1:19; 2 Cor. 5:19). Christ's passion, death and resurrection brings into relationship those who had become alienated, both individually and corporately. The reconciling work of Christ, the very heart of the Christian good news, brings those who receive him into the trinitarian life of sharing and interrelationship.

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2.22 Christ calls human beings to share in that loving and redeeming work of God and empowers them for that ministry with his Spirit. Jesus prayed, "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Christ called and equipped his disciples and sent them to reflect his own ministry of healing, teaching, leading, feeding and proclaiming. Through the varied aspects of the Church's one ministry, the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed is brought into historical expression.

2.23 To be baptized and to participate at the Table of the Lord is to be entrusted with Christ's one, continuing mission through the Church. The baptised are called to unity and interdependence. United to Christ, each member of the Body relates to the other members; they are interdependent with and through Christ. To celebrate the eucharist together reveals and builds this mutuality. "We who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread". In eucharist the Spirit affirms and renews communion in Christ and the gifts given us to participate in the divine mission.

2.24 The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complimentary gifts. (cf. BEM, Ministry 5) God the Creator, blesses people with many talents and abilities. The Holy Spirit graces individuals with special gifts. The outworking of one person's gift in the Church is unthinkable apart from all the others. The mutuality and interdependence of each member and each part of the Church is essential for the fulfillment of the Church's mission. In the early Church, those who spoke in tongues needed interpreters of tongues; Paul's mission to the Gentiles complemented Peter's mission to the Jews. The ministry of serving tables in the early Church freed the other disciples to preach God's word. The gifts of all contribute to the building up of the community and the fulfillment of its calling.

2.25 But the one mission of the Church, the Body of Christ, must always find its motivation, its intelligibility and its integrity in the one ministry of the Church's Lord, Jesus Christ. The variety and difference among Christian charisma would quickly become incoherent and disabling if it were to become eccentric, without a reference to its centre in Christ. An important function of life in communion is always to remain attentive to one another, particularly when conflict arises, so that the centre may never be forgotten. Seen in the framework of God's mission of love in Christ and the Spirit, the variety of gifts, which may appear to be potentially divisive, is seen to be necessary, mutually enriching, and a cause for thanks and praise to God.

2.26 God invites his people to enjoy diversity. As Christ's body, the Church must affirm that variety of gifts and use them faithfully both for the building up of the body "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ" and "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12-13).

CHAPTER 3

BELONGING TOGETHER IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

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IV. The Ministry of Oversight 3.21-3.23

V. Structures of Interdependence 3.24-3.54

3.1 Anglicans are held together in a life of visible communion. Baptism is God's gift of unity, the means by which an individual participates in the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is brought into a living community of faith. The confession of a common faith, the celebration of the eucharist, a life of common prayer, the service of an ordered ministry, conciliar structures, shared service and mission sustain a life of Anglican belonging. These elements belong to the universal Church and are not unique to Anglicans. They are nevertheless, lived out in a recognisable and characteristically Anglican way.

3.2 In the sixteenth century, members of the Church of England continued to understand themselves as the local embodiment of the Catholic Church, continuing to live in England with the same faith, sacraments and ministry of the Church through the ages, and yet they developed a family likeness which today characterises Anglicans who live not only in England but in the 36 provinces of the Anglican Communion.

3.3 One feature of Anglican life is the way it holds together diversities of many kinds. From the Reformation Anglicans endeavoured to hold together people of different temperaments, convictions and insights: the puritans who wanted more radical reform and the conservatives who emphasized their continuity with the pre-reformation Church. Today, for example, evangelicals, catholics, liberals and charismatics bring a diversity of insights and perspectives as Anglicans struggle to respond to the contemporary challenges to faith, order and moral teaching. Bound up with these groupings are the differences which arise from a variety of reactions to critical study of the Bible, particular cultural contexts, different schools of philosophical thought and scientific theory. The Reformation insistence on providing the Scriptures in the vernacular opened the possibility that the faith is expressed in the language, symbols and imagery of the different cultural contexts.

3.4 At best the Anglican way is characterised by generosity and tolerance to those of different views. It also entails a willingness to contain difference and live with tension, even conflict, as the Church seeks a common mind on controversial issues. The comprehensiveness that marks the Anglican Communion is not a sign of weakness or uncertainty about the central truths of the faith. Neither does it mean that Anglicans accept that there are no limits to diversity.

I. The Anglican Way: Scripture, Tradition and Reason

3.5 Anglicans are held together by the characteristic way in which they use Scripture, tradition and reason in discerning afresh the mind of Christ for the Church in each generation. This was well described in the Report of the Pastoral and Dogmatic Concerns section of Lambeth 1988.

3.6 Anglicans affirm the sovereign authority of the Holy Scriptures as the medium through which God by the Spirit communicates his word in the Church and thus enables people to respond with understanding and faith. The Scriptures are "uniquely inspired witness to divine revelation", and "the primary norm for Christian faith and life".

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3.7 The Scriptures, however, must be translated, read, and understood, and their meaning grasped through a continuing process of interpretation. Since the seventeenth century Anglicans have held that Scripture is to be understood and read in the light afforded by the contexts of "tradition" and "reason".

3.8 In one sense tradition denotes the Scriptures themselves, in that they embody "the tradition", "the message", "the faith once delivered to the saints". Tradition refers to the ongoing Spirit-guided life of the Church which receives, and in receiving interprets afresh God's abiding message. The living tradition embraces the ecumenical creeds, the classical eucharistic prayers, which belong with the Scriptures as forming their essential message. Tradition is not to be understood as an accumulation of formulae and texts but the living mind, the nerve centre of the Church. Anglican appeal to tradition is the appeal to this mind of the Church carried by the worship, teaching and the Spirit-filled life of the Church.

3.9 Properly speaking "reason" means simply the human being's capacity to symbolise, and so to order, share and communicate experience. It is the divine gift in virtue of which human persons respond and act with awareness in relation to their world and to God, and are opened up to that which is true for every time and every place. Reason cannot be divorced either from Scripture or tradition, since neither is conceivable apart from the working of reason. In another perspective, reason means not so much the capacity to make sense of things as it does "that which makes sense", or "that which is reasonable". The appeal to reason then becomes what people - and that means people in a given time and place - take as good sense or "common" sense. It refers to what can be called "the mind of a particular culture", with its characteristic ways of seeing things, asking about them, and explaining them. If tradition is the mind that Christians share as believers and members of the Church, reason is the mind they share as participants in a particular culture.

3.10 Anglicanism sees reason in the sense of the "mind" of the culture in which the Church lives and the Gospel is proclaimed, as a legitimate and necessary instrument for the interpretation of God's message in the Scriptures. Sometimes Scriptures affirm the new insights of a particular age or culture, sometimes they challenge or contradict those insights. The Word of God is addressed to the Church as it is part of the world. The Gospel borne by the Scriptures must be heard and interpreted in the language that bears the "mind" and distils the experience of the world. Tradition and reason are therefore in the Anglican way two distinct contexts in which Scriptures speak and out of which they are interpreted.

3.11 The characteristic Anglican way of living with a constant dynamic interplay of Scripture, tradition and reason means that the mind of God has constantly to be discerned afresh, not only in every age, but in each and every context. Moreover, the experience of the Church as it is lived in different places has something to contribute to the discernment of the mind of Christ for the Church. No one culture, no one period of history has a monopoly of insight into the truth of the Gospel. It is essential for the fullest apprehension of truth that context is in dialogue with context. Sometimes the lived experience of a particular community enables Christian truth to be perceived afresh for the whole community. At other times a desire for change or restatement of the faith in one place provokes a crisis within the whole Church. In order to keep the Anglican Communion living as a dynamic community of faith, exploring and making relevant the understanding of the faith, structures for taking counsel and deciding are an essential part of the life of the Communion

II. The Anglican Way: Sacrament and Worship

3.12 Fundamental to the Anglican way of living with and responding to diversity is the constant interplay and influence of Scripture, tradition and reason. The Scriptures are read and interpreted in the round of common daily prayer and in the celebration of the sacraments. In worship the faith is encountered in the hearing of the word and in the experience of the sacraments. In the sacrament of baptism Christians die and rise again with Christ through the waters of baptism to new life in him. In the eucharist they encounter the central mysteries of the faith in the anamnesis, the making present of those past events and the experience of future glory, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Word and sacrament are fundamental to the life of the Anglican Communion as it seeks to teach the faith and to give guidance for the right conduct in human life, expressing this in doctrine and moral guidance. A family likeness in common prayer expressed in many languages is a precious heritage which is significant in forming Anglican identity and maintaining unity. A commitment to daily prayer, to systematic scripture reading, to praying the psalms and canticles, to regular credal confession of the faith, and to intercessory prayer for one another and for the needs of the world is an integral part of Anglican belonging.

3.13 All of these resources keep Anglicans living together in fidelity to the memory and hope of Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. In the present they are bound together as they remember the past and anticipate the reconciliation of all things in Christ at the end of time.

III. Interdependence of Charisms in the Life of the Church

3.14 All who are baptised into the life of God and live out their calling as members of the Anglican Communion are given a charism of the Holy Spirit for the life of the Communion and for the service of others. The vocation of the laos is exercised in a broad context of social and communal life in civil society, at work and in recreation and within the family, as well as within the life of the community of the Church. By virtue of their baptism all members are called to confess their faith and to give account of their hope in what they do and what they say.

