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**REPORT OF THE PRIMATE'S TASK FORCE**  
**FOR THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS**  
**CONCERNING ADEQUATE/ALTERNATIVE EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT**  
**FOR DISSENTING MINORITIES**

*March 3, 2004*

**HISTORY AND CONTEXT**

**Background**

- 1.1 At the Fall 2003 meeting of the House of Bishops at the Queen of the Apostles Retreat Centre, a motion was passed requesting the Primate to establish a Task Force to examine and report upon Adequate Episcopal Oversight. The Task Force appointed by the Primate was composed of:

The Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Edmonton (Chair)  
The Rt. Rev. George Bruce, Bishop of Ontario  
The Rt. Rev. Tom Morgan, Bishop of Saskatoon (retired)  
The Rt. Rev. Donald Young, Bishop of Central Newfoundland  
Staff support was provided by The Rev. Dr. Michael Thompson, Principal Secretary to the Primate

The mandate of the Task Force is found at Appendix A.

- 1.2 The Task Force commenced its work through conference calls involving the members and also the Metropolitans and the Chancellor of General Synod. It also reviewed existing examples of AEO to be found in other jurisdictions within the Anglican Communion, particularly in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, ECUSA (Navaholand) and proposals for AEO in Australia. Many of these examples relate particularly to the issue of women in ordained ministry and although instructive were not particularly helpful to our task.
- 1.3 In compliance with its mandate, the Task Force visited the Diocese of New Westminster from December 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The Task Force met with a variety of groups including “dissenting but loyal” parishes, the diocesan leadership, the diocesan council; the chancellor, the bishop; clergy from the dissenting parishes (“ACiNW”); other affected parishes and the council of the coalition (“ACiNW”). The Task Force asked questions, key of which was “How have recent events helped or hindered the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ in this place?” and also spent extensive time listening. Key messages were that the situation was unprecedented and urgent, and that whatever option(s) the Task Force could identify should be workable and creative, and should be options with which we, as bishops could live.

- 1.4 Throughout January 2004, members visited or conducted conference calls with bishops and clergy and lay members of the dioceses including representatives from groups such as “Essentials”, “Integrity” and the Prayer Book Society. All dioceses were asked to respond to five questions which had been circulated in advance (see Appendix B). The responses were circulated to all members in preparation for the drafting of this report. The Task Force met in Toronto from February 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004 to draft this report. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> the Task Force conferred by conference call in preparation for a conference call with the Metropolitans on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The final report was circulated to bishops and to the wider church in early March in order that the bishops might prepare adequately for discussion of its contents at their meeting in Regina on April 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

### **The National Dimension**

- 2.1 It is important to understand the context of this report. For over 35 years the House of Bishops has been seeking ways to address the issue of homosexuality in contemporary society. In 1976 a Task Force presented a lengthy report to the House of Bishops for consideration. By 1979 the bishops as an interim measure issued a statement based upon the belief as Christians, that homosexual persons, as children of God, have a full and equal claim with all other persons, upon the love, acceptance, concern and pastoral care of the church. The statement also contained four pastoral guidelines for the bishops as they considered the admission of individual persons to the church’s ordained ministry which indicated that (a) Our present and future considerations about homosexuality should be pursued within the larger study of human sexuality in its totality; (b) We accept all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, as equal before God; our acceptance of persons with homosexual orientation is not an acceptance of homosexual activity; (c) We do not accept the blessing of homosexual unions; and (d) We will not call into question the ordination of a person who has shared with the bishop his/her homosexual orientation if there has been a commitment to the bishop to abstain from sexual acts with persons of the same sex as part of the requirement for ordination (see Appendix C). This statement was described by the then Primate, Archbishop Scott, as interim: “Our statement is not meant to be, in any way, legislation or a final doctrinal statement”.
- 2.2 Throughout the 1980’s, the House of Bishops held a number of study sessions around the issue of human sexuality, culminating with the establishment of a new Task Force in 1991. General Synod in 1992 mandated the NEC and the House of Bishops to produce a study of human sexuality with special reference to homosexuality and homosexual relationships. The Bishops of Niagara, Cariboo and Ontario were appointed as the representatives of the House to the Commission. The Commission produced study materials “Hearing Diverse Voices, Seeking Common Ground”.

- 2.3 At its April meeting in 1997, the House agreed to update the guidelines of 1979 in light of new pastoral awareness while at the same time retaining the original intent of the guidelines. The House noted that “In undertaking this task we seek to articulate how far we have come, as well as to acknowledge those areas where continued study and dialogue is necessary”. At that same meeting a motion which would have acknowledged that individual bishops could for pastoral reasons set aside the guidelines was tabled. The motion was discussed at the Fall 1997 meeting and was defeated. At that same meeting the revised guidelines were issued (see Appendix D).
- 2.4 In May 1998, the bishops were briefed by the Bishop of New Westminster on the nature of dialogue in the Diocese of New Westminster and received the reports from the New Westminster Commissions on theology, liturgy and jurisdiction. The House appointed the Bishop of Edmonton and the Archbishop of Huron to the Council of Advice of the Diocese of New Westminster. Between 2000 and 2002 the House debated the issue on many occasions including, in October 2001, the possibility of AEO. At the April 2002 meeting, the Archbishop of Toronto briefed the House on the Final Report on Conversations on Human Sexuality in the Anglican Communion (see Appendix E), which had been facilitated by the Public Conversation Project. In June of that year, the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster approved for the third time a motion requesting the diocesan bishop to authorize a rite of blessing for same sex unions. The bishop gave his consent to the Act of Synod and representatives, lay and clergy, of a number of parishes withdrew from synod.
- 2.5 The 1998 General Synod commended the House of Bishops for their 1997 Statement On Human Sexuality.
- 2.6 In 2002 the House of Bishops and the Council of General Synod received the report of the Jurisdiction Task Force. (Appendix F)
- 2.7 At the Fall 2002 session of the House, a message to the churches was issued. This message made clear to the church the level of disagreement within the House and began the discussion in earnest about AEO (see Appendix G).
- 2.8 The Spring 2003 meeting continued the discussion in the face of a unilateral intervention by the Bishop of Yukon and his inhibition by the Bishop of New Westminster, and in light of the request to the Metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon that he initiate legal proceedings against the Bishop of Yukon. During the meeting the Bishop of New Westminster received the concurrence of the House with his decision to appoint the then Bishop of Fredericton, Bishop Hockin, as “Episcopal Visitor” to the Diocese of New Westminster.

- 2.9 By the time the House met again in October 2003, the first blessing of a covenanted same gender relationship had taken place in the Diocese of New Westminster. There was extensive debate in the House of Bishops over the way forward, a debate which resulted in the passage of two motions. The first motion asked the Primate to establish this Task Force and the second requested the Bishop of Yukon to withdraw his offer of Episcopal oversight to the dissenting parishes, and requested that legal proceedings against him and the dissenting clergy in the Diocese of New Westminster be stayed.

