ECCLESIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION IN THE LIGHT OF ARCIC

Report of the ad hoc sub–commission of IARCCUM
presented to the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams and to the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Cardinal Walter Kasper
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I. Introduction

1. The Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church have been committed for almost forty years to 'serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed' *(Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey,* 1966*).* Over these decades, remarkable progress has been made towards the 'restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life' called for by the 1966 *Declaration*. The importance of steady movement towards this goal was emphasized by Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie in their *Common Declaration* of 1989:

> Against the background of human disunity the arduous journey to Christian unity must be pursued with determination and vigour, whatever obstacles are perceived to block the path. We here solemnly re-commit ourselves and those we represent to the restoration of visible unity and full ecclesial communion in the confidence that to seek anything less would be to betray our Lord's intention for the unity of his people…
>
> We also urge our clergy and faithful not to neglect or undervalue that certain yet imperfect communion we already share.... This communion should be cherished and guarded as we seek to grow into the fuller communion Christ wills.

The Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops who gathered in Mississauga in May of 2000, after reviewing the extensive progress made both in theological agreement and in practical relationships since the Second Vatican Council, confidently observed that the communion we already share is 'no longer to be viewed in minimal terms'. It is 'a rich and life-giving, multi-faceted communion. We have ... moved much closer to the goal of full visible communion than we had at first dared to believe'.[1]

2. It is a significant confirmation of the progress we have made, and of the importance of our common commitment to the goal of full ecclesial communion, that the appearance of a fresh obstacle to achieving that goal has led to a common initiative to address that difficulty. The question raised by the episcopal consecration in New Hampshire is immediately an Anglican concern and is being addressed by the Anglican Communion itself. However, consultations with the Roman Catholic Church led the Archbishop of Canterbury to take the initiative of inviting Cardinal Kasper of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to join him in setting up a special sub-commission of the

[1] *Communion in Mission,* nn.5-6.

International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) to address the ecclesiological concerns raised by the event. As members of this sub-commission, we are grateful to be given an opportunity to contribute to the process of discernment within the Anglican Communion. We believe that the invitation to make this ecumenical contribution illustrates how close our two communions have come to each other, and reflects the fact that what one communion does has consequences for the other. Cardinal Kasper said of the present situation that Catholics do not see themselves simply as observers: because of our close relationship, there is no such thing as an entirely unilateral decision or action. He added that it was precisely in the midst of problems that dialogue was most necessary.

3. Our theological dialogue of the past decades, carried out through the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), has been principally concerned with doctrinal issues, but it has also dealt with moral matters, and in the process, has shown how closely the two are interconnected. The Agreed Statement, *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church* (1994), claimed that:

> despite existing disagreement in certain areas of pastoral and practical judgement, Anglicans and Roman Catholics derive from the Scripture and Tradition the same controlling vision of the nature and destiny of humanity and share the same fundamental moral values. (*Life in Christ*, 1)

Our sharing in this common Apostolic heritage enables us to give shared witness and to speak prophetically on moral questions. Recent developments, however, call into question the extent to which we in fact share a moral vision. The episcopal consecration in New Hampshire raises two areas of concern: one relating to the moral teaching involved; the other to the ecclesiological difficulties deriving from the course of action taken. With regard to the moral aspect, the Roman Catholic Church holds a firm position on homosexuality, which is set out, for example, in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn.2357-2359. The consecration, following the endorsement of the General Convention, has caused Roman Catholics, and many Anglicans, to question, however, whether the churches of the Anglican Communion can sustain a coherent teaching and practice in this area, since the action was taken in spite of Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference and the statement of the meeting of Primates in October, 2003. This very fact simultaneously highlights the major ecclesiological questions that have been raised.

4. The Lambeth Commission has not been asked to address directly the question of homosexuality but rather to focus on related ecclesiological issues. In like manner, our sub-commission has been asked specifically to give attention to the ecclesiological implications arising from the recent developments in the Anglican Communion, particularly in the light of, and with reference to, the relevant Agreed Statements of ARCIC. The major focus of our report, therefore, will be to draw out of the ARCIC texts pertinent signposts which relate to the current situation in the Anglican Communion, in the hope that they may help the Lambeth Commission in addressing the questions before it. In order to contextualise the contributions from ARCIC, showing them to arise both out of our ancient common traditions, and out of recent ecclesiological thinking in both the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church, we offer a preliminary section on shared ecclesiological foundations. We look first at the 4th century, where there are certain parallels to the current context which suggest some helpful insights for the present situation. Next, we look to recent statements from both our communions on the maintenance of communion, which have shaped and, in some

instances, been influenced by the work of ARCIC. Finally, in the principal section of this document, we turn to the ARCIC Agreed Statements, identifying five areas relevant to the task facing the Lambeth Commission. We hope that our reflections will help the Commission to take full account of that 'certain yet imperfect communion we already share', and to cherish and guard it 'as we seek to grow into the fuller communion Christ wills' (*Common Declaration*, 1989).

II. Ecclesiological Pointers Past and Present

i. The Church's Life in the 4th Century

5. The fourth century was a particularly turbulent period in the Church's history, during which the Christian community was both grappling with the doctrinal crisis of Arianism and adapting to a new relationship with the State. Henry Chadwick notes that it 'was the misfortune of the fourth-century church that it became engrossed in a theological controversy at the same time as it was working out its institutional organization.'[2] The same could be said for the Anglican Communion today, which is in the throes of a major controversy regarding sexuality and ordination at the same time as it is seeking to develop structures to sustain an interdependent life among an ever-increasing number of provinces. It is helpful to look to the Church's life in the 4th century at a time of doctrinal crisis and to note in particular the role of councils, the responsibilities of bishops and metropolitans, and the relationship between local and universal within the *koinonia* of the Church.

6. The 4th century shows the Church's instinct to address problems by means of councils of bishops, and in this way, to hold together the Church in its local and universal expressions. The Council of Nicaea, for instance, lays down fundamental principles for episcopal life and relations, stipulating that a bishop should be ordained by all the bishops of his province, if possible, but never by less than three, and that whatever is done in a province is subject to the consent and confirmation of the metropolitan of that province (canon 4). Nicaea also acknowledged particular regional prerogatives of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, whereby they had authority to confirm episcopal elections beyond the strict bounds of their own provinces (canon 6) . The Council of Sardica (342/3), while not accepted as a universal council, reflects the same sense of interdependence between the local and the universal. With regard to the integrity of the local church it decreed that, 'if in any province, any bishop have a cause against his brother and fellow-bishop, neither shall call in bishops from another province'.[3] This measure in turn highlighted the leadership role of the metropolitan in the bishops' own province. On the other hand, Sardica reflects the importance of interdependence of local churches with the Church universal by decreeing that if an accused or deposed bishop felt himself to be misjudged, there could be an appeal to the Bishop of Rome by those who heard the case, by the neighbouring bishops or by the bishop himself. If the Bishop of Rome decided that the case should be retried, he could appoint judges or send a delegate to sit with the neighbouring bishops to settle the matter (canon 3).