3.15 The calling of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given to them, to carry out Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship and governance of the Church.

3.16 To enable the community of faith to respond to Christ's call God has given to the Church the charism of ordered ministry: the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate. The ordained ministry is exercised with, in and among the whole people of God.

3.17 The calling of a bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, teacher and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

3.18 The calling of a priest or presbyter is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishops in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

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3.19 The calling of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant to those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments (ECUSA, BCP, page 855-856).

3.20 The complementary gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit on the community are for the common good and for the building up of the Church and for the service of the world to which the Church is sent

IV. The Ministry of Oversight

3.21 The continuation of a ministry of oversight (episkope) at the Reformation exercised by bishops, by bishops in college and by bishops in council is what is referred to in the current ecumenical writing as "the personal, collegial and communal" ways of exercising the ministry of oversight. These forms of ministry help to hold Anglicans together in a community of discernment and reflection.

3.22 Every diocese in the Anglican Communion knows something of the exercise of the personal ministry of oversight of the bishop (or bishops); of collegiality in the coming together of bishops and clergy; and of the communal dimension of oversight which brings together the bishop with clergy and laity in the meeting of synods. These dimensions of the ministry of oversight are expressed in different ways in the different regions of the world and are affected by local circumstance and custom.

3.23 The bishop presides over the gatherings, collegial and communal in the diocese. Sometimes the bishop shares the presiding over meetings with a member of the laity. In most places at the level of a Province, the collegial and synodical gatherings are presided over by an archbishop or presiding bishop. Collegiality and primacy are thus part of the Anglican experience at diocesan, Provincial and Communion-wide levels. Within the Communion, Provincial primacy, influenced by the different cultural contexts, varies in perception and practice.

V. Structures of Interdependence

3.24 The life of belonging together with its characteristic ethos within the Anglican Communion is supported by a web of structures which hold together and guide a common life of belonging. These structures owe something to their continuity with the western catholic Church and also to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. They have undergone considerable development since the sixteenth century and continue to be subject to change and development today.

3.25 At the Reformation the Church of England maintained the threefold order of ministry in continuity with the early Church. Bishops in their dioceses continued to be the personal focus of the continuity and unity of the Church. There was no attempt to minimise the role of bishops as ministers of word and sacrament nor to stop a collegial relation between bishops and presbyters in the diocese or bishops together at the level of Province. Conciliar life continued to be part of the Church of England's experience. The role of Parliament and the Royal Supremacy ensured that the role and place of the laity were embedded in the structuring of the life of the Church of England. In time, this developed into synodical structures which bring together ordained and lay for discernment, decision making and authoritative teaching.

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3.26 The expansion of the Church of England as a result of British colonisation led to the formation of Provinces, each with its own episcopal and synodical structures for maintaining the life of the Church. In the post-colonial period of the twentieth century the various independent Anglican Churches are governed by synods which recognise bishops' authority in some form as crucial and distinct, but which include, not only presbyterial representation, but also lay representation. Each Province, too, has developed some form of primatial office in the role of archbishop or presiding bishop .

3.27 The expression of episcopacy and the form of synodical and collegial government are not identical in each place. The experience and exercise of authority in the local context has played a part in shaping the different Provincial structures and processes. In some places the increasing emphasis on democratic forms of representation in modern secular governments has also affected church government.

3.28 In the development of the Anglican Communion there is no legislative authority above the Provincial level. (How far this is a result of the Royal Supremacy in the Church of England is a matter for reflection. Other historical factors in other Provinces have also affected the question of autonomy and interdependence.) There has been an insistence upon the autonomy of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion. However, while autonomy entails the legal and juridical right of each Province to govern its way of life, in practice autonomy has never been the sole criterion for understanding the relation of Provinces to one another. There has generally been an implicit understanding of belonging together and interdependence. The life of the Communion is held together in the creative tension of Provincial autonomy and interdependence. There are some signs that the Provinces are coming to a greater realisation that they need each other's spiritual, intellectual and material resources in order to fulfill their task of mission. Each Province has something distinctive to offer the others, and needs them in turn to be able to witness to Christ effectively in its own context. Questions are asked about whether we can go on as a world Communion with morally authoritative, but not juridically binding, decision-making structures at the international level. A further question is the relationship between the autonomy of a Province and the theological importance of a diocese which is reckoned to be the basic unit of Anglicanism.

3.29 The interdependence of the Provinces has come to be maintained by certain ministries, structures and relationships which continue to develop. The first of these is the Archbishop of Canterbury.

3.30 While the request for first Lambeth Conference in 1867 came from the Communion and not from Canterbury, it assembled at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who also presided over it. The continuing role of Canterbury, as a focus of the unity of the Anglican Communion and the "first among equals" in the Anglican college of bishops, came to clear expression in this way. The primacy of Canterbury and the international collegiality and conciliarity of Anglicanism are inextricably interrelated.

3.31 The primacy of the See of Canterbury and its key role in the Communion clearly emerged in many of the resolutions of the first Lambeth Conference. However, at the Conference of 1897 the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in gathering the Communion was explicitly acknowledged and affirmed when he was urged to foster the maintenance and development of the Communion by calling the Conference of bishops every ten years.

3.32 Today Anglican identity and authenticity of belonging is generally determined by the outward and visible test of communion with the See of Canterbury. The 1930 Lambeth Conference explicitly defined Anglicanism in this way:

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"It is part of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Its centre of unity is the See of Canterbury. To be Anglican it is necessary to be in communion with that See".

Resolution 49 added further:

The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, with One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...in communion with the See of Canterbury... (Lambeth Conference 1930, Resolution 49).

3.33 Lambeth 1968 described the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in more detail:

Within the college of bishops it is evident that there must be a president. In the Anglican Communion this position is at present held by the occupant of the historic See of Canterbury, who enjoys a primacy of honour, not of jurisdiction. This primacy is found to involve, in a particular way, that care of all the churches which is shared by all the bishops.

3.34 The Lambeth Conference of 1978 in a further statement on the basis of Anglican unity said *inter alia*:

"Its [unity] is personally grounded in the loyal relationship of each of the churches to the Archbishop of Canterbury who is freely recognised as the focus of unity."

3.35 Being in communion with the See and Archbishop of Canterbury has been a visible sign of the membership of bishops and of their Churches in the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury's task has been described as involving "in a particular way, that care of all the churches which is shared by all the bishops", and also as a task "not to command but to gather" the Communion. Clearly, the emphasis is upon service and caring and not upon coercive power.

3.36 The Lambeth Conference of bishops first met in 1867. It arose from the missionary concern of the Provinces, particularly the bishops of Canada, but the first moves to establish a meeting of all bishops of the Anglican Communion did not go unopposed. What was said about the identity and role of the first Lambeth Conference in 1867 was cautious:

It has never been contemplated that we should assume the functions of a general synod of all the Churches in full communion with the Church of England, and take upon ourselves to enact canons that should be binding upon those represented. We merely propose to discuss matters of practical interest and pronounce what we deem expedient in resolutions which may serve as safe guides (Lambeth Conferences 1867-1930, SPCK (1948), page 9).

3.37 The consultative rather than legislative role of the Conference was reiterated clearly in 1920:

The Lambeth Conference does not claim to exercise any powers of control. It stands for the far more spiritual and more Christian principle of loyalty to the fellowship. The Churches represented in it are indeed independent, but independent with the Christian freedom which recognizes the restraints of truth and love. They are not free to ignore the fellowship...the Conference is a fellowship in the Spirit (Lambeth Conference 1920, SPCK (1920), Evangelical Letter, page 14).

3.38 A balance is held between denying any power of compliance or control while upholding the need for loyalty to the fellowship expressed in restraint imposed by virtue of belonging to the Communion. No one part should act without regard for the others.

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3.39 In 1958 the Lambeth Conference recognised the need for an executive officer who would serve both the Lambeth Consultative Body and the Advisory Council on Missionary Strategy. It was out of the tireless efforts of the Rt. Rev'd Stephen F. Bayne, Jr. that communication within the Communion was strengthened and a new vision of interdependence and mutual accountability in Anglicanism was shaped. From his work, and that of his successor, Archbishop Ralph Dean, came the vision of a Consultative Council.

3.40 The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) was established by a resolution of the 1968 Lambeth Conference. The Conference recognised that there was a need for more contact between the Churches of the Anglican Communion than that provided by the Lambeth Conference every ten years by bringing together bishops, presbyters and laity, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to work on common concerns. The Council met for the first time at Limuru, Kenya in 1971.

3.41 Resolution 69 of the 1968 Lambeth Conference set out areas of ministry belonging to the Anglican Consultative Council:

1. To share information about developments in one or more provinces with the other parts of the Communion and to serve as needed as an instrument of common action.
2. To advise on inter-Anglican, provincial, and diocesan relationships, including the division of provinces, the formation of new provinces and of regional councils and the problems of extraprovincial dioceses.
3. To develop as far as possible agreed Anglican policies in the world mission of the Church and to encourage national and regional Churches to engage together in developing and implementing such policies by sharing their resources of man power, money, and experience to the best advantage of all.
4. To keep before national and regional Churches the importance of the fullest possible Anglican collaboration with other Christian Churches.
5. To encourage and guide Anglican participation in the ecumenical movement and the ecumenical organisations; to co-operate with the World Council of Churches and the world confessional bodies on behalf of the Anglican Communion; and to make arrangements for the conduct of pan-Anglican conversations with the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches and other Churches.
6. To advise on matters arising out of national or regional Church union negotiations or conversations and on subsequent relations with united Churches.
7. To advise on problems of inter-Anglican communication and to help in the dissemination of Anglican and ecumenical information.
8. To keep in review the needs that may arise for further study and, where necessary, to promote inquiry and research.