### **The International Dimension**

- 3.1 While the discussion on human sexuality was taking place in the Canadian church it was also high on the agenda of the Communion as a whole. In Kuala Lumpur, in February 1997, eighty delegates representing the Anglican Churches of the South met for the second “Anglican Encounter of the South”. This meeting issued a Statement on Sexuality. Also, the Lambeth Conference; the Primates Meetings and the Anglican Consultative Council engaged in discussions concerning the issue of human sexuality. The 1988 Lambeth Conference, recognizing that there were a number of issues which could threaten the unity of the Communion, passed Resolution 72 regarding episcopal responsibilities and diocesan boundaries. This motion affirmed the historical position concerning diocesan boundaries and the authority of bishops within these boundaries (see Appendix H).
- 3.2 At Lambeth 1998, Resolution 72 was reaffirmed by Resolution V.13 (Appendix J). Lambeth 1998 also passed a hotly debated resolution I.10 which, among other things, upheld the definition of marriage as a lifelong union between a man and a woman and the belief that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage. The resolution affirmed the Christian faith of those of homosexual orientation who sought the pastoral care and moral direction of the church and God’s transforming power for their lives and the ordering of relationships. The resolution rejected homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture but called upon all Anglicans “to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation”. The Resolution noted that the conference “cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those in same gender unions”. The Conference requested the primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done in the area of human sexuality (see Appendix K). In addition to debating and deciding Resolution I.10, a section of the Lambeth Conference explored issues in human sexuality over several days (see Appendix L). The Conference also passed a resolution relating to the unity of the Anglican Communion and called upon the provinces of the Communion “to make such provision including appropriate Episcopal ministry as will enable them to live in the highest degree of communion possible” (see Appendix M).
- 3.3 The issue of human sexuality also features largely in recent meetings of the Primates of the Anglican Communion. In Porto, Portugal, in March 2000, a large

part of their final communiqué addressed the question of differing interpretations of Scripture as they relate to the issue of homosexuality. The communiqué noted that unity of the Communion as a whole' still rests upon the Lambeth Quadrilateral: the Holy Scriptures as the rule and standard of faith; the creeds of the undivided church; the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself; and the historic episcopate. The communiqué noted that "only a formal repudiation of this would place a diocese or Province outside of the Anglican Communion". The communiqué expressed concern that Resolution I.10 had been rejected by some dioceses particularly with respect to the blessing of same sex unions and the ordination of declared non-celibate homosexuals. The meeting also addressed the irregular consecrations in Singapore as being unhelpful in the quest for AEO by those who believed their pastoral needs were not met by the church and consequently felt alienated from the life of the church.

- 3.4 The Primates returned to the issue when they met at Kanuga, U.S.A. in March 2001 when they committed themselves to seek for ways to secure pastoral care for all in our Communion. When the Primates met in Canterbury in April 2002, they addressed the issue of unity by referring to the four instruments of unity: The Archbishop of Canterbury; the Lambeth Conferences; the Primates meetings and the Anglican Consultative Council. They acknowledged a fifth instrument "unwritten law common to the churches of the Communion". At ACC 12 in Hong Kong, the Archbishop of Canterbury in his presidential address noted with regret the actions of some dioceses and submitted a resolution which called upon all dioceses "considering matters of faith and order that could affect the unity of the Communion to consult widely in their provinces, and beyond, before final decisions are made" (Resolution 34). The Archbishop noted that "we cannot insist that they do so, but as a Consultative Body we can urge them to do so". In his address he made reference to Resolution 4 of the first Lambeth Conference which stated "That, in the opinion of this Conference, unity in faith and discipline will be best maintained among the several branches of the Anglican Communion by due and canonical subordination of the synods of the several branches to the higher authority of a synod or synods above them".
- 3.5 When the Primates met once more in Gramado, Brazil in May of 2003, the decision of the Diocese of New Westminster was on the hearts and minds of many in the Communion, as was the possible confirmation of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire by the ECUSA General Convention. The final communiqué addressed specifically the issue of rites for blessing same sex unions as follows, "The question of public rites for blessing same sex unions is still a cause of potentially divisive controversy. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for us all when he said that it is through liturgy that we express what we believe and there is no theological consensus about same sex unions. Therefore we as a body cannot support the authorization of such rites". The communiqué carefully separated the need for pastoral care from that of doctrine.

- 3.6 Shortly after the Primates' meeting, the first blessing occurred in New Westminster which prompted the Archbishop of Canterbury to respond by publicly stating that "As the recent Primates' Meeting made clear, the public liturgy of the church expresses the mind of the church on doctrinal matters and there is nothing approaching a consensus in support of same sex unions". In August 2003 the Archbishop of Canterbury called for the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the Primates in October. This meeting reaffirmed the Lambeth Resolutions as having "moral force and commanding the respect of the Communion as its present position on these issues". The Primates requested that the Archbishop of Canterbury establish a Commission, originally envisaged by Archbishop Carey at Lambeth 98, to report within twelve months. The Primates also called on "those provinces concerned to make provision for adequate Episcopal oversight for dissenting minorities within their area of pastoral care in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the primates".
- 3.7 In February 2004 the Lambeth Commission began its work. The Reverend Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan became the Canadian member.

### **AEO and the Canadian Church**

- 4.1 After reviewing the responses by dioceses to the questions posed by the Task Force it is clear that the concept of AEO receives only grudging acceptance and is seen as a last resort to prevent schism. The majority of those consulted, regardless of the position they take on the issue of same sex blessings, believe that AEO must be interim in nature, and must provide security and safety to those who request it. In response to the question as to what other issues might precipitate a request for AEO, many of those consulted found it difficult, initially at least, to identify anything beyond the current issue.
- 4.2 Many expressed concern that, if AEO was to extend beyond the issue of blessing of same sex unions it could open up a Pandora's box which would render *episcopal* unmanageable. Many suggested that AEO must be temporary in nature since to institutionalize it would *de facto* institutionalize schism. Lay people had far less concerns about the jurisdictional aspects of *episcopal* noting that society in general was no longer "hung up" on hierarchical authority. Some suggested that bishops get out of the feudal monarchical mode of behaviour. Several suggestions for models of AEO were discussed. Questions concerning property, apportionment and other logistical concerns were expressed by almost all of those consulted.
- 4.3 Many felt that there would be a requirement for a "conscience clause" but that it should only be capable of being revoked by those who had first invoked its protection. We also heard from many quarters of the potential economic impact upon dioceses of a decision by General Synod to affirm the blessing of same sex unions. If AEO could stem the potential loss of membership in such dioceses, then it must be explored. However two of the smaller dioceses indicated that they

could not afford the cost of an AEO bishop and expressed concern that if the authorization of the blessing of same sex unions occurred, and led to a drop in membership, their diocese might experience bankruptcy.

- 4.4 On several occasions those consulted requested that any AEO bishop be named from outside the dioceses at either the Provincial or National level.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

### **The Mandate**

- 5.1 The Church is the Body of Christ and no member appropriately says to another member, “I have no need of you” (1 Corinthians 12.13). We are all members of the same Body.
- 5.2 The vocation of the bishop is to “the apostolic work of leading, supervising and uniting the Church” (BAS page 631). The bishop serves as chief pastor guarding the faith, unity and discipline of the Church. Such descriptions as “share with your fellow bishops in the government of the whole Church” (BAS page 637) point to a ministry that is meant to unite the people of God. With these thoughts in mind, how then was it possible for the Task Force to reach consensus on any recommendation for AEO?
- 5.3 It is no secret that the distress experienced over the approval of the blessing of same sex unions is profound. The Task Force heard time and again voices in the consultations saying that this is an issue so serious that it can place one’s salvation in jeopardy. Indeed, some believe that to remain silent about such action is itself sinful and is turning one’s back upon one’s brothers and sisters in Christ. In these circumstances no conscience clause is sufficient for the dissenting parties to find peace and harmony in the Diocesan fellowship of believers. Nor do those who seek AEO have any patience with the accusation of homophobia as the root and cause of their reservations and criticism.
- 5.4 The pain and suffering experienced by Christian gays and lesbians is equally undeniable. Dioceses with a significant gay and lesbian voice are asking that the pastoral response might include the blessing of same sex unions.
- 5.5 Such division of theological understanding and interpretation of the authority of Scripture, is judged to be so widespread across the Church, that the Task Force believes healing and reconciliation can be served best by the implementation of AEO. While AEO is an extraordinary solution, even temporarily, the Task Force members see it as a unique response to uniquely threatening circumstances.
- 5.6 In recent years the doctrine of the economic Trinity, wherein the relationships within the divine life are stressed, has been held up as a symbol of the unity of the life of the church, a symbol which invites us all to mutual responsibility in the



mission of the Body of Christ. In no way is this a call to uniformity, but it does include an expectation that no part or member of the church become a stumbling block for others.