7. It is plain that the Church's conciliar life, which was developing at this time, did not spontaneously function in total harmony. In 4th century practice, many councils were actually summoned by the emperor (e.g. Nicaea, 325; Constantinople, 381) or emperors (Sardica, 342/343). Moreover, a feature of the period between Nicaea and

[2] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, revised ed. 1993), p.133.
[3] J. Stevenson (ed.), *Creeds, Councils and Controversies* (London: SPCK, 1989), p.15.

Constantinople 'was certainly the large number of controversial assemblies of bishops which were summoned by one party or the other or by the emperors themselves';[4] the resolution of these controversies necessitated further clarification of the relationship between the local and the universal Church. Through this formative period, we can see that metropolitans undoubtedly exercised a vital role in the assurance of good order, and that important patriarchal and primatial responsibilities were beginning to be clarified for the effective living out of the Church's life of communion. **Unity** and **interdependence** were emerging as essential hallmarks of authentic *koinonia*. Patterned on the primordial communion of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, these hallmarks were to characterize the life of the Church at all levels.

8. Commenting on the councils of the early Church, the Orthodox scholar, Alexander Schmemann, insists that: 'the basic truth to which all canons dealing with bishops, their consecration and their jurisdiction point and refer, is the reality of *unity*, as the very essence of the Church', and that 'the unity and interdependence of the bishops' is 'the form of the Church's unity'.[5] In this way, the bishop mediates his church to the wider communion of churches, and the wider communion to his own church. In the name of the Good Shepherd, he has prerogatives of leadership among his people that cannot be abdicated. The bishop is not just a chairman, but exercises his distinctive ministry of leadership in, with and among his people. Authentic *koinonia* has a focal point - the bishop among his people - just as the life of the Trinity is centred upon the Father. Moreover, authentic *koinonia* requires unity and interdependence between this focal figure and the community gathered around him. As suggested above, the early Church displayed this configuration not just within each local church but also at the regional or provincial level. The 34th of the *Apostolic Canons* (c.375-380) stipulated that the bishops of every region should acknowledge the one who is first among them as their head and do nothing of consequence without his consent, as also he should do nothing without their consent, 'for so there will be unanimity and God will be glorified through Christ in the Holy Spirit'.[6]

9. Recalling the crises, councils and canons of the 4th century helps us to reflect on our current situation: in particular, on the role of the local bishop, and his relationship to the metropolitan and the universal Church, in safeguarding the unity of the Church. The practice of the 4th century, which shows that, in challenging situations, consultation and conciliarity alone are not always sufficient to sustain and protect ecclesial communion, may also suggest models for the Anglican Communion as it seeks to find a way forward. In particular, it may suggest the need for some kind of right of appeal from within any Anglican province to the Archbishop of Canterbury. More broadly, it may suggest the need to strengthen both the focal role of the Primates within provinces and that of the Archbishop of Canterbury among the Primates. These would be important developments during this interim period as we continue to work towards full visible unity between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church. There is everything to be said for both our Communions developing a polity which is both consistent with the early Church and also consistent with the sort of Church we believe God is calling us to become together in the future.

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[4] J.N.D.Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longman, 1972), p.263.

[5] Alexander Schmemann, 'Problems of Orthodoxy in America', *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 8(1964), pp.75, 80.

[6] F.X. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Paderborn, 1905), vol.1, pp.572-5.

ii. Recent Reflections on *koinonia* in our two Communions

10. In order to contextualise the ARCIC material which follows, we turn now to review some of the ecclesiological themes in recent writings of both our Communions, illustrating a converging understanding about the Church as *koinonia,* the maintenance of communion and decision-making in communion.

11. Each of our Communions affirms *koinonia* as the fundamental reality of the Church and also as the primary concept for our understanding of the life and mission of the Church, both through history and today.[7] Since Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, the life in which the Church participates, as the Body of Christ, is the life of the Trinity, which is one of perfect *koinonia*. *Koinonia* is both God's gift to us and our calling. Dependent on the Holy Spirit, we are to manifest God's life in and for the world.[8]

12. Each of our Communions understands that *koinonia* is sustained and nurtured by "structures of grace", the constituent elements or bonds of communion. Each agrees that all the various elements of visible communion are gifts of the Risen Christ, bestowed through the power of the Holy Spirit, on the Church. They are not separable items but integrally related to one another. Working together they serve and protect the inner mystery of the Church's communion. By such gifts of communion, the Church is held together in the apostolic Tradition, enabled to offer united worship and praise to the Triune God, and strengthened and organized to be the sacrament of God's presence in the world.[9]

13. Each Communion considers that it lives by these bonds of communion. Anglicans are held together in a life of visible communion by baptism, '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 …These elements belong to the universal Church and are not unique to Anglicans. They are, nevertheless, lived out in a recognisably and characteristically Anglican way.'[10] These bonds are what Roman Catholics also indicate when they say that the unity of the Church is 'constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and hierarchical communion.'[11] Essential to these bonds for Roman Catholics is the ministry of the Bishop of Rome and the bishops in communion with him.[12] Anglicans recognise that the constitutive elements of the Church exist in the Roman Catholic Church, while the Roman Catholic Church has acknowledged that 'some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church';[13] or, in the words of *Ut Unum Sint,* that 'many elements of great value … are also found in other Christian Communities.'[14]

14. Each of our Communions cherishes the ministry of *episcopacy* in apostolic succession as having a decisive role within the succession of communities living in fidelity to the

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[7] *The Final Report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, 1985 states: "The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council's document" (II. C. n.1); *The Virginia Report*, Chapter 2.
[8] *The Virginia Report ,* Chapter 2; *Unitatis redintegratio*, n.2; *The Final Report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, 1985*,* II. C. n.1.
[9] First Report of the Eames Commision paras 26-27; *Lumen gentium*, n.8; *Unitatis redintegratio*, n.3.
[10] *The Virginia Report,* Chapter 3.
[11] *Ut Unum Sint*, n.9.
[12] *The Ecumenical Directory* (1993), n.10 and *Ut Unum Sint,* n.79.
[13] *Unitatis redintegratio*, n.3; cf. *Lumen gentium*, n.8.
[14] *Ut Unum Sint*, n.13.

apostolic Tradition. The episcopal ministry, exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way, nurtures the communion of the Church and safeguards the unity between local churches. Collegiality and some form of primacy are exercised in both our Communions at the different levels of the Church's life. At the world level, collegiality for Anglicans is expressed in the meeting of the Lambeth Conference. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the personal focus of unity and communion, having 'in a particular way the care of all the churches which is shared by all the bishops'. His task is 'not to command, but to gather', and within the Anglican Communion, his authority is understood as moral and not juridical. His is 'a primacy of honour'.[15] Only an Archbishop of Canterbury may call bishops to a Lambeth Conference. He presides at the Conference, chairs the regular meetings of Primates and is President of the Anglican Consultative Council. For Anglicans, the communal dimension of the exercise of *episcope*, expressed in synods in which laity participate, is a vital part of the maintenance of communion. Roman Catholics stress that the fullness of *koinonia* entails the ministry of universal primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St Peter, to whom Christ entrusted all his sheep 'to be confirmed in faith and shepherded in perfect unity'. The service of unity of the Bishop of Rome is exercised by him within the college of bishops.[16]