3.42 The Anglican Consultative Council meets every three years and its Standing Committee annually. Its constitution and functions have been clearly set out and agreed to by the Provinces, and it has been incorporated as the legal entity for the Communion. In 1988 the members of the ACC were invited participants without vote at the Lambeth Conference. They have been invited to Lambeth 1998.

3.43 Its most vital purpose, however, like the Lambeth Conference, is to establish a communion of mutual attentiveness, interdependence and accountability to serve the unity

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and interdependence in mission of the Anglican Communion. The mutual attentiveness required when members from various parts of the Communion share the richness of their experiences also helps to form the mind of the Communion and is a reminder of the rich diversity of gifts which God has given us. The sharing of stories enhances and deepens the Communion's experience of interdependence at all levels.

3.44 Important to this process are representatives who are able not only to bring the concerns and stories of their Provinces with them but carry the proceedings of the council back to their communities, at the Provincial, national and diocesan levels. Only this constant interchange will provide the basis on which member Churches are able to develop and maintain constant relations and full communion with their sisters and brothers around the world. Each Provincial Church has a responsibility to assist their representatives to carry out this task.

3.45 The gathering of bishops, priests and laity at the meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council since Kenya 1971 provides a much needed opportunity for the opinions and experiences of the Communion to be shared.

3.46 The 1978 Lambeth Conference approved a proposal that the Archbishop of Canterbury convene a regular Meeting of the Primates. At that Conference Archbishop Coggan said:

"...I am coming to believe that the way forward in the coming years - and it may be a slow process will be along two lines: first, to have meetings of the Primates of the Communion reasonably often, for leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation. There have been such meetings, but on very informal and rare bases. I believe they should be held perhaps as frequently as once in two years. But if that meeting now on some fairly regular basis is to be fruitful, those primates would have to come to such meetings well informed with a knowledge of the mind and will of their brothers whom they represent. Then they would be channels through which the voice of the member Churches would be heard, and real interchange of mind and will and heart could take place. That's the first thing.

The second line, I think, on which we might make progress would be to see that the body of Primates, as they meet, should be in the very closest and most intimate contact with the ACC."

3.47 The minutes of the 1979 Meeting of the Primates comment that:

The role of a Primates' meeting could not be, and was not desired as a higher synod... Rather it was a clearing house for ideas and experience through free expression, the fruits of which the Primates might convey to their Churches.

3.48 Since then, meetings of the Primates have become occasions of debate and discussion of personal and Provincial matters in the context of eucharist, prayer and study, in which the primates have achieved, in spite of the constantly changing membership of the group, a deep sense of fraternity that has nourished the unity of the Communion. At a meeting of the Primates at Newcastle, Northern Ireland in 1991, the Primates considered that the primary importance of meeting is the building and maintenance of personal relationships:

- (a) as a sign of the unity and catholicity of the Church;
- (b) to give high profile to important issues;
- (c) for mutual support and counsel.

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3.49 The Primates also expressed the opinion that there appears to be no issue which is the exclusive preserve of the Primates alone; all issues, doctrinal, ecclesial and moral, are the concern of the whole baptised community.

3.50 What has yet to be given serious consideration is Resolution 18 Section 2(a) of Lambeth 1988:

This conference urges that encouragement be given to a developing collegial role for the Primates' Meeting under the Presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, so that the Primates' meeting is able to exercise an enhanced responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters."

3.51 The episcopate is the primary instrument of Anglican unity, but episcopate is exercised personally, collegially and communally. The emergence of the Lambeth Conference and more recently, the Primates' Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council, together with the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, have become effective means of keeping the Provinces in touch with each other and of binding the Anglican Communion together. Apart from the episcopate these instruments were not given from the beginning but have gradually developed and are still developing. The instruments, while having no legislative authority, provide the means of consultation and go some way to helping to form a Communion-wide mind on issues that affect the whole Communion. In these developments we see the conciliar nature of modern Anglicanism which is one of its least recognised yet most characteristic features. However, the Provinces remain autonomous. They are governed and regulated by synods which recognize the authority of bishops in some form as crucial and distinct, but which also include representation from the ordained clergy and the laity.

3.52 This complex and still evolving network of structures within Anglicanism has developed and serves to keep Anglicans in a life of belonging together, a life of relationship. These structures are both formal and informal and interrelate and affect one another in subtle ways. They involve personal, collegial and communal relationships at the parochial, diocesan, regional and international levels. Each contributes towards a web of interdependence and serves to guard against isolation.

3.53 This complex network of structures gives expression to the fundamental bond of Anglican life which is that unity given in the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That life of divine communion is made visible in a characteristic way within the ordered life of the Anglican Communion. The combination of allegiance to Scripture, tradition and reason, the life lived within the gifts of Scripture, creeds, sacraments and ordained ministry, the essential interrelatedness of lay and ordained and the structured, conciliar life contribute each in their particular way to a life of interdependence and belonging. The life of the Communion is dynamic as the fellowship seeks to respond to new insights, challenges and threats.

3.54 At the end of the decade one question for Anglicans is whether their bonds of interdependence are strong enough to hold them together embracing tension and conflict while answers are sought to seemingly intractable problems. In particular the call for more effective structures of communion at a world level will need to be faced at Lambeth 1998 for the strengthening of the Anglican Communion and its unity into the next millennium. A further question concerns the wider ecumenical community. Is there a need for a universal primacy exercised collegially and respecting the role of the laity in decision-making within the Church? This question was referred to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (APCIC) by Lambeth 1988 and is also raised by the Bishop of Rome's invitation in *Ut Unum Sint*.

CHAPTER 4

LEVELS OF COMMUNION - SUBSIDIARITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

Introduction 4.1-4.4

I. The Levels of the Church's Life 4.5-4.7

II. The Principle of Subsidiarity 4.8-4.21

III. The Particular Church and the Church Catholic 4.22-4.27

4.1 The Churches of the Anglican Communion belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. That is to say, they understand themselves as an integral part of the mystery of God's reconciling work and an embodiment of the presence of God in the world. The task and aims of the Church are given by divine commission. The Church is commanded to go to all nations and make them disciples of the Lord (Mt.28: 19f). His followers are sent by Christ into the world, as he was sent by the Father into the world (Jn. 17). God has entrusted the Church's ministers with the task of being ambassadors, and makes an appeal for reconciliation through them (2 Cor. 5:18ff). In the most fundamental way, therefore, the Church is for mission, by commission.

4.2 As the Church reflected on the nature of this mission it formulated four classic "marks" or "attributes" which ought to characterise its life at all times, and in all places. These it confesses in the words of the Nicene Creed. It is to be one, as the Body of Christ, to proclaim and to embody the reconciliation of all things in Christ. It is to be holy, that is, to have about it the marks of the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit; it is to be catholic, that is, to be, as Christ was, for all people, at all times, in all places; and it is to be apostolic, to witness courageously and unceasingly to the authentic and liberating gospel of Christ, as taught by the apostles.

4.2 Together with these marks goes the presupposition that the Church must be a receptive and learning community. It can manifest none of these attributes unless Christians are encouraged corporately "to go to school" with Christ, to be nourished by teaching and the sacraments, and to grow up into his likeness (Eph. 4:11-16). So the Church is a school in which the gift of teaching is acknowledged, but in which all the teachers are themselves learners, enjoying mutuality of encouragement and correction. This enables the Church to be a teaching community not simply for its own sake, but for the sake of its mission to the world.

4.4 Although the aims of the Church have been given to it, nonetheless the Church has continually to formulate and reformulate its specific objectives with a view to their being consistent with these fundamental aims, and also appropriate and relevant to the given conditions of a particular place and time. The gospel has to be proclaimed afresh in each generation. New challenges and opportunities constantly arise to be addressed; new threats have to be resisted.

I. The Levels of the Church's Life

4.5 This raises the question of where and at what levels decisions are to be made. Characteristically, questions arise in the Communion in a particular place at a particular time. To respond appropriately and effectively the Church needs to be clear that there is a diversity of levels on which the God-given mission of the Church is carried out. The word "level" is used in this context neutrally; the more local is not "lower" in a pejorative sense, nor is the more international "higher" and for that reason more important. Each level has its own integrity and its own demands. Some matters concern a single parish; some relate to a diocese; some would be appropriately addressed by a national or Provincial assembly; a very few would be better approached at a regional or international level; and some are matters for the Communion as a whole as a part of the universal Church.

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4.6 There is no simple way of separating levels, or of assigning the consideration of particular matters to particular levels without controversy. An ethnic matter, for example, may be divisive at parish level, and be relevant at every intermediate stage to the international level. No one guideline can be invoked to determine where responsibility for a decision lies.