- 5.7 When this vision of mutuality is placed side by side with the concept of “unity in diversity” which Anglicans have extolled for years; and the commitment to “mutual responsibility and interdependence” that dates back to the Anglican Congress in Toronto in 1963, it becomes clear that what was envisaged then is not what we experience now. However much we are each trying to follow Jesus, the global village, with both its instant communications and local cultural accommodations, highlights diversity. “Now we see in a glass darkly” (1Corinthians 13.12).

## **Models of AEO**

- 6.1 In the course of the consultations, it was apparent that all consulted, laity, clergy and bishops, are deeply concerned with the mission of the church. On the one hand, the Task Force clearly heard from many of those consulted that there was concern for a form of Episcopal leadership which advanced the mission of the church, even if it involved changes to our current understanding of episcopacy. On the other hand, the bishops consulted articulated their understanding of episcopacy in its current form as the means of guarding the faith and unity of the church, and expressed concern that to change the current order could compromise the mission of the church. The Task Force sees the way forward in the voluntary agreement of the bishops to some temporary ceding of jurisdiction. All of the following models are premised on this “generosity of spirit”.

### **6.2 Model #1**

- 6.2.1 In the event that General Synod passes a resolution permitting dioceses to exercise local option on the matter of the blessing of same sex unions, this Task Force recommends that such option be exercised only by a resolution of diocesan synod. In dioceses affirming local option by a resolution of diocesan synod, dissenting and distressed parishes would be given the option of being placed in trust by the Diocesan Bishop. That Trust would be delivered into the hands of a Metropolitan, who then names the AEO bishop assigned by the Metropolitan of the Province. The parish(es) are then delivered into the hands of the AEO bishop by the Metropolitan of the Province. The selection of AEO bishops happens by nomination of the Metropolitans with the concurrence of the majority of the National House of Bishops, and Metropolitans will maintain a current list of such bishops. It is recommended that the AEO be a bishop living in reasonable proximity to the parish(es) requesting AEO. The AEO bishop is designated as Episcopal Assistant to the Metropolitan.
- 6.2.2 In keeping with the repeated admonition heard by the Task Force that the need for AEO is urgent and that the appointment of an AEO bishop must be temporary, we

suggest that the appointment be for a six month term, renewable but not exceeding six years, with a review every two years. This “In Trust” model is similar to a trial separation in a marriage and assumes that there is the will on all sides to repent and work towards reconciliation. This timeframe also permits the church at various levels to continue to pray, study and discern God’s will and allows our Province to consider this subject at two further General Synods, and to receive the outcomes of deliberations from within the Anglican Communion.

- 6.2.3 This model of AEO assumes a conscience clause for parishes and clergy who decline to bless same sex unions. It is our hope that General Synod would provide such a conscience clause and ensure its continuing availability for parishes and clergy.

### **6.3 Model #2**

- 6.3.1 In the event that General Synod declines to permit local option in the matter of the blessing of same sex unions, the diocesan bishop of New Westminster and Metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon volunteer to temporarily cede jurisdiction over distressed and dissenting parishes and their clergy to a Metropolitan who then assigns them to an AEO bishop to allow for the healing of relationships. Such a bishop is designated Episcopal Assistant to that Metropolitan.

- 6.3.2 Such AEO bishop should be a bishop living in reasonable proximity to New Westminster who holds theological convictions supportive of the dissenting parishes. The nomination to be made by the Metropolitans with the concurrence of the majority of the House of Bishops. Appointment would be for a six month term, renewable up to but not exceeding six years, with a review every two years.

### **6.4 Model #3**

- 6.4.1 While not strictly Alternate Episcopal Oversight, attention needs to be drawn to the Supplemental Note 6.5.3 regarding informal arrangements between bishops to provide supplemental episcopal pastoral care to distressed and dissenting parishes.

### **6.5 Supplemental Notes**

- 6.5.1 Church planting: Conflict will only increase if the parishes under the AEO bishop engage in church planting within the boundaries of diocesan parishes. Parishes receiving AEO will agree not to plant churches.

- 6.5.2 Relationship between the Diocesan Bishop and the AEO Bishop: Whatever differences of theology and ecclesiology exist between the Diocesan Bishop and the AEO bishop in any diocese, it is imperative that the highest possible level of collegiality exist. Even in matters of doctrinal disagreement and where one

bishop feels compromised by the appointment of the other, there is the need for an appreciation of their common discipleship to Jesus Christ. The common study of the Scriptures, praying together and sharing of intentions and ministry developments will only assist our church to hasten towards reconciliation.

- 6.5.3 Informal arrangements between a Diocesan Bishop and another bishop (not AEO): It is possible that some dioceses may make informal arrangements with a retired bishop or a bishop of an adjacent diocese to care for the needs of dissenting or distressed parishes in a diocese which permits the blessing of same sex unions. While this arrangement would not include jurisdiction, it might include consultation on appointments, invitations to preside at confirmations and a voice on the committee dealing with postulants for ordination. Care must be taken that such arrangements, which may serve the needs of the diocesan bishop very well, not leave the dissenting and distressed parishes feeling bereft. A request for AEO should not be downgraded to alternative or supplemental episcopal pastoral care, without the support of the concerned parishes.
- 6.5.4 Financial hardship caused because of AEO: If the provision of AEO has a catastrophic impact on the finances of a diocese, we recommend that General Synod and/ or Provincial Synods be approached to provide the means to address this hardship.

## 6.6 Application Procedure for AEO

- 6.6.1 Parishes simultaneously notify the diocesan bishop and the Metropolitan of their desire to seek AEO after following this procedure. (In the event that the diocesan bishop is the Metropolitan application may be made to the Primate.)
- 6.6.2 A short statement signed by the rector, wardens and vestry must state why the diocesan bishop and/or area bishop can no longer offer adequate episcopal oversight for the parish.
- 6.6.3 The decision to request an AEO bishop must have been reached at a duly constituted meeting of the members of the congregation(s) of the parish as established in the diocesan canons at which at least 80% of those eligible to vote and present vote in favour of the request. Prior to this, the parish elected council(s) must have voted at least 80% in favour.
- 6.6.4 A statement promising full payment of the parish apportionment (as agreed upon by the Diocesan and the AEO bishop) to the office of the AEO bishop needs the signature of rector and wardens. Apportionment paid to the AEO bishop would cover the expenses of the AEO bishop and thereafter be divided to assist with Diocesan services (eg. payroll; benefits administration; General Synod apportionment; Provincial Synod assessment ) and the programs and services offered by the AEO office. The decision of how to divide this money would be

- made by the AEO bishop, Diocesan Bishop, and Metropolitan after due consultation with the diocese and AEO parishes.
- 6.6.5 AEO clergy and parishes of the AEO bishop would have voice but not vote at the diocesan synod. (At least one clergy and one lay person per AEO parish.)
  - 6.6.6 AEO parishes in any diocese would be governed by an AEO Council that would have representation on the Executive Council of the Diocese (voice not vote). One representative for every five parishes under the AEO bishop plus an open invitation to the AEO bishop.
  - 6.6.7 The diocese would have one representative with voice but not vote for every five parishes under the AEO bishop on the AEO Council.
  - 6.6.8 An AEO bishop would owe obedience to the Metropolitan of the Province or the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. The AEO bishop would be a member of a Provincial and National Houses of Bishops.
  - 6.6.9 Property and buildings are held in trust (without prejudice) and leased for \$1.00 per year to the AEO Bishop. Diocesan canons and regulations, including those pertaining to buildings remain, in effect for AEO parishes and clergy unless an agreement is reached by the Diocesan Bishop, the AEO bishop and the Diocesan Chancellor that a suspension of canon or regulation is required. Then the request for such suspension would be forwarded to the Diocesan Executive Council and/or Diocesan Synod.