15. Each of our Communions emphasises the interdependence of the local and the universal. Although binding decisions for Anglicans can only be made at the level of a province, there has been a growing 'sense' that matters that touch the faith, order or moral life of the Communion should be settled within the interdependent life of the Anglican Communion – and, in a divided Christendom, should be considered in a way that is open to the rest of the Church. Archbishop Robert Runcie challenged what he called 'the shibboleth of autonomy'. His speech to the 1988 Lambeth Conference was an encouragement to continue moving along a path from independence to interdependence: 'We have reached the stage of growth of the Communion when we must begin to make radical choices, or growth will imperceptibly turn to decay. I believe the choice between independence and interdependence…is quite simply the choice between unity or gradual fragmentation'.[17] *The Virginia Report* suggests that: '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 …'[18]

16. Anglicans have developed international structures and processes for the purpose of helping them to maintain the communion of all the churches. The Lambeth Conference has served the Anglican Communion since 1867. Resolution 49 of the Conference of 1930 declared that the Churches of the Anglican Communion 'are bound together not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through

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[15] *The Truth Shall Make you Free*: Report of the 1988 Lambeth Conference (London: CHP, 1988) Dogmatic and Pastoral Concerns, p.110. He is 'a pastor in the service of unity, offers a ministry of service, care and support to the Communion' (*The Virginia Report*, in *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference*, 1998, p.56).

[16] *Unitatis redintegratio*, n.2.

[17] Robert Runcie, Opening Address to the Lambeth Conference, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, The Lambeth Conference 1988, pp. 16 and 17.

[18] *The Virginia Report,* Chapter 5, para. 24; cf also Resolution 34 of the ACC 2002 having in mind the emphasis on mutual responsibility and interdependence called upon: '1) dioceses and individual bishops not to undertake unilateral actions or adopt policies which would strain our communion with one another without reference to their provincial authorities; 2) provincial authorities to have in mind the impact of their decisions within the wider Communion; and 3) all members of the Communion, even in our disagreements to have in mind the 'need for courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect and prayer for one another' (1998, II.2 e).

the common counsel of the bishops in conference.' Two newer organs, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting also have a part to play, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lambeth Conference, in the Anglican Communion's discernment of what is faithful to the Apostolic tradition on matters which touch the unity of the Church. Decision-making entails consultation, dialogue, discernment and reception and involves those with a special ministry of oversight and the whole people of God.

17. Roman Catholics hold to 'the very ancient discipline whereby the bishops installed throughout the whole world lived in communion with one another and with the Roman Pontiff in a bond of unity, charity and peace', and also maintain the practice of holding councils wherein profound issues are to be settled together.[19] The college or body of bishops has 'no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head'.[20] *Lumen gentium* speaks of the role of the entire body of the faithful in the discernment of matters of faith, which is 'aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth'.[21]

18. Each of our Communions is exploring more effective ways to maintain *koinonia* in times of change. Roman Catholics, since Vatican II, have been gradually developing structures for sustaining *koinonia* more effectively: national and regional Episcopal Conferences, General Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops and, at local level, the involvement of lay people and clergy in parochial and diocesan pastoral councils. Anglicans have considered how to develop their international instruments of communion: the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting - and what part each has to play in the maintenance of the communion of local churches.

19. Each of our Communions stress the qualities of life that belong to Communion. The *Virginia Report* speaks of life in communion as one of mutuality, common concern for one another, forbearing one another in love.[22] Pope John Paul II has called for the fostering of a 'spirituality of communion', without which external structures 'will serve very little purpose', becoming 'mechanisms without a soul'. Such a spirituality centres on the 'contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, …whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us.' A spirituality of communion means thinking of our brothers and sisters in faith as 'those who are a part of me', and enables us to 'share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs', to 'make room' for each other, 'bearing "each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2)'.[23]

20. The convergence that we note in our understanding of the nature of the Church, of the constitutive elements of communion and of the ways in which communion is to be maintained prompt us to ask how far the recent events in North America challenge what we both believe. With this question in mind, we now turn our attention directly to the work of ARCIC, which has given sustained expression to our shared belief.

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[19] *Lumen gentium*, n.22. *Lumen gentium* elaborates on the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, who 'presides over the whole assembly of charity and protects their legitimate variety, while at the same time taking care that these differences do not hinder unity, but rather contribute to it…' (n.13). 'There never is an ecumenical council which is not confirmed or at least recognized as such by Peter's successor. And it is the prerogative of the Roman Pontiff to convoke such councils, to preside over them and to confirm them…' (n.22).

[20] *Ibid*.

[21] *Ibid,* n.12.

[22] *Virginia Report,* chapter 3, para.4.

[23] *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n.43.

III. ARCIC and the Lambeth Commission

21. The theological conversations of ARCIC I and II have explored areas which have a bearing on the current situation in the Anglican Communion. ARCIC's Agreed Statements hold differing degrees of authority. The official responses of both Communions to the work of ARCIC I recognised 'substantial agreement' or 'significant convergence' in the areas treated in its Agreed Statements. The Agreed Statements of ARCIC II have not received official responses on the level of our two Communions. However, the Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops gathered at Mississauga in May 2000 were able to point to all the documents and note 'the very impressive degree of agreement in faith that already exists'.[24] Such recognition would seem to imply that actions or decisions taken by either Communion, which touch the communion of the Church, necessarily have implications for the other. Moreover, how each Communion acts either gives credibility to what has been agreed in our theological dialogue or calls that agreement into question. How we act also confirms, or denies, something about the sort of life we look to live together in the future and indicates the seriousness, or lack of seriousness, of our intention to move together in conformity with what has been agreed.

22. We believe that the theological Agreed Statements have insights to offer in interpreting the current situation and may even help to suggest a possible way forward. We would group these insights under five headings, as follows:
    - A. the nature of the Church as communion;
    - B. the constitutive elements of communion, the episcopal office, unity and diversity in ecclesial communion, and the relation between local churches and the universal Church;
    - C. discernment in the communion of the Church, authority and the use of Scripture and Tradition;
    - D. the qualities and obligations of life in communion;
    - E. morals and discerning in communion.

A. The nature of the Church as communion

23. The understanding of the Church as communion is fundamental to all of the work of ARCIC – 'union with God in Christ Jesus through the Spirit is the heart of Christian *koinonia*' (*Final Report*, Introduction, 5). 'God wants his people to be in communion with him and with each other' (*Church as Communion*, 7). This communion thus embraces 'both the visible gathering of God's people and its divine life-giving source' (*Church as Communion*, 3). These two aspects of the nature and life of the Church must never be divorced. The *Final Report* goes on to talk of the eucharist as the effectual sign of *koinonia*, *episcope* as serving *koinonia*, and primacy as its link and focus (Introduction, 6).