4.7 The character of the Christian faith from its early days has given it a profound investment in the quality of personal, face-to-face relationships. Christians are called to embody in daily life God's reconciliation of all things in Christ, living newly in the light of God's justice and forgiveness. It is through the personal witness of Christians to the reality of that new life that the attractiveness of the gospel becomes apparent. And the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are various to different people, are given precisely so that, used together in humility and love and with attentiveness to one another's interests, they may contribute to the building up of the whole body.

II. The Principle of Subsidiarity

4.8 The principle of "subsidiarity" has been formulated to express this investment in the local and face-to-face. Properly used, subsidiarity means that "a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level" (Oxford English Dictionary).

4.9 Subsidiarity may properly be applied to the life of the Church in order to resist the temptation of centralism. But in the life of the Church the local level was never seen as simply autonomous. Because the work of Christ was itself a reconciliation of humanity, there is evidence from the first days of the churches of concern for the unity of the communities, both in their internal relationships and in their inter-relationships. St. Paul, for example, writes of his anxiety for the continuity of preaching and teaching the authentic apostolic gospel and for the effectiveness of the united witness of the Church to the gospel of reconciliation. Care was taken, as the Church grew, to preserve the continuity of its witness across time and its coherence and effectiveness in different places.

4.10 It is important to clarify the principles which should govern the relationship of the different levels of the life of the Church to one another. Clarity on this matter makes for creative, sustainable and transparent partnerships in the Body of Christ. Every "higher" authority ought to encourage the free use of God's gifts at "lower" levels. There must be clarity on what has to be observed and carried out at that level, and also on the limits of its competence. As much space as possible should be given to personal initiative and responsibility. For example, in the relationship between a bishop and a parish priest and congregation, there is initially a giving of responsibility to the latter for the task of worship, witness and service within its geographical boundaries or area of immediate influence. The priest and parish will be given a set of tasks which they are obliged to fulfil. These will be few in number and general in character. The limits of their authority and responsibility will also be explained to priest and parish. These will essentially reflect agreements made previously by church synods, and expressed in canons and other ways. They will be honoured by all unless and until they are changed by the due processes of agreement. Subject to such boundaries the priest and parish will be encouraged to use all their gifts, energy and commitment to enable the gospel to go forward in that area. The bishop and parish priest will maintain the highest level of communication possible so that encouragement, advice, and, where necessary, correction can be given, together with new task as occasion arises.

4.11 Anglicans may properly claim that the observation of different levels and the granting of considerable freedom to the lowest possible level has been a feature of their polity. In Anglicanism today canonically binding decisions can only be made at the level of a Province or in some Provinces at the level of a diocese.

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4.12 Decision-making by Provinces on appropriate matters has proved a source of strength to the Anglican Communion. Thereby, Provinces take responsibility in clear and bold ways for what they do.

4.13 However, when decisions are taken by Provinces on matters which touch the life of the whole Communion without consultation, they may give rise to tension as other Provinces or other Christian traditions reject what has been decided elsewhere. The Eames Commission has stressed the need for consultation prior to action, and for charity and patience in this situation, insisting that discernment and "reception is a continuing process in the life of the Church, which cannot be hurried". (Eames III, Reception 43-4)

4.14 The proclamation of the gospel to all humanity must embody its universal coherence. Care needs to be taken to prevent a Province from becoming bound by its culture. The corrosive effects of particular environments are often not perceptible to those who are immersed in them. The principle articulated here of a relationship between Provinces and the worldwide Communion applies at other levels also. At each interface the aim is to free the people of God to use their God-given gifts responsibly and cooperatively, in every way compatible with the gospel and its effective proclamation in word and deed.

4.15 The move to ordain women to the priesthood and the episcopate provides a recent example of the process by which Anglicans have struggled together to form a mind on a matter which affects the ministry and therefore the unity of the Communion. It is a story which throws into sharp relief some of the emerging questions concerning both the structures of Anglican interdependence and the processes by which we come to take decisions together.

4.16 The story illustrates, for particular historical reasons, how binding decisions can only be made at the level of a Province or in some places at the level of a diocese. However, it also reveals a struggle to honour the interdependence of Anglicans through reference to the international organs of consultation. When, in the 1960s, the matter of the ordination of women became urgent for the mission of the Church in Hong Kong, Hong Kong first brought the matter to the Lambeth Conference. The Conference asked that every regional church should study the matter. In this way consultation was initiated. But in spite of an attempt to listen to one another, in fact no written responses had been received by the time the Provincial representatives met for the first meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council. The Council adopted the following resolution:

In reply to the request of the Council of the Church of South-East Asia, this Council advises the Bishop of Hong Kong, acting with the approval of his Synod, and any bishop of the Anglican Communion acting with the approval of his Province, that, if he decides to ordain women to the priesthood, his action will be acceptable to this Council; and that this Council will use its good offices to encourage all Provinces of the Anglican Communion to continue in communion with these dioceses. (Resolution 28(b) The Time is Now Anglican Consultative Council, First Meeting, Limuru, Kenya, 23 February - 5 March, 1971. London: SPCK (1971), page 39).

4.17 In a similar way in 1985, after the General Convention of ECUSA had expressed its intention not to withhold consent to the election of a bishop on the grounds of gender, it also sought the advice of the newly created Primates Meeting. Through its working party the Primates sought the advice of Provinces. It was that Communion-wide reflection from 17 provinces that formed the background to resolution 1 of Lambeth 1988:

That each province should respect the decision and attitudes of other provinces ...without such respect necessarily indicating acceptance of the principles involved, maintaining the highest degree of communion with the provinces that differ.

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4.18 In much the same way as a juridical decision made at Provincial level has to be received, so the expressed "mind of the Communion" given in resolutions of Lambeth Conferences, still has to undergo a process of "open reception", in the life of the Anglican Communion and the whole Church. Much emphasis was placed by the Eames Commission on the need for an open process of reception following the Lambeth 1988 Resolution (see The Eames Commission, pp. 54-5).

4.19 There has been an increasing awareness that certain issues arise that affect the unity of the universal Church. Issues of faith, the sacraments, the ordering of the ministry, fundamental changes in relationships with another World Communion and ethical issues have implications for the life of communion. These need a Communion-wide mind if a life of interdependence is to be preserved.

4.20 Matters which touch the unity of the whole Communion can rarely be decided without argument and therefore must always be brought to the life of prayer. The Church needs to be tolerant and open enough to conduct its arguments with charity and attentiveness to the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Care needs to be taken to ensure that complex matters are fairly and appropriately considered. Different cultures have differing traditions in the matter of consultation and decision-making.

4.21 Anglican theologians, such as Richard Hooker, have spoken of the need for consent, without which the mere exercise of authority can amount to tyranny. But there is no one way of establishing what constitutes consent. Where there is disparity and diversity of traditions there is need for great care with communication. As long ago as 1888 the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral asserted the appropriateness of different styles of episcopal authority, appropriate to different cultures: "The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church" (Report on Home Reunion, Article 4, pages 159f).

III. The Particular Church and the Church Catholic

4.22 The life and mission of the Church is at its most authentic and vibrant in a particular context, that is a cohesive geographical region or an area covered by a people, tribe or group with its own traditions and customs. "Local" can mean different things in different places. A single parish can be a locality, and that place can be as small as a village, or as big as a city. A cohesive geographical region can be a local entity, or an area covered by a people, tribe or group with its own traditions and customs. Styles and ways of living, received wisdom, social customs or rituals, clan structures and inter-relationships can all contribute to a sense of particularity. The Church is effective when it is embedded a local place, challenging wrongs, healing relationships, standing with the vulnerable and marginalized, and opening up new possibilities for mutual service, respect and love. In such a context what the word "church" stands for is a rich, many-sided reality embodying God's saving and reconciling presence within a particular context. It is a richly referential term, culturally resonant, and locked into an established symbolic system or network of meanings.

4.23 It is important that the Church in its particular embodiment is not the "translation" of an abstract ideal into a merely temporary or transitory vehicle. The life of the Church, particularly developed, would show respect for the history of the Church of past centuries, including the early centuries and the biblical communities, noting both their failings and faithfulness. It would also be ready to be helped and challenged by the contemporary Church in other places, and use the experience of fellow Christians as a way of discerning truth within the ambiguities of local tradition and culture.

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4.24 Dependent upon such embodied ecclesiologies is the expression of a catholic doctrine of the Church, which attempts to express what is, or should be, true of the Church in all places. Our trinitarian theology (chapter 2) provides the basis of such an ecclesiology. It is no accident that it is rooted not just in the doctrines and experiences of the churches of the Anglican Communion, but in the convictions of the vast preponderance of Christians who have ever lived and of the public witness of their churches. In no sense is this ecclesiology untried or flimsy. Like certain forms of highly sophisticated modern metals, it is thin and exceptionally tough, proved in vast numbers of stresses. It is a vital resource, and to draw upon it is to show a wholly appropriate respect for the Church catholic. We have also spoken of the "marks" or "attributes" of the Church (para 4.2) as providing its general aims. These are true, but likewise unspecific. Nor do they prevent disputes from breaking out as to their precise interpretation. What, for example, does it mean to be a "holy" Church in the context of a hedonistic culture? St. Paul himself had to work hard to interpret the Christian's responsibility in relation to the ramifications of idolatry in pagan society.