## **7 Review**

This document shall be reviewed by the National House of Bishops every two years and if required, amended accordingly.

## Appendix A

### **Terms of Reference for the Task Force:**

1. To consult with metropolitans, bishops, pertinent clergy and lay leaders in order to identify the range of possible circumstances in which alternative/adequate episcopal oversight might be called for. As part of this undertaking, to meet with the public leaders of those parishes no longer accepting the ministry of the Diocesan bishop of New Westminster, and to meet with the Bishop, Dean, Regional Deans and Archdeacons of that Diocese.
2. To consult with the Chancellor of General Synod and others to establish the legal and canonical realities within which such alternative/adequate episcopal oversight must abide.
3. To consult with the Primate, and through him the Archbishop of Canterbury, as to the adequacy of the proposed framework for such episcopal oversight, given the request of the Primates' Statement of October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003.
4. To establish one or more proposals that address the possible need for such alternative/adequate episcopal oversight.
5. To make a progress report to the Metropolitans not later than the end of February, 2004.
6. To present the recommended proposal(s) to the House of Bishops at its meeting in Regina in April, 2004, providing adequate advance materials to its membership as is helpful.
7. In order to permit the Bishop, and the designated leaders of the Diocese of New Westminster, and the leaders of those parishes that are requesting alternative/adequate episcopal oversight in that Diocese to have particular input into the consultation referred to in #1 above, to introduce the expectation of the House of Bishops resolution of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003 that a mediator be appointed to assist in the identification of possible parameters of alternative/adequate episcopal oversight for the particular situation in New Westminster.
8. To appoint such a mediator on behalf of the Primate, and share such information as is deemed helpful and necessary by the various parties with the understanding that the information sharing will extend to Task Force members and the Primate, and the Reverend Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan.
9. The Reverend Dr. Michael Thompson will provide staff support for this work.

10. Cost for the work of the Task Force on Alternative/Adequate Episcopal Oversight will be borne by the Office of the Primate.
11. To ensure that any proposal include a time limit beyond which the proposed model would not be extended without review, and establish a process for such review.

## Appendix B

December 19, 2003

To: The Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada  
From: Michael Thompson, Principal Secretary to the Primate

Re: Consultations concerning “adequate episcopal care for dissenting minorities”

Dear Bishops,

The members of the Task Force on AEO are hoping to consult within each of the dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada, for the most part during the month of January. You may already have heard from one of the members (Bishop Matthews, Bishop Bruce, Bishop Morgan, Bishop Young) to arrange such a consultation in your diocese.

Below is a draft of the questions to which the bishops seek responses. They may change slightly in construction, but the general nature of each question is, I think, unlikely to change.

1. The October 16 statement from the Primates, which led to the establishment of this Task Force, relates to AEO around dissent concerning the blessing of same-sex unions. Are there circumstances or issues within your context (diocese, province) that might appropriately call for AEO?
2. What would you look for in a model of AEO to address such a situation?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages you would anticipate if such AEO were pursued?
4. What role does generosity of spirit have to play in addressing such circumstances and issues?
5. Do you believe that establishing the possibility of AEO is to the benefit of the Anglican Church of Canada? Please discuss the rationale for that belief.

The members of the task force are hoping to provide an update to the Metropolitans, and to bring a draft proposal to the House of Bishops in April. Thank you for your cooperation.

Every blessing of the season to you and to your household.

Michael Thompson

## Appendix C

### PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

I address you, as your Primate, to share with you several important facts regarding the recent resolution of our Canadian House of Bishops concerning the ordination of persons with homosexual orientation and serious consideration.

1. The recent resolution does not represent a new position or a departure of tradition on the part of your Bishops. The Church, throughout its history, has admitted to her ordained ministry those persons who have experienced a vocation to that sacred ministry, and whose vocation has been ratified by the appropriate authoritative bodies and persons within the Church. You should also be aware that there is now, in our Church, a very careful psychological and vocational screening process during a candidate's training period prior to ordination, with a detailed report on each individual being provided for the Diocesan Bishop. Further, the Church has always required an exemplary standard of behaviour for those who were to be admitted to the ordained ministry. This is seen specifically in the words of the Ordination questioning (Prayer Book page 652) where the ordinand promises to be a "Wholesome example and pattern to the flock of Christ", and in the Canons on Discipline of the Clergy in each Diocese of the Church.
2. The resolution of the House of Bishops is meant to be a pastoral guideline for the Bishops, as they consider persons to be admitted to the Church's ordained ministry. The resolution re-affirms the standards that have always been expected of all clergy.
3. The pastoral guidelines included in the resolution re-affirm the discipline which is common to all clergy, regardless of sexual orientation. Again, there is no change in expectation or in the exercise of discipline.
4. The House of Bishops, in the resolution which has been adopted, re-affirms that the only appropriate place for sexual activity is within the marriage relationship. As an affirmation of this position, and as a pastoral guideline for our Bishops and others dealing with candidates for ordination, we have therefore agreed upon the four guidelines in our resolution:
  - “1. Our present and future considerations about homosexuality should be pursued within the larger study of human sexuality in its totality.
  2. We accept all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, as equal before God; our acceptance of persons with homosexual orientation is not an acceptance of homosexual activity;
  3. We do not accept the blessing of homosexual unions. (For background to this see Primate's Press Statement pages 2 and 3.)



4. We will not call in question the ordination of a person who has shared with the Bishop his/her homosexual orientation if there has been a commitment to the Bishop to abstain from sexual acts with persons of the same sex as a part of the requirement for ordination."

It should be clearly understood that, in the resolution, the House of Bishops has not instituted a new mandate to ordain persons of homosexual orientation. We continue to set forth the same standards which have guided our discipline and pastoral ministry in the past. We share these matters with you so that you may understand our actions and deliberations more fully.

Yours faithfully,

The Most Reverend Edward W. Scott, Primate,  
The Anglican Church of Canada.

## Appendix D

### HUMAN SEXUALITY : A STATEMENT BY THE ANGLICAN BISHOPS OF CANADA - 1997

#### **The Background**

In 1976 the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada sought advice as it faced the issue of homosexuality in contemporary society and how the church ought to relate pastorally, and in terms of ordination. A task force presented a lengthy report to the bishops.

By 1979 the bishops had committed themselves to further study and they requested the preparation of study materials to help further discussion at all levels of the church. These materials were published in 1985.

In 1979, as an interim measure, the bishops issued a statement based on the following belief:

We believe as Christians, that homosexual persons, as children of God, have a full and equal claim with all other persons, upon the love, acceptance, concern and pastoral care of the Church.

As well, the Bishops issued a four point pastoral guideline for themselves as they considered the admission of individual persons to the church's ordained ministry.

1. Our present and future considerations about homosexuality should be pursued within the larger study of human sexuality in its totality.
2. We accept all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, as equal before God; our acceptance of persons with homosexual orientation is not an acceptance of homosexual activity;
3. We do not accept the blessing of homosexual unions;
4. We will not call into question the ordination of a person who has shared with the bishop his/her homosexual orientation if there has been a commitment to the Bishop to abstain from sexual acts with persons of the same sex as part of the requirement for ordination.

In referring to this guideline in the press, Archbishop Scott, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada at that time said, "Our statement is not meant to be, in any way, legislation or a final doctrinal statement. It is a pastoral statement and we intend it to assist us in the exercise of our pastoral ministry within the Church."

The house held a number of study sessions on the topic of human sexuality through the 1980's. In 1991 a new task force was constituted by the Primate.