24. *Church as Communion* is ARCIC's fullest treatment of the theme of *koinonia*, and notes in its conclusion that 'our two Communions agree in their understanding of the Church as communion' (56). The report expands upon the nature of communion and sees how that notion is unfolded in Scripture. The Church, as the body of those baptised into the life and love of God, is the communion of believers called to be an effective sign, in and for the world, of all God intends for the whole of humanity. It is also an instrument of salvation and in its life, here and now, we are given a foretaste of the life God intends for all. It is inadequate to speak only of an invisible communion.

[24] *Communion in Mission*, n.4.

Communion requires visible expression (43).

The New Hampshire consecration has had an effect on the unity of the Anglican Communion. Recent documents have spoken of 'impaired communion' and even of 'broken communion'. In the light of the centrality that ARCIC gives to communion for the realisation of the Church, we ask whether the damage that the recent consecration is doing to communion can be acceptable to those who profess belief in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

B. Constitutive elements of ecclesial communion, the episcopal office, unity and diversity in communion, and the relationship between local churches and the universal Church

25. ARCIC is clear that there are inter-related constitutive elements and facets which 'belong to the visible communion of the universal Church. Although their possession cannot guarantee the constant fidelity of Christians, neither can the Church dispense with them.' (*Church as Communion*, n.46); indeed the Church has received these elements and has an obligation to pass them on (*Gift of Authority*, 14). *Church as Communion* notes:

> For all the local churches to be *together in* communion, the one visible communion which God wills, it is required that all the essential constitutive elements of ecclesial communion are present and mutually recognised in each of them. Thus the visible communion between these churches is complete and their ministers are in communion with each other. (43)

The text proceeds to describe what constitutes ecclesial communion:

> It is rooted in the confession of the one apostolic faith, revealed in the Scriptures and set forth in the Creeds. It is founded upon one baptism. The one celebration of the eucharist is its pre-eminent expression and focus. It necessarily finds expression in shared commitment to the mission entrusted by Christ to his Church…. Also constitutive of life in communion is acceptance of the same basic moral values, the sharing of the same vision of humanity created in the image of God and recreated in Christ and the common confession of the one hope in the final consummation of the Kingdom of God. (45)

The text goes on to state that the ministry of oversight, the fullness of which is entrusted to the episcopate, is needed to maintain and express the Church's unity and to hold together believers in the communion of the local church in the communion of all the churches. 'This ministry of oversight has both collegial and primatial dimensions…. It is exercised so that unity and communion are expressed, preserved and fostered at every level – locally, regionally and universally.' It is precisely within the context of the communion of all the churches that 'the Episcopal ministry of a universal primate finds its role as visible focus of unity' (45).

ARCIC understands that there is an essential relationship between all of the constitutive elements of the Church. They interrelate and belong to a single life of communion. To deny or damage one is to weaken the total life of communion of the Church. The New Hampshire consecration raises questions about how constitutive elements of communion - the unity of the episcopate, the authority of Scripture and its interplay with Tradition, and the holding of 'the same basic moral values' - have been honoured, singly and together.

26. ARCIC has much to say about the role of the bishop, both within the local church and in the service of the communion of all the churches. At ordination, every bishop receives 'both responsibility for his local church and the obligation to maintain it in living awareness and practical service of other churches. The Church of God is found in each of them and in their *koinonia*' (*Authority I*, 10). Within the local church, the bishop carries a pastoral authority, by virtue of which he is primarily 'responsible for preserving and promoting the integrity of the *koinonia* in order to further the Church's response to the Lordship of Christ and its commitment to mission' (*Authority I*, 5). The bishop is to teach 'the faith through the proclamation and explanation of the Word of God', to provide for the celebration of the sacraments, and to maintain the Church in holiness and truth (*Gift of Authority*, 36). 'The exercise of this teaching authority requires that what (is taught) be faithful to Holy Scripture and consistent with apostolic Tradition' (*Gift*, 44). ARCIC also communicates the understanding of both Anglican and Roman Catholic Communions that bishops carry out their ministry in succession of the Apostles, which is 'intended to assure each community that its faith is indeed the apostolic faith, received and transmitted from apostolic times' (*Church as Communion*, 33).

27. ARCIC sees the mission of the local church as being held within the mission of the universal Church. *Authority I* notes that '*koinonia* is realised not only in the local Christian communities, but also in the communion of these communities with one another' (8). The text goes on to state:

> A local church cannot be truly faithful to Christ if it does not desire to foster universal communion, the embodiment of that unity for which Christ prayed…. Every local church must therefore ever seek a deeper understanding and clearer expression of this common faith, both of which are threatened when churches are isolated by division.' (*Authority I*, 13)

Each bishop, in communion with all other bishops, is responsible to preserve and express the larger koinonia of the church, and 'participates in the care of all the churches' (*Gift*, 39). The bishop is therefore 'both a voice for the local church and one through whom the local church learns from other churches' (*Gift*, 38). By means of communion among the bishops, 'the whole Church is made aware of the perceptions and concerns of the local churches: at the same time the local churches are enabled to maintain their place and particular character within the communion of all the churches' (*Church as Communion*, 33). *Authority I* (5) had already affirmed the 'mutual responsibility and interdependence' of all who minister in the Church, and *Gift of Authority* underlines more deeply the same notion in speaking of the role played by the

college of bishops in maintaining the unity of the Church – a topic which will be further addressed in the forthcoming section (29ff) on discernment:

> 'The mutual interdependence of all the churches is integral to the reality of the Church as God wills it to be. No local church that participates in the living Tradition can regard itself as self-sufficient.... The ministry of the bishop is crucial, for his ministry serves communion within and among local churches. Their communion with each other is expressed through the incorporation of each bishop into a college of bishops. Bishops are, both personally and collegially, at the service of the communion …' (*Gift*, 37).