4.25 At all times the theological reflection and praxis of the local church must be consistent with the truth of the gospel which belongs to the universal Church. The universal doctrine of the Church is important especially when particular practices or theories are locally developed which lead to disputes. In some cases it may be possible and necessary for the universal Church to say with firmness that a particular local practice or theory is incompatible with Christian faith. This was said, for example, to those churches in South Africa which practiced and justified racial discrimination at the eucharist. Similarly if a church were to develop a different baptismal formula than that delivered in Scripture and used throughout the world, a comparable situation would arise. The Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral is a list of norms and practices which must characterise the Church at all times everywhere. However, it is not a complete ecclesiology; nor is it free from interpretative ambiguity.

4.26 Elizabethan Anglican ecclesiology, for example as developed by Richard Hooker (c.1544-1600) or Richard Field (1561 - 1616), is a locally embodied ecclesiology for a particular time and place. It is not a "translation" of a universal ecclesiology, which can then be (as it were) "retranslated" into different times and places. It is, as ecclesiologies should be, a whole-hearted attempt to embody the saving presence of God in a given culture. It is a rendering of biblical ecclesiology, which is itself particular and local. Elizabethan Anglicans, however, acknowledged the authority of the Nicene creed and sought to show how the Church of England belonged to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The contemporary churches of the Anglican Communion also need locally embodied ecclesiologies, not pale imitations of Elizabethan Anglicanism, but full, rich, and relevant embodiments of God's saving presence within a locality. Nor will they be mere "translations" of a universal ecclesiology, but a confident and whole-hearted seeking of God's way for the Church in transforming relationships with particular traditions, structures and institutions.

4.27 But no local embodiment of the Church is simply autonomous and it is plain from the history of the Church that local churches can make mistakes. A care for reconciliation and unity is implicit in the catholicity of Jesus' unique, atoning work. The apostolicity of a particular church is measured by its consonance with the living elements of apostolic succession and unity: baptism and eucharist, the Nicene and Apostles' creeds, the ordered ministry and the canon of Scripture. These living elements of apostolic succession serve the authentic succession of the gospel and serve to keep the various levels of the Church in a communion of truth and life.

CHAPTER 5

KOINONIA: PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING STRUCTURES

Introduction 5.1-5.2

I. The Communion of the Trinity 5.3-5.4

II. Episcopate, Personal, Collegial and Communal 5.5-5.16

III. Subsidiarity, Accountability and Interdependence 5.17-5.20

IV. Discernment and Reception 5.21-5.26

V. Theological Coherence 5.27-5.28

5.1 The purpose of all structures and processes of the Church is to serve the koinonia, the trinitarian life of God in the Church, and to help all the baptised embrace and live out Christ's mission and ministry in the world. Through baptism each person is called to live the new life in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and is anointed with grace to do so in communion with all members of the same Body of Christ.

5.2 As we have seen in the Anglican Communion today the structures of unity and communion at a world level are still developing. This development needs now to be inspired by a renewed understanding of the Church as koinonia; a recognition of God's gift to the whole people of God of a ministry of episcopate, exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways within and by the whole company of the baptised; by principles of subsidiarity, accountability and interdependence; and by an understanding of the Spirit led processes of discernment and reception.

I. The Communion of the Trinity

5.3 In chapter two we explored an understanding of the Church as communion, participating in and called to manifest in its own life, the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Those who are baptised, through the power of the Holy Spirit, die with Christ and rise to new life in him and are joined with all the baptised in the communion of God's own life and love. Through baptism and through participation at the Table of the Lord the baptised are called to a life of unity and interdependence and using all their diverse charisma entrusted with carrying out God's mission in the world. The structures of the Church, at every level, are to serve this vocation of the Church. In the way they are ordered as well as in the way they inter-relate and function they are to reflect and embody the fundamental reality of the Church's life - its communion in the life and love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

5.4 This means that the personal and relational life of the Church is always prior to the structural. But without enabling structures the Church's life is weakened and the relational and personal life unsupported. Right structures and right ordering provide channels by which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the mind of Christ is discerned, the right conduct of the Church encouraged and the gift of the many are drawn upon in the service and mission of the Church.

II. Episcopate, Personal, Collegial and Communal

5.5 A ministry of oversight (episcopate) of interdependence, accountability and discernment is essential at all levels of the Church's mission and ministry, and for the sake of the Church's wellbeing, must be exercised at every level in a way that is personal, collegial and communal. A bishop's authority is never isolated from the community; both the community of the Church and the community and unity of all humankind.

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i. Personal

5.6 The ministry of oversight should be personal because the presence of Christ among his people can most effectively be pointed to by the person ordained to proclaim the gospel and to call the community to serve the Lord in a unity of faith and witness. Bishops have a special responsibility for maintaining and focusing the internal unity and communion of the local Church. In the diocese where they have oversight they represent, focus and have a care for the unity of the Church. Bishops also relate the local church to the wider church and the wider Church back to the local church.

5.7 Bishops are called by God, in and through the community of the faithful, to personify the tradition of the gospel and the mission of the Church. As the one with special responsibility to ensure that the proclamation of the word and the celebration of the sacraments is faithful to the gospel and the tradition of the Church, the bishop has specific responsibilities for the calling of all humanity into the unity of the Church. This specific responsibility is exercised in partnership with other bishops, clergy and laity, with members of other ecclesial bodies and leaders of the local community. Thus episcopal ministry is no authoritarian ministry above and separate from the community, but is a ministry, based in the grace of God, always exercised in relation to the community and always subject to the word of God.

5.8 By virtue of ordination, bishops are called and empowered to represent Christ to the community of the faithful and to the wider local community. This is the personal ministry of episcopate. While this is the unique responsibility of the diocesan bishop, it is at the same time always shared with others. At a regional level Primates exercise a personal ministry of oversight, and at the level of the whole Communion the Archbishop of Canterbury exercises a personal ministry of episcopate.

ii. Collegial

5.9 Bishops share in a Collegial relation with those whom they commission to serve with them in the diocese, in the priestly ministry of word and sacrament and in the pastoral work of the Church. Bishops also share collegially with other bishops of the same Province representing the concerns of the local church and community to the wider Church, and bringing back the concerns and decisions of the wider Church to their local community. The Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meeting are wider expressions of collegiality.

iii. Communal

5.10 Bishops exercise their office communally. The community's effective participation is necessary in the discovery of God's will, under the guidance of the Spirit. In their communal relationships, bishops meet with representatives of those who hold office, or those who exercise responsibility within the community of the local churches. This accords with the principle of subsidiarity, keeping the bishop in touch with the concerns and decisions which belong properly to the more parochial levels of diocesan life. As representative persons, bishops have a moral duty to reflect the concerns of the whole community, especially those whom society pushes to the margins.

5.11 The practical expression of the personal, Collegial and communal ministry of the bishop is to be seen in synodical government. The churches of the Anglican Communion may be said to be episcopally led and synodically governed. The task of synods is properly consultation, deliberation and legislation. Episcopal leadership is, however, always in accountable relation to the whole Church, both local and universal .

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5.12 There is a proper place for the communal expression of the Church's life and ministry at levels other than the diocesan. Every Province has its communal synodical gathering. At the world level, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) currently embodies the communal dimension of the church life, reminding the Communion of the shared episcopal, presbyterial, diaconal and lay vocation in the discovery of the mind of Jesus Christ. At the world level, however, the meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) are consultative, not legislative in character.

5.13 Primacy and collegiality are complementary elements within the exercise of episcopate. One cannot be exercised without reference to the other in critical and creative balance. Further, both in turn must be open to the Christian community in a way that is both transparent and accountable, and in the decision-making of the Church, upholds a reception process in which critique, affirmation and rejection are possible.

5.14 The role of primacy is to foster the communion by helping the bishops in their task of apostolic leadership both in their local church and in the Church universal. A Primate's particular role in episcopate is to help churches to listen to one another, to grow in love and unity, and to strive together towards the fullness of Christian life and witness. A Primate respects and promotes Christian freedom and spontaneity; does not seek uniformity where diversity is legitimate, or centralize administration to the detriment of local churches.

5.15 A Primate exercises ministry not in isolation but in collegial association with other bishops. If there is a need to intervene in the affairs of a diocese within the Province, the Primate will consult with other bishops, and if possible act through the normal structures of consultation and decision-making. The Primate will strive never to bypass or usurp the proper responsibility of the local church. ARCIC I spoke of the ministry of primacy in this way:

Primacy fulfils its purpose by helping the churches to listen to one another, to grow in love and unity, and to strive together towards the fullness of Christian life and witness; it respects and promotes Christian freedom and spontaneity; it does not seek uniformity where diversity is legitimate, or centralise administration to the detriment of local churches. (The Final Report, Authority I, para 21).

5.16 The primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the meeting of Primates reflects at the Anglican Communion level the primacy and collegiality exercised at Provincial level. There is a difference, however, in that distance and infrequency of meeting add difficulty to the process of consultation and decision. Discernment, decision and action at this level will normally depend only upon the consensus of the Primates' meeting or a part of it and demands great sensitivity.

III. Subsidiarity, Accountability and Interdependence

5.17 The Holy Catholic Church is fully present in each of its local embodiments. Decisions about the life and mission of the Church should be made in that place and need only be referred to wider councils if the matter threatens the unity and the faithfulness of teaching or practice of the Church catholic, or where the local church encounters genuinely new circumstances and wishes advice about how to respond.