At the General Synod of 1992 a major block of time was devoted to an open forum on the topic. More materials were made available for study and by 1994/95 approximately 170 groups and 2500 people had used the study guide "Hearing Diverse Voices, Seeking Common Ground".

At the 1995 General Synod, an important report was presented, following a hearing, which led to a motion being presented and strongly supported which: Affirmed the presence and contributions of gay men and lesbians in the life of the church and condemned bigotry, violence and hatred directed toward any due to their sexual orientation.

This report recommended among other things, that the process of dialogue continue; that all of us should, "learn and reflect more about our sexuality as a whole," and that the dialogue should be extended so that the, "whole church family has an opportunity to be involved". The Faith Worship and Ministry Committee of the ACC was given a mandate to provide leadership to the church to ensure a continuation of the dialogue.

All of this effort has fostered a greater understanding of what it is to be a gay man or lesbian in the church and a heightened sense of pastoral concern on the part of the church. Also, as gay men and lesbians have found greater acceptance in the church, they have been enabled to share their experiences in a more public way to the benefit of the whole church which has become increasingly aware of the breadth and depth of their contribution.

At its April 1997 meeting, discussing this topic for the first time in open session, the House of Bishops continued its deliberations and requested the task force to redraft the 1979 guideline in the light of new pastoral awareness while at the same time retaining the original intent of the guideline. In undertaking this task we seek to articulate how far we have come, as well as to acknowledge those areas where continued study and dialogue is necessary.

Theological reflection and pastoral action in the Church since 1979 have focused on four key areas, and it is these that shape our considerations in this statement. The church has reflected on the place of gay and lesbian persons in society; the place of gay and lesbian persons in the church; the significance of committed sexually active relationships between people of the same sex and the significance of such relationships for ordination of gay and lesbian persons.

### **Gay and Lesbian Persons in Society**

As Christians we believe that homosexual persons are created in the image and likeness of God and have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, concern and care of the church. As an expression of this love and care, the gospel of Jesus Christ compels Christians to oppose all forms of human injustice and to affirm that all persons are brothers and sisters for whom Christ died.

It is on the basis of these theological insights, which remain pertinent irrespective of any considerations of the appropriateness or otherwise of homosexual acts, that the Anglican Church of Canada has affirmed that gay and lesbian persons are entitled to equal protection under the law with all other Canadian citizens. Thus, this House supported the passage of bill C-33 that made sexual orientation a prohibited ground for discrimination under the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. We call upon the church and all its members to continue to work to safeguard the freedom, dignity and responsibility of every person and to seek an end to discrimination.

### **Gay and Lesbian Persons in the Church**

We are thankful to see a new sensitivity emerging towards gay and lesbian persons in the Church. No longer can we talk in the abstract. We are experiencing a growing awareness that the persons of whom we speak are among us. They are our sons and daughters. They are our friends and relatives. This recognition has not always been present. The story of the Church's attitude to gay and lesbian people has too often been one of standing at a distance, even of prejudice, ignorance and oppression. All of us need to acknowledge this, and to repent for any part we may have had in creating it.

In our baptism we covenant to seek and to serve Christ in all persons. We now call the church to reaffirm the mutuality of that covenant, a covenant that encourages and enables us to love others as Christ loves us. This covenant will no longer allow us to regard those among us whose orientation is homosexual simply as "needy objects" for pastoral care. Instead we are partners, celebrating together the dignity of every human being, and reaching out together for the wholeness offered to us in the Gospel.

The church affirms its traditional teaching that only the sexual union of male and female can find appropriate expression within the covenant of Holy Matrimony. However, we recognize that some homosexuals live in committed sexual relationships for mutual support, help and comfort. We wish to continue open and respectful dialogue with those who sincerely believe that sexuality expressed within a committed homosexual relationship is God's call to them, and we affirm our common desire to seek together the fullness of life revealed in Christ.

### **Blessing of Covenanted Relationships**

We continue to believe that committed same sex relationships should not be confused with Holy Matrimony. The house will not authorize any act that appears to promote this confusion. There is, and needs to be, ongoing discussion about how to respond appropriately to faithful and committed same sex relationships. In the context of the ongoing debate this would necessitate respectful listening and learning about the nature of such relationships and their meaning for the persons involved in them. We recognize that relationships of mutual support, help and comfort between homosexual persons exist and are to be

preferred to relationships that are anonymous and transient. We disagree among ourselves about whether such relationships can be expressions of God's will and purpose.

While consensus may be unlikely in the near future, we believe that study and dialogue continue to be fruitful. As we continue to listen together to scripture, tradition, and reasoned argument based on the experience of the Church, including and especially the experience of its gay and lesbian members, we grow in our recognition that our disagreements reflect our attempts to be faithful to the Gospel in our different personal and pastoral contexts. As long as such dialogue continues to be fruitful we believe it should continue. We are not ready to authorize the blessing of relationships between persons of the same sex. However, in interpreting the Gospel, we must always reflect on the context to which it is addressed. We are, therefore, committed to ongoing study of human sexuality and of the nature and characteristics of human intimacy and family life as it exists in our society.

### **Ordination of Gay and Lesbian Persons**

Among our clergy there are some who are gay or lesbian. Their ministries are often highly dedicated and greatly blessed. God has endowed them with many intellectual and spiritual gifts and we give thanks for their ministries. We reaffirm that sexual orientation in and of itself is not a barrier to ordination or the practice of ministry within the church. Within the wider parameters of suitability, it is the manner in which sexuality is expressed that must be considered. Our intimate relationships are an expression of the most profound possibilities for human relationships, including our relationship with God (Eph.5:32). At ordination, candidates promise to live their lives and shape their relationships so as to provide a "wholesome example" to the people of God (BCP, 642). Exemplary behaviour for persons who are not married includes a commitment to remain chaste.

### **Conclusion**

Our discussions over the past few years have taught us much. We do not have a common mind on all things. We see in part and we know in part. Where we disagree we need to continue to read the scriptures together and to engage in dialogue, that we might listen for what the Spirit is saying to the Church today.

## Appendix E

### A final report from the International Anglican Conversations on Human Sexuality

#### **Foreward**

*In 1999, the year following the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury convened an international conversation of bishops to consider the topic of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular. He asked me to chair the group, which included twelve bishops and primates. Aided by experienced and skilled facilitators, we continued the conversation, with some changes in membership, meeting annually for several days in retreat settings over the next three years.*

*The purposes of the meetings were to deepen our understanding of each others' views, as well as the theological perspectives and personal/cultural experiences in which these views are grounded.*

*Some of the participants had never met. Some knew others only by name, and came with preconceptions about where others stood on the substance of the conversations. Engaging in the disciplines of prayer, worship, agreed covenants and structured conversation, we together created a sacred space in which our differences became sources of mutual enlightenment and new insights.*

*Honoring one another by refusing to impute ill motives and by valuing the opinions of those with whom we disagreed, we became a kind of laboratory in which to grapple with our topic. The ensuing conversations were challenging, moving, and always honest, direct and conducted with charity and mutual respect.*

*We all felt ourselves enormously privileged to have had the opportunity to engage in this conversation, and we offer the following report on our learnings, hoping that it might be a gift to the Anglican Communion.*

*We are deeply grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his vision of how our work might be of value in these times when a community that can honor and learn from difference can be a sign of hope to a fractured world.*

The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church in the United States

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## **Commendation for Report on Human Sexuality**

The document before you is the result of a huge effort to bring Anglicans together to listen to each other and share their own views on human sexuality. It arose out of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, and I am very grateful to the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States for chairing the Working Party which has produced this summary of its discussion.

It will no doubt disappoint the vast majority of Anglicans who believe the practise of homosexuality to be inherently wrong. It will no doubt disappoint homosexuals in the Communion who continue to feel marginalised, misunderstood and maligned, and those who with them argue for a change of belief and of policy.