28. While communion with other local churches safeguards the Church's unity and catholicity, this is not to result in a narrow uniformity. The challenge and responsibility of bishops in this regard is 'so to exercise their ministry that they promote the unity of the whole Church in faith and life in a way that enriches rather than diminishes the legitimate diversity of local churches' (*Gift of Authority*, 33). A diversity of traditions, faithful to the Word revealed in Jesus Christ, is indeed 'the practical manifestation of catholicity and confirms rather than contradicts the vigour of Tradition' (*Gift*, 27). *Church as Communion* speaks of a legitimate diversity in liturgies and forms of spirituality, in ways of exercising authority and canonical structure, in theological approaches, and in diverse theological expressions of the same doctrine (36, 43). The text notes: 'These varieties complement one another, showing that, as the result of communion with God in Christ, diversity does not lead to division; on the contrary, it serves to bring glory to God for the munificence of his gifts' (36). The text proceeds to speak about the framework within which that diversity is held together, including a reference to a common ministry of oversight:

> Amid all the diversity that the catholicity intended by God implies, the Church's unity and coherence are maintained by the common confession of the one apostolic faith, a shared sacramental life, a common ministry of oversight and joint ways of reaching decisions and giving authoritative teaching. (39)

- **From the perspective of ARCIC's understanding of the episcopate, we conclude that the collegiality of bishops is seriously affected if the majority of bishops in the Anglican Communion will neither receive nor recognise the ministry of the Bishop of New Hampshire.**
- **How can a bishop whose ordination made him a cause of controversy (leading others to break communion with him and with those who consecrated him) represent the local community in the councils of the Church? How can he mediate the unity of the universal Church to his diocese when he is at odds with large segments of the universal church, the latter arguing that he has departed from the moral teaching of the apostolic faith?**
- **Does not this situation damage both the communion of the local church of New Hampshire and the communion of the diocese of New Hampshire with all churches in the Anglican Communion?**

C. Discernment in the communion of the Church, authority and the use of Scripture and Tradition

29. *Church as Communion* notes that tensions are inevitable in the life of the Church. Some are creative tensions, others are not:

> Some may cause a loss of continuity with apostolic Tradition, disruption within the community, estrangement from other parts of the Church. Within the history of Christianity, some diversities have become differences that have led to such conflict that ecclesial communion has been severed. Whenever differences become embodied in separated ecclesial communities, so that Christians are no longer able to receive and pass on the truth within the one community of faith, communion is impoverished and the living memory of the Church is affected. (30)

Amid internal tension and conflict, it is the Church's task to 'distinguish between tolerable and intolerable diversity in the expression of the apostolic faith'. *Church as Communion* adds that 'in the area of life and practice the Church has to discover what is constructive and what is disruptive of its own communion' (40).

30. These evocative citations serve to highlight the decisive importance of discernment, most especially when the unity of the communion is at stake. This sub-commission's reflections on ARCIC's understanding of Christian discernment are offered mindful of the discernment process with which the Anglican Communion and its churches are currently engaged.[25] Our reflections also have in mind the New Hampshire consecration, which was itself the result of processes of discernment on the diocesan and provincial levels. The Diocese of New Hampshire issued a statement noting that they 'faithfully and prayerfully considered and followed a Spirit-led process' in their election of a new bishop.[26] As we have already seen, these processes of discernment all have broad ecclesiological implications, and with these in mind we turn to what ARCIC has to say about the nature of discernment in communion.

31. In the Elucidation of *Authority I*, ARCIC notes that in all it says, it takes for granted two fundamental principles: 'that Christian faith depends on divine revelation and that the Holy Spirit guides the Church in the understanding and transmission of revealed truth' (1). All Christian discernment has as its foundational reference point God's revelation in Christ, who 'sums up in himself the whole of God's self-disclosure' (*Authority I*, Elucidation, 2). Christian discernment is therefore always a seeking of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a discerning of the mind of Christ, an attentiveness to how God speaks into a particular situation. This discernment is not principally a matter of subjective insight; it is done in communion, recognising the objectivity and givenness of the Word that addresses us.

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[25] The 'Guide for Ecumenical Partners', issued by the Anglican Communion Office following the Primates' Meeting of Oct. 15-16, 2003, anticipated the consequences of the New Hampshire consecration and spoke of the (forthcoming) discernment process in the following terms: 'Questions remain about the nature, extent and duration of this impaired or broken communion. Will a breach in Communion between two parts of the Anglican Communion mean a Communion-wide split with each province having to choose between one side or the other? How will these divisions affect the relationship of each province with the See of Canterbury as the centre of unity of the Communion?' (Anglican Communion News Service, October 17, 2003).

[26] Statement from the Diocese of New Hampshire, October 17, 2003 (Anglican Communion News Service 3639). Regarding the discernment process at the General Synod of the Episcopal Church USA, see the statement of ECUSA Primate and Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, August 8, 2003 (General Convention website).

32. Scripture and Tradition play foundational roles in Christian discernment. The fullness of revelation manifest in Jesus Christ is mediated to the Church of subsequent generations by the apostolic community's reception of that revelation, as recorded in the New Testament. The Commission states clearly and strongly the place and authority of the Scriptures: 'Scriptures are the uniquely inspired witness to divine revelation' (*Authority I Elucidation* n.2). Within Tradition the Scriptures occupy a 'normative place' and are 'uniquely authoritative'; the Church is 'constantly to measure its teaching, preaching and action' against the Scriptures (*Gift*, 19). In ARCIC's understanding, Scripture and Tradition are indelibly bound together. Scripture arises from the living proclamation of the Church and the formation of the Canon takes place within it (*Gift*, 22). However, every generation needs 'prophetically to translate' the Gospel (*Authority I*, 15). 'Tradition is a dynamic process, communicating to each generation what was delivered once for all to the apostolic community. Tradition is far more than the transmission of true propositions concerning salvation' (*Gift*, 14). The handing on involves stating the Gospel message in new ways. Yet all such restatement 'must be consonant with the apostolic witness recorded in the Scriptures' (*Authority I*, 15). Finally, the Gospel 'is fully understood only within the Church. God's revelation has been entrusted to a community.' Hence, individualistic interpretation of the Scriptures is 'incompatible with the nature of the authority of the revealed Word of God. Word of God and Church of God cannot be put asunder' (*Gift*, 23).

33. ARCIC understands bishops as having a vital role in the process of discernment, bearing 'a special responsibility for promoting truth and discerning error' (*Authority I*, 18) and for preserving and promoting communion; but this is never exercised apart from the whole body of the faithful. The 'interaction of bishop and people' in this exercise of discernment and teaching 'is a safeguard of Christian life and fidelity' (*Authority I*, 18). *Church as Communion* reflects on this interaction, noting:

> In responding to the insights of the community, and of the individual Christian, whose conscience is also moulded by the same Spirit, those exercising oversight seek to discern what is the mind of Christ. Discernment involves both heeding and sifting in order to assist the people of God in understanding, articulating and applying their faith. (32)

The Gift of Authority develops this further by emphasising the role of the whole people of God as bearers of the living tradition: discernment is the duty of all, together in communion. Each Christian who is seeking to follow Christ and who is incorporated into the life of the Church has a sense of faith, and 'when this capacity is exercised in concert by the body of the faithful we may speak of the exercise of the *sensus fidelium*' (*Gift*, 29; cf. *Authority I Elucidation*, 3-4). The Church is like a symphony in which all have a part to play; all are walking together on the way. 'Consulting the faithful is an aspect of episcopal oversight' (*Gift*, 38).

34. ARCIC texts also reflect on the decisive role of the college of bishops and synodal and collegial structures in the Church's discernment.