5.18 The various levels of the Church are accountable to each other. This will be expressed by openness to dialogue, by attentiveness to the particularity of people, times and places, by acceptance of interdependence on both the personal and corporate levels and by honouring plurality and diversity as gifts of God.

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5.19 Attentiveness, in the Christian community, is a specific quality of interacting among members of Christ's body. Christian attentiveness means deciding to place the understanding of others ahead of being understood. It means listening and responding to the needs and the hopes of others, especially when these differ from one's own needs, agendas and hopes. Further, Christian attentiveness means keeping these needs and agendas in mind, when making one's own decisions and developing one's own practices. Such attentiveness is consonant, we said, with the quality of God's love known in Christ and shared in the Holy Spirit. This divine love is imaged beautifully in John's Gospel, where the Father and Son glorify and affirm the identity of one another. It is mirrored further in our Lord's acute awareness of and compassionate responsiveness to the needs of others.

5.20 The world-wide Anglican assemblies are consultative and not legislative in character. There is a question to be asked whether this is satisfactory if the Anglican Communion is to be held together in hard times as well as in good ones. Indeed there is a question as to whether effective communion, at all levels, does not require appropriate instruments, with due safeguards, not only for legislation, but also for oversight. Is not universal authority a necessary corollary of universal communion? This is a matter currently under discussion with our ecumenical partners. It relates not only to our understanding of the exercise of authority in the Anglican Communion, but also to the kind of unity and communion we look for in a visibly united Church.

IV. Discernment and Reception

5.21 The faith of the Church is always in need of fresh interpretation, so that the living Christ can be realised in the lives of contemporary men and women. Discerning the mind of Christ for the Church is the task of the whole people of God, with those ordained for a ministry of oversight guiding and leading the community. Authority is relational. Some matters are properly determined at a local or regional level, others which touch the unity in faith need to be determined in the communion of all the churches.

5.22 When a matter is raised by a local church processes of discernment, decision making and reception, all have their part to play. It is the responsibility of the local church to consider the implication of taking decisions for the wider Communion. Anglicans agree that the Great Ecumenical Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries were the highest conciliar authority. However, no ecumenical council possesses final authority simply as an institution. Even with these early councils there was no guarantee that the guidance of a council was free from error of judgement or distortion of the truth. Its words were accepted as true and binding, not because a particular council spoke, nor because it had been convened by a particular authority, but because its decisions came to be received and recognised by the faithful in the local churches as expressing the truth of the gospel. This is not to say that certain councils of the Church in the past and in the Anglican Communion today should not command the respect of the faithful and be taken with all due seriousness in the response and discernment process.

5.23 Anglicans hold that the universal Church will not ultimately fail. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, truth is gradually discerned. However the discernment of truth is never an uncomplicated and straightforward matter. There are always setbacks along the way.

5.24 Within the Anglican Communion matters which touch the communion of all the churches need to be discerned and tested within the life of the interdependence of the Provinces, through the meeting of bishops in the Lambeth Conference and through the consultative process of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting. Beyond that lies the process of open reception within the life of the local churches. The maintenance of communion both within and between churches, in the process of testing the truth of a

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decision needs great sensitivity, and adequate space needs to be found for clearly expressed dissent in testing and refining truth. In the process of discernment and reception relationships need to be maintained, for only in fellowship is there opportunity for correcting one-sidedness or ignorance. Though some of the means by which communion is expressed may be strained, the need for courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect, prayer for one another and a continuing desire to know and be with one another, remain binding upon us as Christians. The reception process involves the preparation of appropriate and informative study materials and the preparation of occasions for conversations, bringing together those on both sides of the particular issue.

5.25 In a divided Christendom there is no possibility of making decisions today in a General Council. Nevertheless, at this stage of the ecumenical movement any decisions which touch the faith or order of the universal Church need to be offered for testing within the wider ecumenical fellowship.

5.26 In the matter of discussing the mind of Christ for the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment, conciliar debate and decision making followed by a process of reception each have a part to play. It is not a matter of weakness that the Church is unable to make instant decisions in relation to the complex matters of faith, order and morals which come before it, but the way it lives in the process of discernment, decision making and reception may give profound witness and provide a model for other communities.

V. Theological Coherence

5.27 The mission of the Church is to embody and proclaim Christ's gospel of love and reconciliation, healing and freedom. This must be transparent not only in the words it speaks and in its advocacy of justice and peace, but also in its visible structures and processes. The theology implicit in the Church's structures and processes must be one with the explicit theology of its words.

5.28 It is with the principles we have explored in this chapter that we turn now to reconsider the instruments of Anglican belonging at a world level and raise questions about how they might develop in the light of these principles.

CHAPTER 6

THE WORLDWIDE INSTRUMENTS OF COMMUNION: STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Introduction 6.1

I. The Archbishop of Canterbury 6.2-6.6

II. The Lambeth Conference 6.7-6.22

III. The Anglican Consultative Council 6.23-6.27

IV. The Primates' Meeting 6.28-6.33

V. The Inter-relation of the Instruments of Communion 6.34-6.35

VI. Final Reflections 6.36-6.37

6.1 In this chapter we raise a number of questions about the future development of the worldwide instruments of communion, the way they function and their inter-relation, one with the other. The Commission was not asked to give specific proposals for future developments. It simply seeks to ask questions which the bishops at Lambeth will need to address if they are to give direction for the future interdependence and coherence of the Anglican Communion.

I. The Archbishop of Canterbury

6.2 In our historical section we noted that to be in communion with the See of Canterbury is an important ingredient of Anglican interdependence, yet each of the Provinces is autonomous. The Archbishop of Canterbury is neither a supreme legislator nor a personification of central administrative power, but as a pastor in the service of unity, offers a ministry of service, care and support to the Communion. The interdependence of the Anglican Communion becomes most clearly visible when the Archbishop of Canterbury exercises his primatial office as an enabler of mission, pastoral care and healing in those situations of need to which he is called. This pastoral service of unity is exercised by invitation. For example, at the request of Provincial leaders, the Archbishop has exercised a pastoral role and mediation in the Sudan and Rwanda.

6.3 The Archbishop of Canterbury exercises his ministry in relationship with his fellow Primates. In considering how to respond to a request for assistance from a Province, he wisely consults all the appropriate resources in the region, the Province and the local diocese. Here, as elsewhere in the exercise of primacy, subsidiarity is important. So too is the exercise of an episcopate in which personal, collegial and communal elements are held together.

6.4 Together with a ministry of presence and teaching, there is also a certain administrative primacy. Historically this has found its unique expression when the Archbishop of Canterbury calls and presides at the Lambeth Conference, where the relationship of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Communion, and the bishops to each other, is most clearly seen. It is also visible in his chairmanship of the regular meetings of the Primates, and also exercised within the life of the Anglican Consultative Council where the Archbishop of Canterbury acts as its president and as an active participant in its meetings.

6.5 It is nevertheless most often the personal pastoral element in the exercise of this office which has become the most visible evidence of the Archbishop of Canterbury as an instrument of unity. Given the magnitude of this ministry, there must be concern that pastoral and spiritual care, beyond the prayers of the Communion, be made available to the Archbishop.

6.6 The special position of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Communion raises questions that need to be addressed. Are there mechanisms by which tasks may be shared within the fellowship of the Primates, without weakening the symbol of unity provided by one person?

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Is the Archbishop of Canterbury adequately resourced as Primate of the Communion? Is there sufficient coherence and consultation between the Anglican Communion Secretariat and the staff of Lambeth Palace? Does the role of the Archbishop mean that the Church of England must be more cautious in its decisions than other Provinces? Does an Archbishop of Canterbury necessarily have to be a member of the Church of England? Does the Primate of the Anglican Communion need to be the occupant of the see of Canterbury?

II. The Lambeth Conference

6.7 The Lambeth Conference plays an important role in strengthening the unity of the Anglican Communion by expressing the collegiality of bishops in a clear and concrete way at the international level and in symbolising the relatedness in bonds of spiritual communion of each of the dioceses from which the bishops come.

6.8 Though the Conference is not legislative it offers the opportunity to bishops who come from churches in different cultures and social and political contexts, and with different agendas and problems, to live together, to worship together, to join in Bible study together and to listen to each other. Through these means each bishop may share the difficulties and joys of every other church. This indicates that each church in the Anglican Communion is a partner in mission and a part of the body of Christ. In this way the Conference embodies the Pauline concept of the Church as a body. As Paul writes "when one part of the body suffers the rest of the body suffers". Each part of the body is different, but every part is necessary to the body.

6.9 The Conference also signifies the fundamental importance of face to face communication for the healthy life of the Communion. The personal encounters that it facilitates and the relationships that grow from them signify one aspect of the servanthood of bishops who bring the reality of each diocese to the whole Communion as a whole back to their own diocese.

6.10 The Lambeth Conference thus helps to define the bishop's role as 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.

i. Attentiveness at the Lambeth Conference

6.11 In the context of the Lambeth Conference, Christian attentiveness entails, in the first place, that individual bishops and groups of bishops will heed the voice of other bishops when these express the needs and hopes of the Church in their place. Such respecting of the voice of others, especially when such respect requires taking into account needs and agendas that are not one's own, can mean that bishops from one part of the world make their own an agenda they did not bring originally to Lambeth. This can result in a bishop or group of bishops leaving the Lambeth Conference committed to a quite new programme.