However, the Working Party was not set up with the intention necessarily of resolving the disagreements among us; but to deepen the dialogue and to find ways of bringing theology, experience and pastoral care together. The result of the Conversation demonstrates what dialogue involves—an encounter with people with real feelings, real principles, real hopes and fears. It has demonstrated that another way is possible, a method of working together through difficult issues we face as churches. I really do like this face-to-face method, and want simply to commend it to all leaders of the Communion. Dialogue is not something we simply urge upon others. We use dialogue in order to clarify where misunderstandings may lie; to probe deeper into the motives for adopting this or that position in regard to certain issues; and to appreciate better (even though we may not agree with) the reasons why some people's views differ so radically from our own. In this way, our deepest search for truth will not be divorced from the fellowship we need for truth to emerge.

The Most Rev. & Rt. Hon. George L. Carey  
Archbishop of Canterbury  
The Anglican Communion

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## **A final report from the International Anglican Conversations on Human Sexuality**

Following the Lambeth Conference of 1998 we, bishops from different Provinces of the Anglican Communion, were called together at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury for a series of Conversations regarding issues of human sexuality.

According to the Archbishop's mandate our purpose was to "help move the whole Communion forward from the Lambeth resolution." We have brought to our Conversations a wide range of cultural and personal experiences, as well as theological convictions. We have met annually over the past three years for a period of four days. Those who were present for each meeting are noted below.

The Rt. Rev. Simon Chiwanga,  
Bishop of Mpwapwa  
Present: 1st, 2nd years

The Rt. Rev. Terence Finlay,  
Bishop of Toronto  
Present: 1st, 2nd years

The Most Rev. Frank Griswold,  
Presiding Bishop and Primate, Episcopal Church, USA  
Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years

The Rt. Rev. Roger Herft,  
Bishop of Newcastle  
Present: 2nd year

The Rt. Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Bishop of Kaduna  
Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years

The Rt. Rev. Chilton Knudsen,  
Bishop of Maine Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years The Most Rev. Peter Kwong,  
Archbishop of Hong Kong  
Present: 1st, 2nd years

The Most Rev. Glauco Soares de Lima,  
Primate of Brazil and Bishop of Sao Paulo  
Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years

The Rt. Rev. John Lipscomb,  
Bishop of Southwest Florida  
Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years



The Rt. Rev. Michael Scott-Joynt,  
Bishop of Winchester  
Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years

The Rt. Rev. Peter Watson,  
Archbishop of Melbourne  
Present: 1st, 2nd, 3rd years

The Most Rev. Rowan Williams,  
Archbishop of Wales  
Present: 2nd year

As we arrive at the conclusion of our third and final consultation we have come more profoundly to treasure and respect, through one another's presence, the Anglican Communion as God's gift. We recognize that our communion with one another is grounded in our shared creedal faith, in word and sacrament and in our common prayer. With humility we have come to acknowledge that as well as being a Communion we are also in the process of becoming a Communion in a deeper and fuller way, even as we struggle with difficult questions.

We have come to understand that our diversity of culture, language, history and ecclesiology enriches our common life. We also acknowledge that our diversity demands a high degree of forbearance with one another as we live within the multiple contexts in which we practice our faith as members of the Anglican Communion.

We do not underestimate the gravity for the Communion of the challenge on the part of some to change our traditional teaching regarding human sexuality. During our Conversations we have noted the fear of some within our Communion that any departure from the received teaching might in time become mandatory, and therefore compromise the conscience of many.

We rejoice that the critical issue regarding homosexual behavior that has brought us together for these three Conversations provided an impetus toward a deepening of our relationships with one another. We have discovered that we share many points of convergence, while we recognize that there are still critical points of disagreement in our common life and ministries as bishops of the Church.

As we have reflected on the Lambeth Conference of 1998 we have come to believe that the "legislative" process is often an inadequate way to discern the mind of Christ in some of the sensitive issues that face us as we continue to grow as a Communion of churches.

Truth can never be the private possession of one person or group within the Communion. It is only as we continue in conversation together within the whole Body of Christ that we are able to hear and test the Spirit speaking.

We believe that communion with one another will grow as we learn to speak the truth in love. We regret that we have often participated in and responded to half-truths about others. Our conversations have led us to long for more open and honest communication that will help us build up the life of our worldwide faith community.

We have committed ourselves to the hard work of seeking to be open to one another, listening in a spirit of hospitality and charity. We believe that respect for our Communion is fostered when we as bishops engage in face-to-face conversation across provincial lines. We encourage the development of similar conversations between other lay and ordained provincial leadership around issues vital to our common life. This discipline of seeking the truth and speaking the truth is especially important when information flows freely around the world due to contemporary technology. Our experience has reaffirmed our conviction regarding the importance of face-to-face communication. No amount of e-mail can take the place of it.

Our Conversations have led us to agree on the following points:

- The Scriptures are foundational for all aspects of our work.
- The questions at issue center on homosexual behavior, not on homosexual people. We are called to love homosexual people as we are called to love any other people.
- Homosexuality is a much more varied phenomenon than the singular noun suggests; there are no "assured results" available to us from medical and other research into origins, causations, etc. Even if there were, Christians would not be relieved of the responsibility of making theological and ethical judgments.
- The issue of homosexual behavior, and the divisions to which it leads, are a burden and a distraction from pressing needs for attention to mission, as well as to other issues of high priority for our Provinces.
- There is urgent work to be done in provinces, to strengthen commitment to marriage and to fidelity within it. Our failures on this front weaken our ability to speak with credibility with homosexual people or about homosexual sexual behavior.
- We reaffirmed Section 5 of the Lambeth Conference Report (1998), on human sexuality which noted some of the expressions of sexuality - beginning with promiscuity and every kind of abusive sexual behavior - which are plainly contrary to the Christian way.

- Because the role and authority of the Bishop and understandings of collegiality differ from Province to Province there is an increased potential for misunderstandings amongst us.
- Recognizing our Anglican Communion as a gift, we do not want to see it fragmented. For it to be further divided by the issue of homosexual behavior would be the ultimate sexualization of the Church, making sexuality more powerful, or more claiming of our attention, than God.

Our Conversations have revealed and clarified the following points of disagreement:

- We were not able to reach a common mind regarding a single pattern of holy living for homosexual people.
- We have different perceptions of the relationship of the authority of Scripture to that of Reason and Tradition, and contemporary experience.
- We approach and interpret particular Scriptural passages in different ways.

Reflecting on our conversations we discern the following fruit of our work together:

- While our differences remain, the relationships between us have been strengthened and deepened. We have gained in mutual respect, affection, and appreciation of one another as followers of Jesus and fellow bishops.
- Our Conversations have strengthened and clarified our differing convictions, not diluted them. They have helped us to understand others' views, and their roots, more fully.

The following conditions were among those that made our Conversations fruitful:

- The central place made for Scripture in the Conversations, and the willingness of all participants to credit the integrity of others' interpretations.
- Each meeting has been grounded in worship, and has been held in places devoted to prayer, reflection and hospitality.
- The number of participants was small enough to support and sustain a sense of community.
- There was a consistency of attendance.

- At the outset we established an agreed covenant (see Appendix A) governing our meetings, which ensured an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust.
- We have discovered again the importance of restraining our desire to persuade the other to agree with our position.
- We discovered in our own experience the importance of "interpretive charity": imputing the best intentions to our colleagues and other members of our Communion, telling the better stories about them, checking (if possible at first hand) before drawing conclusions.
- We have been free to discover points both of divergence and of agreement.
- We have come to value both the respect that allows us to develop what we have to say without contradiction, and the love that questions clearly so that we can discover more together. We hope that this context can be more widely replicated when Bishops gather -- including when they meet as Houses of Bishops.
- Expert facilitation from outside the group has been essential.
- Three meetings, with space between them, allowed us to digest and reflect upon what we heard and shared.
- We have discovered for ourselves that this kind of Dialogue is not an effort to influence participants to agree to a particular position. (See "Thirty Theses on Christian Responses to People of Other Faiths" Lambeth 1998 Section II Report "Called to Live and Proclaim the Good News.")