> 'When bishops take counsel together they seek both to discern and to articulate the *sensus fidelium* as it is present in the local church and in the wider communion of churches. Their role is magisterial: that is, in this communion of the churches, they are to determine what is to be taught as faithful to the apostolic Tradition.'(*Gift*, 38)

The teaching office, which 'is not above the Word of God but serves it' (*Gift* cites *Dei Verbum*, n.10), is exercised in communion. As *Gift of Authority* puts it: 'the authenticity of the teaching of individual bishops is evident when this teaching is in solidarity with that of the whole episcopal college. The exercise of this teaching authority requires that what it teaches be faithful to Holy Scripture and consistent with apostolic Tradition' (*Gift*, 44). Both personally and collegially, bishops are to be concerned with synodality 'in all its expressions':

> These expressions have included a wide variety of organs, instruments and institutions, notably synods or councils, local, provincial, worldwide, ecumenical. The maintenance of communion requires that at every level there is a capacity to take decisions appropriate to that level. When those decisions raise serious questions for the wider communion of churches, synodality must find a wider expression. (*Gift*, 37; cf *Church as Communion*, 45; *Authority I*, 16)

When a discernment process issues forth in authoritative teaching, an important role is also played by the reception of this teaching by the faithful as an authentic expression of the apostolic faith. Particularly in challenging situations, or when contradictory interpretations of Scripture or Tradition are proposed, Christian discernment in the Church requires the participation of the whole body of believers, not only of those charged with the ministry of memory and teaching (*Gift*, 43). The people of God must be able to recognise that what is presented as authoritative teaching expresses the apostolic faith and operates within the truth of Christ, the Head of the Church. In the formulation of *Authority I Elucidation* (3), reception 'does not create truth nor legitimize the decision', but 'is the final indication that such a decision has fulfilled the necessary conditions for it to be a true expression of the faith' (cf *Authority I*, 6, 16; *Church as Communion*, 32).

35. Finally, ARCIC also touches briefly on the role of the bishop of a principal see in the Church's discernment, reflects at length on a universal primacy which would serve the *koinonia* of the Church, and invites cooperation between our churches in discernment.

- *Authority I* notes that it is the duty of a bishop of a principal see to assist the bishops of his region to promote right teaching, unity and the Church's mission. 'When he perceives a serious deficiency in the life or mission of one of the churches he is bound, if necessary, to call the local bishop's attention to it and to offer assistance' (*Authority I*, 11).
- Regarding a universal primacy, what *Authority I* notes is that 'if God's will for the unity in love and truth of the whole Christian community is to be fulfilled, this general pattern of the complementary primatial and conciliar aspects of *episkope* serving the *koinonia* of the churches needs to be realised at the universal level (23; cf. *Gift*, 46). While our two Communions haven't yet reached full consensus on a universal primacy, ARCIC has explored this subject intermittently for thirty years, and its reflections are an integral part of its reflection on discernment. *The Gift of Authority* envisioned a primacy which would help to 'uphold the legitimate diversity of traditions, strengthening and safeguarding them in fidelity to the Gospel' (*Gift*, 60; cf. 47).
- Regarding consultation between our two Communions, *Gift of Authority* noted: 'For the sake of *koinonia* and a united Christian witness to the world, Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops should find ways of cooperating and developing relationships of mutual accountability in their exercise of oversight' (58). We see the invitation for this sub-commission to offer these reflections as a valuable example of the latter.

ARCIC's thorough treatment of discernment within the Church offers various insights to the Anglican Communion in its current discernment process, and raises numerous questions, among which we would highlight the following:

ARCIC is clear about the normative role of Scripture within the Tradition of the Church and the need to have recourse to Scripture and Tradition in discerning the will of Christ. The teaching of the Anglican Communion on the issue of homosexuality is set forth in Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. Roman Catholic teaching is stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (nn.2357-59). Both see their conclusions as grounded in Scripture and Tradition. While in recent times differing interpretations of Scripture have emerged with regard to the issue of homosexuality, the traditional teaching continues to be upheld by our two Communions. In this context, should there not be restraint within Anglican Provinces while together in the communion of the Church we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit regarding issues facing us?

ARCIC holds that the maintenance of communion requires that decisions which raise questions for the wider communion of churches be addressed in appropriately wide synodal structures and processes.

- **Should the decision to ordain a priest in a committed same sex relationship for the office and work of a bishop be taken in a local or regional church when the matter is considered to touch the moral life of the whole Church?**
- **The fact that the New Hampshire Consecration took place in opposition to Resolution 1.10 passed by the bishops at the Lambeth Conference, to Resolution 34 of ACC 12, to the statement of the Primates' Meeting in October 2003, and to a public statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, would seem to call into question the processes of discernment in communion, and in particular the place of the episcopate and the ministry of primacy in their respective responsibilities for the maintenance of unity in the Anglican Communion. When individual dioceses and provinces act autonomously against the recommendations of the Communion's instruments of unity, at what cost is this done?**
- **How can these instruments of unity more effectively serve and safeguard the *koinonia* of the Anglican Communion?**
- **How can the effective governance of the Church on diocesan and provincial levels be complemented by collegial and primatial structures in such a way that the unity of the Anglican Communion is creatively maintained in the Apostolic faith and not under recurring threat of dissolution?**

Alongside these questions, those posed to the Anglican Communion at the end of *The Gift of Authority* about authority and decision-making in the life of the Church seem particularly pertinent:

Is the Communion open to the acceptance of instruments of oversight which would allow decisions to be reached that, in certain circumstances, would bind the whole Church? When new questions arise which, in fidelity to Scripture and Tradition, require a united response, will these structures assist Anglicans to participate in the *sensus fidelium* with all Christians? To what extent does unilateral action by provinces or dioceses in matters concerning the whole Church, even after consultation has taken place, weaken *koinonia*?(*Gift*, 56) [27]

D. The qualities and obligations of communion

36. *Church as Communion* also stresses that our *koinonia* is a participation in the life and love of the Trinity, and must therefore be modelled on and grounded in the love which is at the heart of the divine life (15). 'It is a life of shared concern for one another in mutual forbearance, submission, gentleness and love; in the placing of interests of others above the interests of self; in making room for each other in the body of Christ…'(45). It includes a sharing in one another's joys and sorrows, a common responsibility for maintaining unity and peace, and a mutual giving and receiving of gifts because of the fellowship that exists in Christ.

- **When fundamental changes arise which may impair the communion of the Church, then concern for others, mutual forbearance, deferring to others, putting the interest of others above one's own are marks of the way of communion. We ask whether these attitudes were shown towards all sections of the Anglican Communion and towards the holders of all shades of opinion in the Communion in the recent decisions of New Hampshire and New Westminster.**
- **We ask how these attitudes can be fostered during this period of discernment in the Anglican Communion. Whose responsibility is it in the Anglican Communion to nurture the qualities and obligations of communion as it seeks to discern a common mind, in fidelity to the Apostolic faith, when facing new and potentially divisive questions and how is this to be done?**

[27] *Gift* (53) also takes note of the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution which requested the Primates' Meeting to initiate a study in each province 'on whether effective communion, at all levels, does not require appropriate instruments, with due safeguards, not only for legislation, but also for oversight … as well as on the issue of a universal ministry in the service of Christian unity' [Resolution III, 8 (h)].