6.12 A special concern of Lambeth 1998 will need to be how the college is attentive to, and integrates the insights of, women bishops attending the Conference for the first time.

6.13 Christian attentiveness at Lambeth should mean giving special heed to those bishops whose first language is not English, and to those bishops who do not come from politically, culturally and economically powerful Provinces in the Communion. Attentiveness becomes distinctively Christian when the bishops assembled give ear to, and make space for, the voices of those Christians who are seldom, if ever, heard.

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6.14 One example of such Christian attentiveness in the past is western bishops' heeding of, and being responsive to, the deep concern of African bishops regarding polygamy. A second example, from the Lambeth Conference, 1988, is western bishops acknowledging the legitimacy of a call from Asian and African bishops for a renewed commitment to evangelism. All the bishops left Lambeth 1988 committed to a Decade of Evangelism which they had not anticipated before the Lambeth Conference process began.

6.15 Increasing the opportunities for, and occasions of, Christian attentiveness should be promoted and protected at the Lambeth Conference. This will allow the bishops gathered at Lambeth to share in, to be shaped by and to show forth the attentiveness of God the Father's love as we know it in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

ii. Interdependence at the Lambeth Conference

6.16 The principle of communal interdependence, if brought to bear on the Lambeth Conference, might be thought to demand its reform so as to introduce priests and deacons and lay people into its structure. This was in fact suggested in 1871 before the second Lambeth Conference, when the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, USA suggested that the Lambeth Conference should be transformed into a "Patriarchal Conference" of world bishops, representative clergy and laity, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This would tend, however, to confuse Lambeth with the synodical structures of the local and national churches and move it in the direction of a "world synod". The calling of a World Anglican Congress from time to time may be a more appropriate opportunity for presbyters, deacons and lay people to meet together with bishops at an international forum. We explore this proposal in Appendix II.

6.17 An alternative approach would be to suggest that the gathering of bishops should continue to be seen collegially, but in the context of the life of the Church as a whole. Insofar as bishops are representative persons, they should understand Lambeth as an opportunity to bring the issues and concerns of their own dioceses to the consideration of brother and sister bishops. Few issues are entirely peculiar to a particular diocese, and the sharing of experiences and approaches to the resolution of difficulties makes for the easing of the burden of decision making.

6.18 At the last Lambeth Conference the Archbishop of Canterbury invited participating bishops "to bring their dioceses with them". At the same Lambeth Conference bishops voted on resolutions in the light of a preceding consultative process that had already occurred in their home dioceses and Provinces and at ACC-7. One obvious example was the resolution on the Final Report of ARCIC I which expressed a "Communion-wide mind" on the consonance of ARCIC with the faith of Anglicans. This resolution did not just express the mind of the bishops acting entirely alone, but as spokespersons who reflected the mind of their Provinces and were together expressing the mind of the Communion.

6.19 The bishops acting collegially can speak prophetically to the Church and to the world. On some issues such as, for example, ordination, the Church itself should expect the advice of those to whom the responsibility to ordain has been given. When the bishops speak to the Church, however, this should not be in an autocratic way, but in a manner that makes a positive contribution to, and stimulates, a continuing conversation in the wider life of the Church. True leadership demands consultation and partnership.

iii. Accountability at the Lambeth Conference

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6.20 Bishops are accountable for their words and actions at Lambeth, before God and the whole Church. The bishops at Lambeth are to represent those who have no voice: those who can rely on no one else to tell their story and plead their case; those whose concerns society and/or the Church have chosen, sometimes deliberately, sometimes forgetfully, to address. It is when the bishops consider themselves to be accountable to those who have the least that they discover the way of God's Kingdom.

6.21 The diocese is to be brought with the bishop to Lambeth, and Lambeth through the bishop back to the diocese. It is an important way of involving the entire membership of the people of God in the concerns and thinking of the world-wide communion. Post-Lambeth educational programs may dictate that, in addition to the usual publication of a report of its proceedings, educational resources, audiotapes and videos should be made available so as to assist the bishops in the sharing of the Lambeth experience.

6.22 There are again questions worth asking. Is a Conference every ten years too frequent to allow for adequate preparation, consultation and reception? What is the nature of the authority of the Conference? How binding are the resolutions of the Conference? How should issues be selected and prepared; what concerns should be addressed? What form of report or pastoral letter would best strengthen the communion of the Church? If the Lambeth Conference is an effective instrument of unity of the Anglican Communion, what is its special vocation in relation to the movement for the visible unity of the Church? What part should ecumenical participants play? How might the Lambeth Conference encourage the development of shared oversight with other Christian traditions? How does the authority of the Lambeth Conference relate to the authority of other churches, in particular to those churches which claim to be the Church?

III. The Anglican Consultative Council

6.23 Unique among the international Anglican instruments of unity, the ACC includes laity among its members. The inclusion of the laity in decision-making bodies has long been a principle of Anglican life. Thus, the royal priesthood of the entire people of God (1 Peter 2:9), and the mutuality and interdependence of the various ministries within the Church, are witnessed to and affirmed. Means must be found to honour the specific experience and expertise that various lay members bring and also to provide them with whatever further resources and experiences they might need to participate fully and responsibly in the life of God's Church.

6.24 It is important that these rich experiences of being in community not be lost through either infrequency of meeting or too large a gathering. Significant too is the participation of members from the two-thirds world who represent a growing majority in the Communion and whose issues increasingly occupy the Communion's concern. Every effort needs to be made to enable people whose first language is not English to communicate freely and effectively so that there be no feeling of exclusion.

6.25 The mission of the Anglican Consultative Council is to represent the concerns of the Communion, in the Communion and for the Communion. Most of this work is effected day by day through the General Secretary and the Secretariat. However, to be effective and credible, the Secretariat must be governed by a reference group which is informed, has continuity and is also representative of the Communion's diversity. It must be adequately staffed.

6.26 There are two possible ways in which change might be effected in order to enhance the representative nature of the ACC and its effectiveness: first, by creating a smaller council

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which would meet more frequently, or alternatively, by enlarging the Standing Committee and leaving the size and frequency of the ACC as it presently is. It is important that the representation be balanced between laity and clergy, with greater continuity of membership than at present. Representatives should have entree to the councils of their own church and be knowledgeable about its concerns and interests.

6.27 The existence of the Anglican Consultative Council raises questions of a general nature. What is the relationship of this body to the Lambeth Conference and to the Primates' Meeting? What part should the ACC play in contributing to the major issues that are to come before the Lambeth Conference and the reception of the Lambeth resolutions? Should the on-going tasks of the Communion be done by an expanded secretariat, or through meetings of the ACC, or a combination of both? Who is responsible for the continuity of membership in the ACC; is it the members themselves, is it the Primates, who make this decision? What is the nature of the responsibility and accountability of those elected to serve on the ACC?

IV. The Primates' Meeting

6.28 The Primates' Meeting provides the opportunity for mutual counsel and pastoral care and support of one another and of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Their meetings have an inherent authority by virtue of the office which they hold as chief pastors. The Meeting provides a place between Lambeth Conferences for each to share the burning or persistent issues of their Province and their own primatial ministry. It is the context in which Primates can identify common issues and resolve outstanding concerns. It also provides for a broader horizon than the Provincial which makes it possible for a Primate to consider a regional matter in a world-wide context. There is an opportunity to take responsibility together in the concern for the wellbeing of all the churches.

6.29 The Primates have in fact found it easier to affirm collegiality for the sake of consultation, study and mutual support than for the exercise of pastoral, moral and doctrinal guidance. This experience raises in yet another context the theological and practical importance of holding together the personal, collegial and communal modes of episcopate.

6.30 Each Primate exercises his personal primatial ministry with fellow bishops and the synod of his Province. Similarly, the Archbishop of Canterbury exercises this Communion-wide ministry both collegially and communally. In the same way, the collegiality of the Primates' Meeting is exercised in relation to the personal and communal elements of the episcopate at the communion-wide level.

6.31 The exercise of collegiality with one another and with the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as the exercise of collegiality with all the bishops at the Lambeth Conference, raises the question of the relation of the Primates' Meeting to the communal gatherings of the Anglican Consultative Council. It is to be noted that while the Standing Committee of the Primates' Meeting meets with the Standing Committee of the ACC, this has hardly enhanced relations with the ACC. As an instrument of world-wide unity within the Communion, the Primates' Meeting has responsibility to maintain a living relationship with the ACC, so that the collegial and communal exercise of oversight are held together. Archbishop Donald Coggan commented at the 1978 Lambeth Conference that the Primates' Meeting should be in the very closest and most intimate contact with the ACC. What in fact this would mean in practice still has to be worked out.

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6.32 How far should the task of the Primates' Meeting be that of responsibility for monitoring the progress of recommendations and resolutions which come from the Lambeth Conference in the interim between Conferences? For example, in the period following Lambeth 1988, the Primates received and promulgated the recommendations of the Eames' Commission to the Communion. The Primates' Meeting also referred to the Provinces the Porvoo Common Statement and the Concordat of Agreement.