We have noted the following topics for further exploration:

1. Does the Holiness, that we all understand ourselves bound through Christ to grow into, to encourage, and to teach, exclude or include homosexual behavior within committed relationships?
2. What constitutes loving and responsible pastoral care of homosexual people? What may be the workings of God's grace in this context?

As a consequence of our Conversations we recommend the following:

1. There should be opportunities throughout the Communion for ongoing structured conversations regarding difficult issues. These should engage

persons at all levels within and between Provinces and should be guided by agreed covenants similar to those that have assisted our Conversations.

2. Group visitations of bishops between provinces should be explored to enhance understanding within the Communion. Such exchanges should include attendance at Provincial Synods and Conventions.
3. Those proposing changes to the Church's traditional teaching on human sexuality or other significant issues should take account of both ecumenical and inter-faith implications, and the impact upon other Provinces of our Communion.
4. It is important that bishops have the opportunity to better understand other positions than their own.
5. Bishops across the Communion could be encouraged to develop a common "rule of life" as a way of strengthening our worldwide fellowship.

This paper is respectfully submitted by those participating in the final conversation in the hope that the fruit of our work together can be of use to the Anglican Communion we deeply treasure. We also pray that God will continue to use our Communion as a means of reconciling all things to himself in Christ.

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## Appendix A

### Covenants

1. We will respect each other's faith journey.
2. We will listen respectfully.
3. We will ask inviting questions.
4. We will have flexible understanding, attempting to understand from the point of view of others.
5. We will seek to learn from all perspectives.
6. We will keep the topic in mind when speaking.
7. We will not speak as individuals for the group apart from our common statement.

8. We will not repeat each other's comments after we leave. We are free to share learnings without attribution to individuals. Otherwise, we will respect the confidentiality of other's statements.

9. We will clarify the nature of our speaking. We will request clarification in good faith.

## Appendix F

In Service of Communion:  
the Final Report  
of  
The General Synod Task Force on Jurisdiction  
to  
The Council of General Synod  
and  
The Canadian House of Bishops  
February 2002

The origins of “Jurisdiction” as a feature of the life of the Church reach back to the early days of the post-resurrection community in Jerusalem. Jurisdiction of some form is present in the “twelve” who were chosen by Jesus, and who, in the aftermath of the ascension, chose Matthias to make up their number and to take the place of Judas Iscariot.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly there in the creation of the ministry of deacons,<sup>2</sup> and in the validation of Saul’s conversion and calling to preach the gospel to the gentiles.<sup>3</sup>

Saul’s ministry provoked one of the most memorable of the early church’s exercises of jurisdiction in the interests of the growth and nurture of the Church. Confronted with the issue of who might be included within the “ecclesia” in the wake of the wholesale conversion of uncircumcised gentiles in Asia Minor, the early church met (c.49 CE) for what is now referred to as the Council of Jerusalem. The issues were aggravated by centuries of ill-will and prejudice. Gentiles were, by definition of Jewish prejudice, unclean, idolatrous and given to unspeakable acts of immorality. The early Christians, all of whom were Jewish, quite simply could not conceive of how such people might be included in the church as full members unless they repudiated their race and culture, submitting to circumcision as the sign of the sincerity of their repentance and inclusion

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 1:12-26

<sup>2</sup> Acts 6

<sup>3</sup> Galatians 1:13-24

into the covenant of the law as delivered by Moses. The “Judgement of James”<sup>4</sup> represents, in the truest sense, the exercise of jurisdiction in the interests of the “communion” of the whole church. It was, in effect an exercise in collegiality. The Jewish Christians had some of their worst fears about the allegedly unclean lifestyle of gentiles put to rest, while the gentiles were recognized as full members of the church without the prohibitive requirement of circumcision.

In a Christian community, that is what “jurisdiction” is all about: the careful and caring exercise of authority to guide and enable the growth and lively faith of the church.

This exercise of authority has its roots in the early church’s memory of Jesus’ promise to His disciples in the “Farewell Discourses” of the Gospel according to St. John. There, in response to the disciples’ dismay at his immanent departure from their midst, the Christ promises that the Father will send the Holy Spirit (the enabler) “who will lead you into all truth.”<sup>5</sup> All exercise of authority as jurisdiction within the church proceeds from the church’s confidence in the truth of this promise. This does not mean that the church is inerrant or infallible. It can, has, does, and will make mistakes. But the efficacy of the Spirit’s guidance of God’s Church is such that it cannot be in error indefinitely or irretrievably. The Spirit always guides, always corrects, always brings the Church (sometimes slowly and painfully) “into all truth”.

Church history provides a rich parade of examples of how the Spirit of God has, through the ministry of authority exercised as jurisdiction, renewed and redirected the practice and teaching of the Church. One such example is in the matter of slavery. It is obvious from the evidence of Acts and the letters of St. Paul that the early Christians, while affirming that all baptized persons were “new creations” in God’s grace, and brothers and sisters in Christ, nevertheless accepted without protest or comment the brutal institution of slavery. With rare exceptions, this continued to be the case until the early 1800’s when the witness of William Wilberforce and his colleagues brought about the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. Wilberforce acted out of Christian conviction, but was

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<sup>4</sup> Acts 15:1-21

<sup>5</sup> John 16:12



violently opposed by many of his fellow-believers, who argued in support of slavery, citing precedents from scripture. The slavery example is, in some senses, extra-ecclesial, but stands nevertheless as an example of how the Spirit can and does “guide” us into “all truth”.

More recent examples, of the guidance of the Holy Spirit drawn from the experience of the Anglican Church of Canada include the amendment of the Marriage Canon to permit the remarriage of divorced persons and the action of General Synod to permit the ordination of women to the priesthood and to the episcopate. In both cases, long-entrenched traditional practices and teachings of the Church were challenged and found wanting, and the exercise of authority as jurisdiction enabled a renewal of the Church in its pastoral and sacramental life.<sup>6</sup>

None of this happened without debate, argument and disagreement. The Church is not, nor has it ever been a “perfect” institution inhabited by a “perfect” people. The Church as the “bride of Christ... without spot or wrinkle”<sup>7</sup> exists only as eschatological promise – a vision of what we will become in the fullness of God’s grace! What we are now is a company of people whom Jesus has called together into communion, with the intention that the life which we share might nurture us in our journey of faith, and might by example and witness, call others to do so as well. It is in this context, through the tradition of two millennia of grace, that the exercise of authority as jurisdiction can be seen to be the servant of the greater good of communion.

### **COMMUNION AND AUTHORITY**

Our shared communion is one of God’s greatest gifts to the Church. This is both literally and figuratively true. The Eucharist stands at the heart of our collective experience as Christians. It is the symbol of our life together, and serves as the touchstone for our wider sense of communion. The Eucharist draws us all together, including those who would otherwise be separated by political belief, social status, economic class, cultural difference, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, to name but a few of our human distinctions.

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<sup>6</sup> See “Authority as Jurisdiction” p.5 below.

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 5:25-28

Archbishop Michael Peers has recently suggested that our primary obligation as Christians is to be in communion, and that this obligation requires that our commitment to orthodoxy be tempered by an acknowledgment of human fallibility in comprehending the mind of God. In the Primate's words, there is "no absolute other than God".<sup>8</sup>

Historic Anglicanism has always valued communion over certainty. This was so even in the less-than-charitable times of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. When Puritans within the Church of England pressed her to authorize the enforcement of a detailed confessional statement, after the style of Genevan Protestantism, the Queen, acting as supreme governor of the Church of England, told them that "we do not build windows into men's souls." Four and a half centuries later, the Virginia Report<sup>9</sup> suggests that communion aims "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".