E. Morals and discerning in communion

37. In its 1994 Agreed Statement *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church*, ARCIC addressed the Church's moral teaching. In this context, the Commission briefly touched upon the question of homosexual relationships, affirming a significant degree of common teaching,[28] while also drawing attention to remaining differences in Anglican and Roman Catholic approaches.[29] We are mindful that our sub-commission has not been asked to reflect directly on questions pertaining to human sexuality, but rather, to address the ecclesiological implications arising from the recent developments in the Anglican Communion in light of the work of ARCIC. In what follows, we draw attention to three themes in ARCIC's work on morals which complement the topics presented in our previous sections on *koinonia* and discernment. They are:
    a) the relationship that ARCIC sees between communion and the process of moral judgement;
    b) the foundational moral positions that are held in common by Anglicans and Roman Catholics and an understanding of the factors that have led to divergences between us on certain matters;
    c) the mutually felt need for common study, consultation and common witness on moral questions.

    The relevance of these three themes to the debate about homosexuality is evident.

38. First, the subtitle of *Life in Christ*, namely '*Morals, Communion and the Church*', reflects the close relationship upheld by ARCIC between morals and the communion of the Church. The text begins by noting that Church doctrines and morals are closely inter-connected (2), and that 'authentic Christian unity is as much a matter of life as of faith' (Co-Chair's Preface). The Preface reiterates the statement made in *Church as Communion* (45) that 'acceptance of the same basic moral values' and 'the sharing of the same vision of humanity created in the image of God and re-created in Christ' are constitutive elements of ecclesial communion. The text (3) notes that our *koinonia* determines 'both the structure of the moral order and the method of the Church's discernment and response':

> Life in Christ is a life of communion.... (C)ommunion means that members of the Church share a responsibility for discerning the action of the Spirit in the contemporary world, for shaping a truly human response, and for resolving the ensuing moral perplexities with integrity and fidelity to the Gospel. (96-97)

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[28] Regarding homosexual relationships, *Life in Christ* (87) notes: 'Both our communions affirm the importance and significance of human friendship and affection among men and women, whether married or single. Both affirm that all persons, including those of homosexual orientation, are made in the divine image and share the full dignity of human creatureliness. Both affirm that a faithful and lifelong marriage between a man and a woman provides the normative context for a fully sexual relationship. Both appeal to Scripture and the natural order as the sources of their teaching on this issue. Both reject, therefore, the claim sometimes made, that homosexual relationships and married relationships are morally equivalent, and equally capable of expressing the right ordering and use of the sexual drive. Such ordering and use, we believe, are an essential aspect of life in Christ.

[29] '… our different approach to the formulation of law are relevant (cf. Para 52). Roman Catholic teaching holds that homosexual activity is 'intrinsically disordered', and concludes that it is always objectively wrong. This affects the kind of pastoral advice that is given to homosexual persons. Anglicans could agree that such activity is disordered; but there may well be differences among them in the consequent moral and pastoral advice they would think it right to offer to those seeking their counsel and direction' (*Life in Christ*, 87).

39. Secondly, *Life in Christ* reflects upon the common foundations that Anglicans and Roman Catholics share on moral questions, but also identifies divergences on particular issues, and explores underlying reasons for those divergences. Regarding common foundations, the text notes that both Anglicans and Roman Catholics 'appeal to a shared tradition' and 'recognize the same Scriptures as normative of that tradition', respecting the role of reason in moral discernment (102). We derive from that common heritage a shared vision of human nature and destiny fulfilled in Christ, upholding the same fundamental moral values and identifying common general principles for discerning the mind of Christ on moral questions (1, 12, 23-32, 96). Our centuries of separation led to a breakdown in communication and to developments in our moral teachings and practices 'in isolation from each other' (88; cf. 89); the resulting differences, however, are not on the level of fundamental moral values, but on their application or implementation in practical judgments (37, 83, 84, 86, 88, 96). Reflecting on these differences, *Life in Christ* notes divergent views on the way in which authority on moral matters 'is most fruitfully exercised and the common good best promoted' (49):

> Anglicans affirm that authority needs to be dispersed rather than centralized, that the common good is better served by allowing to individual Christians the greatest possible liberty of informed moral judgment, and that therefore official moral teaching should as far as possible be commendatory rather than prescriptive and binding. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, have, for the sake of the common good, emphasized the need for a central authority to preserve unity and to give clear and binding teaching. (49; cf. 52)

Could it not be that, in our drawing together, we can learn from one another and take advantage of the complementary value of both these factors of moral discernment?

40. Thirdly, *Life in Christ* proposes that steps should be taken even at the present stage of our journey towards unity in view of dealing together with moral issues. It argues for the importance of such a shared approach from the need to give common witness to the world. 'The urgency of the times and the perplexity of the human condition demand that (our two Communions) now do all they can to come together to provide a common witness and guidance for the well-being of humankind and the good of the whole creation' (88). The final section of the text, entitled 'Towards moral integrity and full communion', draws helpful connections between the desire of Anglicans and Roman Catholics for full communion and the desire to resolve our differences on certain moral teachings, noting concisely that the integrity of our moral response requires a movement towards full communion (99ff; 3). After highlighting the benefits of further exchange between our two traditions on moral questions, the Agreed Statement concludes by proposing that 'steps should be taken to establish further instruments of co-operation between our two Communions at all levels of church life (especially national and regional), to engage with the serious moral issues confronting humanity today' (103). Such co-operation would be 'a practical way of expressing the communion we already enjoy, of moving towards full communion, and of understanding more clearly what it entails; without such collaboration we run the risk of increasing divergence' (104).

41. ARCIC's proposal for a communion-seeking approach to moral matters by Anglicans and Roman Catholics has, unfortunately, had limited fulfilment The degree of communion that exists between us has, indeed, been put at risk by both our churches when they have made statements, or acted, on matters that affect communion without taking the other into due consideration. The bishops gathered at Mississauga in May

2000 took up this issue again. They expressed the hope that their Action Plan would in future promote collegiality through various means, including 'examining ways of ensuring formal consultation prior to one Church making decisions on matters of faith and morals which would affect the other Church, keeping in view the agreed statements of ARCIC.'