6.33 In chapter 3 (paragraph 3.50) it was noted that the Primates have been reluctant to give serious consideration to resolution 18 Section 2(a) of Lambeth 1988 which asks the Primates to exercise greater responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters. Should Primates be expected to make authoritative statements, or should the Primates' Meeting be encouraged to exercise a primarily pastoral role, both for their own numbers, but also for the Communion? What is the relationship of the Primates' Meeting to the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council? Do the Primates have sufficient resources for their ministry?

V. The Inter-relation of the Instruments of Communion

6.34 In reviewing the world-wide instruments of communion this report has at times commented on the relationship of one to the other and on their inter-connectedness with structures at other levels of the Church's life. Three instruments, the ACC, the Primates' Meeting and the Lambeth Conference, have their own distinctive characteristics and potentially hold in balance and tension three aspects of the life of the Communion. Lambeth focuses the relation of bishops to bishops and therefore dioceses to dioceses. The Primates' Meeting focuses the relation of Primates to Primates, and therefore Provinces to Provinces. The ACC, which is the most comprehensive gathering, represents the voice of the inner life of the Provinces, with representatives of laity, clergy and bishops. These three instruments of interdependence are presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, thus focusing the unity and diversity of the Communion.

6.35 At the present time the formal structural and continuing relations between the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative council and the Primates' Meeting is the responsibility of the Secretary General and the Anglican Communion Secretariat which staffs all three bodies. Greater clarity on the relations between the instruments of communion themselves would make for creative, effective and sustainable relations within the Anglican Communion. It is urgent that ways be found to strengthen the resourcing of the ACC Secretariat if it is to serve effectively the world-wide structures of Anglican belonging.

VI. Final Reflections

6.36 A deeper understanding of the instruments of communion at a world-level, their relationship one to another and to the other levels of the Church's life should lead to a more coherent and inclusive functioning of oversight in the service of the koinonia of the Church. When the ministry of oversight is exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way, imbued with the principles of subsidiarity, accountability and interdependence then the community is protected from authoritarianism, structures serve the personal and relational life of the Church and the diverse gift of all is encouraged in the service of all. The Church is thus opened up to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit for mission and ministry and enabled to serve more effectively the unity and community of humanity.

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6.37 We have necessarily concentrated in the report on the world-wide instruments of the Anglican Communion. However, by virtue of our baptism we have in a communion in the Holy Trinity and therefore with the universal Church. The long history of ecumenical involvement, both locally and internationally, has shown us that Anglican discernment and decision making must take account of the insights into truth and the Spirit-led wisdom of our ecumenical partners. Moreover, any decisions we take must be offered for the discernment of the universal Church.

APPENDIX I

LAMBETH CONFERENCE 1988 RESOLUTION 18

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION: IDENTITY AND AUTHORITY

This Conference:

Resolves that the new Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (or a specially appointed inter-Anglican commission) be asked to undertake as a matter of urgency a further exploration of the meaning and nature of communion; with particular reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, the unity and order of the Church, and the unity and community of humanity.

urges that encouragement be given to a developing collegial role for the Primates' Meeting under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, so that the Primates' Meeting is able to exercise an enhanced responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters.

Recommends that in the appointment of any future Archbishop of Canterbury, the Crown Appointments Commission be asked to bring the Primates of the Communion into the process of consultation.

Resolves that the Lambeth Conference, as a conference of bishops of the Anglican Communion, should continue in the future, at appropriate intervals.

Recommends that regional conferences of the Anglican Communion should meet between Lambeth Conferences as and when the region concerned believes it to be appropriate; and in the event of these regional conferences being called, it should be open to the region concerned to make them representative of clergy and laity as well as bishops.

Recommends that the ACC continue to fulfil the functions defined in its Constitution (developed as a consequence of Resolution 69 of the 1968 Lambeth Conference) and affirmed by the evaluation process reported to ACC-6 (see Bonds of Affection, pp 23-27); in particular to continue its consultative, advisory, liaison and communication roles within the Communion (and to do so in close cooperation with the Primates' Meeting).

Requests the Archbishop of Canterbury, with all the Primates of the Anglican Communion, to appoint an advisory body on Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion. The body should be entrusted with the task of offering encouragement, support and advice to Churches of the Communion in their work of liturgical revision as well as facilitating mutual consultation concerning, and review of, their Prayer Books as they are developed with a view to ensuring:

the public reading of the Scriptures in a language understood by the people and instruction of the whole people of God in the scriptural faith by means of sermons and catechisms:

the use of the two sacraments ordained by Christ, Baptism with water in the threefold name, and Holy Communion with bread and wine and explicit intention to obey our Lord's command;

the use of forms of episcopal ordination to each of the three orders by prayer with the laying-on of hands;

the public recitation and teaching of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds; and

the use of other liturgical expressions of unity in faith and life by which the whole people of God is nurtured and upheld, with continuing awareness of ecumenical liturgical developments.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On 1 above. If there is the possibility of ordination of women bishops in some provinces, it will throw into sharper focus the present impaired nature of communion. It is a matter of urgency that we have a further theological enquiry into and reflection on the meaning of communion in a trinitarian context for the Anglican Communion. Such an enquiry should relate to ecumenical discussions exploring similar issues. This, more than structures, will provide a theological framework in which differences can be handled.

On 2 above. We see an enhanced role for primates as a key to a growth of interdependence within the Communion. We do not see any inter-Anglican jurisdiction as possible or desirable, an inter-Anglican synodical structure would be virtually unworkable and highly expensive. A collegial role for the primates by contrast could easily be developed, and their collective judgement and advice would carry considerable weight.

If this is so, it is neither improper nor out of place to suggest that part of the consultative process prior to the appointment of a future Archbishop of Canterbury should be in consultation with the primates.

On 3 above. We are convinced that there is considerable value in the bishops of the Anglican Communion meeting as bishops, both in terms of mutual understanding and as an effective agent of interdependence.

On 4 above. Regional issues need regional solutions. Regional conferences can also provide for wider representation.

On 5 above. We value the present work of the ACC. We do not see, however, that it ought to move beyond its present advisory role.

On 6 above. Concern for how the Church celebrates the sacraments of unity and with what consequences is a central expression of episcopal care and pastoral oversight in the Church of God. As bishops of the Anglican Communion we have a particular responsibility for securing those elements in worship which nurture our identity and unity in Christ and which therefore have an authority for us as Anglicans. (A parallel but significantly different resolution has been proposed by the Anglican Consultative Council: Resolution 12 of ACC-7.)

(See further paras 113-152 of the Report on "Dogmatic and Pastoral Concerns".)

APPENDIX II

AN ANGLICAN CONGRESS

In considering the world-wide instruments of Anglican unity the Commission considered what role and contribution an Anglican Congress might make in the future. The Commission did not see a Congress as becoming a fifth instrument of unity for the Anglican Communion. Nevertheless, it did acknowledge the creative opportunity a Congress might, from time to time, offer the Communion, for the renewal of its life, witness and mission. At the same time the Commission was aware that, at a time of economic pressure on all institutions, the calling of a Congress would put additional financial strain upon the Communion.

The following paragraphs begin to explore some of the issues that would need to be considered if it were thought the time was right for calling for an Anglican Congress.

Local congregations and communities are strongest when there are regular opportunities to come together for worship, social gatherings and other festivals. The ties of friendship between individuals and families are strengthened when they share their joys and sorrows. Similar occasions offered to Anglicans on Provincial, regional and world-wide levels, could also develop and strengthen ties of affection within the Communion.

A World Anglican Congress held perhaps once every ten years might provide an opportunity to bring together representatives from various vocations and spheres of life. It would provide an occasion for conversation, and for sharing of needs and opportunity for prayer and worship.

In the planning of the Congress, Provinces and dioceses should be explicitly invited to propose participants who have a variety of God-given gifts to offer, and a capacity to receive the gifts of others and to be enriched by them. It would be of the essence of such a Congress that the diversity of cultural contexts in which the Anglican Church has taken root, should be visible.

The Congress would need to be planned in such a way that mutual cross-cultural communication could take place. Even if there were a small number of official conference languages, attention needs to be paid to the mode and style of communication, so as to facilitate genuine giving and receiving. A premium should be set upon face-to-face contact, as distinct from amplified addresses inhibiting response and dialogue. Nor should mutual communication be regarded as an end in itself, but as governed by and serving the goal of the universal mission of the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A Congress should not be so tightly structured and organised as to inhibit the freedom of the Spirit and the fruit of new discovery and infectious insights and joy.

The Congress would need to be attentive to particularity of context and life and an effort would be made to avoid misty generalities. The stress would be laid on quality and depth, not quantity and superficiality. The Congress would avoid global tourism, and vague or fashionable international rhetoric, and give the opportunity for the exploration of complexity in depth.

If it is to be a proper reflection of the life of the Anglican Communion it would be essential that participants be full-hearted participants in the mission of the local church, and understand and accept the responsibility of accountability to that church, both in preparation for the Congress and following the Congress.

Membership of the Congress should include laity, deacons, priests and bishops. The Archbishop of Canterbury would preside, and be accompanied by a number of Primates, as well as by other bishops. Efforts should be made to symbolize the personal, collegial and communal aspects of the ministry of the Archbishop. At the same time as the unity of the

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Church is made visible, the recognition of the diversity of God's gifts should also be expressed. There should be opportunity to show how plurality and unity are held together within the one fellowship.

As an international Congress, it would not be appropriate for decisions or resolutions to be taken. A message to the Communion might be an appropriate form of communication.