The decision of an Anglican diocese and province to consecrate as bishop a priest who is in a same-sex relationship seems to us to call into question the criteria for moral discernment that we have found in the ARCIC agreed statement on moral matters. Specifically we ask:

- **Has the decision given sufficient weight to the commonly-held belief, shared by ARCIC, that teaching on homosexuality touches those 'basic moral values' about which agreement is needed in order to establish and preserve communion; and that consequently significant decisions about it should be taken only with the agreement of those who are in communion with each other?**
- **When moral discernment on an issue that matters for communion is undertaken by one part of the Anglican Communion independently of the rest of the Communion, and actions are taken on the basis of that discernment, are not the same kind of fractures of communion that have occurred, and still exist, between Anglicans and Roman Catholics liable to occur within the Anglican Communion?**
- **When such decisions are made by one part of the Anglican Communion with little attentiveness to the ecumenical relationships of their Communion with other churches and Christian bodies, is there not an undermining of the movement towards restoration of full communion to which the churches are committed, and does not there occur by default a serious diminishment of what our relations and our dialogue have already achieved?**
- **Could not the Anglican Communion, as it struggles with this issue, offer a model of how moral discernment might be done, in communion, in a way that takes full advantage of the grace that communion brings to such endeavour?**

E. Conclusion

42. There is an immense amount to be grateful for in the recent developments within Anglican-Roman Catholic relations. Our international commissions have produced valuable work and have given us reasons for hope. Relations between Archbishops of Canterbury and the Holy See have grown and deepened. There are an impressive

number of instruments for theological dialogue, maintaining communication, and fostering relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics - reminders of how deeply our relationship has evolved over the past decades. What we have achieved and the hope this has given rise to accentuate the pain and awkwardness of the current situation for us.

43. One concern which has motivated us is the desire to preserve that which has been gained through our theological dialogue. That is why in writing this report we have particularly wished to show the ways in which we have together articulated our understanding of communion and the dynamics and structures which nurture and sustain it. Communion is simultaneously both a gift and a calling; it makes demands. All through its history, by God's grace, the Church has been striving to bear witness to this gift and respond to the calling, and to accept its demands. The living of communion in history requires an effective way of dealing with new and difficult issues, so as to be able to continue to live and grow together. This applies both within the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, respectively, and it applies also between us as we make every effort to grow closer in our life and witness, in search of the unity which we believe is the will of Christ.

44. We have tried to show how the decision of the Episcopal Church USA to proceed with the recent consecration despite sustained strong opposition from large segments of the Anglican Communion calls into question significant portions of our agreed statements on authority and ecclesiology: the nature of ecclesial communion; the mutual interdependence of churches; the role of episcopal and collegial authority in maintaining the unity of the communion; the process of discernment in the communion of the Church, and the decisive role of Scripture and Tradition therein. This decision also challenges our mutual claim that we uphold a shared vision of human nature and the same fundamental moral values.

45. We believe that interdependence is of the essence of communion. It causes us concern that the New Hampshire consecration went ahead contrary to the resolutions and requests of the Anglican instruments of unity. Archbishop Runcie's warning of the need to confront the 'shibboleth of autonomy' and choose between independence and interdependence has taken on a new urgency in the light of recent events. The new obstacles which have arisen need to be addressed in the strength of our increasingly shared understanding of the apostolic tradition, and with a great resolve born of the profound conviction that communion matters crucially; it is what the world most needs and what the Church empowered by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:13) is charged to show forth and minister.

46. If Anglican Dioceses or provinces were to embrace the notion of a "local option" for important decisions about the teaching of the Church in matters of faith and morals, and if bonds of communion were weakened in the direction of a federation of autonomous provinces rather than a relationship of mutual responsibility and interdependence, then our consensus on the ecclesiology of communion would be seriously undermined, and perhaps irreparably damaged. A federal arrangement cannot adequately express the profound link between the visible gathering of God's people and its life giving source, and is a pale shadow of a proper ecclesiology of communion.

47. We have also sought to show that ARCIC's statements on *koinonia* and discernment in communion are consistent with and find a clear echo in recent Anglican (and Roman Catholic) ecclesiological statements, and are consonant with developments within the

Anglican Communion concerning the four instruments of unity. They are also grounded in 'the ancient common traditions' as we saw these developing in the 4th century.

48. In reflecting on the effect of decisions in the Diocese of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church USA on the communion that Anglicans and Roman Catholics already share, we have taken seriously the following concerns raised frankly by representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in recent discussions with leaders of the Anglican Communion:

> *Unitatis redintegratio* n.13 singles out the Anglican Communion as *occupying a special place* among Churches and Ecclesial Communities with roots in the 16th c. Reformation. On that presumption we have proceeded to maintain relations at the highest level possible. Even at difficult moments in the past we have not sought to downgrade our relations, and do not seek to do so now.
>
> But in the same breath, we must add: the current decisions you face are of monumental ecclesiological importance.... Clearly the ecclesiological decisions you make will be a decisive factor in determining the shape of our future relations. As we see it, the kind of answer you will give to the current situation will tell us what kind of communion you are.
>
> It is profoundly worrisome that the term communion needs increasingly to be qualified by the adjectives *impaired* and *broken*, and that ecclesiological anomalies threaten to pile up as means of responding to tensions within Anglican provinces.... Decisive in this regard, if the term 'communion' is still to be meaningfully applied, is the interpretation given to the autonomy of the Anglican provinces, and the parameters of that autonomy.
>
> If you choose to strengthen the authority structures and instruments of unity within the Anglican Communion and find an effective means of addressing the tendency towards divergence on matters of faith and doctrine, we would clearly see this as enhancing the possibility of meaningful and fruitful dialogue in the search for Christian unity, and of an increasing commitment to shared witness and mission.
>
> It is our overwhelming desire that the Anglican Communion stays together, rooted in the historic faith which our dialogue and relations over four decades have led us to believe that we share to a large degree.

49. The members of this sub-commission are conscious of how many Christians and others are watching the Anglican Communion, to see how it responds to its difficulties. We hope that these reflections, rooted in the work of our theological dialogue commission, will assist your discernment process as you seek the mind of Christ. We find it a hopeful sign that this small group was invited to comment on recent events in the light of the work of ARCIC. We hope that the work of IARCCUM will soon be resumed and that the Commission will be able to carry out its mandate of fostering the reception of the work of ARCIC and finding means of giving tangible expression in our ecclesial lives to the level of faith we share. We accompany the work of the Lambeth Commission with our heartfelt prayers.

50. *Church as Communion* notes that 'the closer we draw together the more acutely we feel those differences which remain', words which resonate strongly for us and for many who, over the past decades, have worked and prayed for closer relations between us. The text closes with a word of encouragement and an invitation to persevere in our pursuit of that unity to which God is calling us:

> The forbearance and generosity with which we seek to resolve these remaining differences will testify to the character of the fuller communion for which we strive. Together with all Christians, Anglicans and Roman Catholics are called by God to continue to pursue the goal of complete communion of faith and sacramental life. This call we must obey until all come into the fullness of that Divine Presence, to whom Father, Son and Holy Spirit be ascribed all honour, thanksgiving and praise to the ages of ages. Amen. (58)

The Members of the Ecclesiological Sub-Commission of IARCCUM were:

Anglicans

The Rt Revd David Beetge – Anglican Co Chair of IARCCUM
The Rt Revd John Baycroft
Dr Mary Tanner
The Revd Canon Gregory Cameron, Anglican Co-Secretary, IARCCUM, *ex officio*

Roman Catholics

The Revd Peter Cross
The Revd Dr Paul McPartlan
The Revd Liam Walsh, OP
The Revd Canon Donald Bolen, Roman Catholic Co-Secretary, IARCCUM, *ex officio*