Communion, then, is about freeing us and enabling us to be the best that we can be.

Communion equips us to rise to God's challenge. It allows the Church to be "the effectual sign of the supernatural in the midst of the natural order", to adopt Michael Ramsey's description.<sup>10</sup>

This understanding of the centrality of communion to the life of the Church carries rich implications for our approach to the concept of authority. "Authority" is a complex term. It can be understood in a number of ways. One speaks of authority to do or to compel something. Here "authority" is used synonymously with "power", and can imply dominance. "Authority" can also be a noun: one is an authority on a given subject. Here "authority" relates to learning or expertise. "Authority" may also be used to describe a person or body whose ideas or decisions are "authoritative". This use of the term implies that the authority is persuasive or, to put it another way, that the pronouncements are perceived by the hearer to be legitimate.

If our primary obligation as Christians is to be in communion, and if communion is about freedom and assistance to fulfill God's purpose for our lives, then a Christian

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Peers, Power in the Church: Prelates, Confessions, Anglicans, Arnold Lecture, 6 December, 2000, Halifax Nova Scotia.

<sup>9</sup> The Virginia Report, Inter-Anglican Doctrinal Commission, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Ramsey, From Gore to Temple, (London, 1959)

understanding of authority would seem to accord most closely with the third definition suggested above: influence flowing from the person or body who is “authoritative”. Christian authority is not rooted in hierarchy; nor is it a mere manifestation of power. When James and John asked to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus in glory, our Saviour replied:

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.<sup>11</sup>

Jesus is the pattern of servant leadership for His Church. His authority was not an authority of status or domination, but an authority based on His willingness to share His power with all who would follow Him. Christian authority is life giving, for it is rooted in communion. In the Anglican tradition, the communal understanding of authority has been described by Bishop Stephen Sykes as “dispersed authority”, authority that arises from a continuous process of decision making amongst all participants.<sup>12</sup> This concept of authority underlies the synodical governance of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Synodical governance means walking together. In this journey, while we bring with us our several differences, we infuse our relationship with patience and a loving acceptance of those who hold different viewpoints. Walking together in this fashion requires a necessary ambiguity, but it has also enabled us to grow and to move forward along the way of becoming, in greater maturity, the People of God. The witness of this journey is the discovery that time is needed to reflect together, to live in relationship with one another, despite our differences, so as to understand better what it means to be in relationship. We constantly seek the middle way, not abandoning our beliefs, but finding a means to hold our differences in creative tension.

We advocate this pattern of civility as the path to follow, rather than to declare definitive statements which have the potential to separate, divide and exclude. We are reminded of

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<sup>11</sup> Mark 10:42-45

<sup>12</sup> Stephen W. Sykes, ed., Authority in the Anglican Communion: Essays Presented to Bishop John Howe, (Toronto, 1987)

our obligation to be “in communion”. The experience of our Anglican way is that decisions which affect the doctrine and discipline of the Church involve a process which demands study, prayer and witness on the part of the whole Church. It must be remembered, however, that because of our human limitations, those decisions must always be regarded as provisional. In the end the “Gamaliel principle”<sup>13</sup> is the one sure test. If a thing is of God it will flourish; if not it will wither.

### **AUTHORITY AS JURISDICTION**

Authority and jurisdiction are not synonymous. Jesus is described as speaking with authority but of having no jurisdiction over those to whom he spoke. Jurisdiction is having the legal right to exercise authority. In the polity of the Anglican Church of Canada there are four basic levels of jurisdiction – the parish, the diocese, the province and the General Synod. Our structure is confederal. When the provinces of Canada and Rupert’s Land, with the dioceses of British Columbia, Caledonia and New Westminster, came together in the 1890s to form the General Synod, the gathering defined the responsibilities and duties that were within the jurisdictions of the General and Provincial Synods leaving all undefined responsibilities and duties to the jurisdiction of the dioceses.

The Solemn Declaration states that among the responsibilities of the General Synod is “by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments and Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in His Holy Word and as the Church of England hath received and set forth the same.”<sup>14</sup>

The Declaration of Principles states in Section 6 that “subject to the provisions of Section 7 (which describes the jurisdiction of the provincial Synod) the General Synod shall have authority and jurisdiction in all matters affecting in any way the general interest and well-being of the whole church and in particular:

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<sup>13</sup> Acts 5:34-39

<sup>14</sup> Hand Book of General Synod, p.5

(1) the definition of the doctrines of the Church in harmony with the Solemn Declaration adopted by this Synod.”

Section 6 (Jurisdiction of the General Synod), Section 7 (Fundamental Principles) and Section 8 (Ecclesiastical Offences and Disciplinary Proceeding) can be amended by a two-thirds majority in each order voting at two successive General Synods, but changes cannot be effected without the consent of the provincial synods. Diocesan synods need not be consulted.

Section 11 c) i) of the Declaration of Principles states that canons dealing with doctrine, worship or discipline and all alterations to such canons must be referred for consideration (but not approval) to diocesan and provincial synods before coming into force. It seems clear, therefore, that the intention of the founders of General Synod was to place responsibility for matters of doctrine and discipline within the jurisdiction of General Synod.

From time to time, matters which affect the whole church but which are not covered by the canons of General Synod arise. The best example in recent years is the ordination of women to the priesthood. General Synod established a procedure by which the issue could be studied and a decision reached without enacting a canon. If an issue is understood to be one of doctrine or discipline, whether it be already dealt with in the canons or not, it belongs within the jurisdiction of General Synod.

The difficulty lies, of course, in the determination of which matters are of doctrine and discipline.

### **DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE, TRADITION ETHICS AND MORALITY**

When the Church speaks of “doctrine” in its most precise sense, what is meant by this is that body of agreed belief concerning the nature of God, the nature of humanity, the nature of God’s redemption of humanity in Jesus Christ, and the nature of humanity’s response to God’s redemption. The source of doctrine thus defined is the historical

reflection of the Church upon the witness of the canonical scriptures, illuminated by the witness of the Holy Spirit's activity in reason and tradition.

“Doctrine” thus defined, belongs to the “Church Universal” and is not the property of any particular denomination with the “Church”. Consequently, while we may affirm and from time to time interpret “Doctrine”, we may not alter it or add to it.<sup>15</sup> This, in the terminology of the “Righter” decision is what is meant by “core doctrine” – that which the Church affirms as being encompassed and embodied in the creeds and expressed in our offering of worship.

Proceeding from “Doctrine” by way of living witness, is the “Discipline” of the Church. Because we collectively believe certain things to be true about God, humanity and the relationship between God and humanity, the Church orders its common life in certain ways, and it accepts a certain “Discipline”. In general terms this “Discipline” is the corporate witness offered by the Church in its way of life which expresses its common understanding of the things which it believes as “Doctrine”.<sup>16</sup>

This use of the terms “Doctrine” and “Discipline” must be distinguished from the traditions of the Church and from the implications of the traditions as expressed in moral and ethical standards. The distinction here is that “Doctrine” and “Discipline” deal with matters “necessary to salvation” whereas “traditions” and “morals and ethics” relate to the mutable development of theological hypotheses and their application in particular circumstances from time to time. To quote Richard Hooker,

Lest...the name of tradition should be offensive to any, considering how far by some it hath been abused, we mean by traditions, ordinances made in the prime of Christian tradition, established with that authority which Christ has left to His Church for matters indifferent, and in that consideration requisite to be observed, till like authority see just and reasonable cause to alter them...

(Hooker, Lawes ....V LXV.2II p. 318)

Serious issues for the Church arise, not in a theoretical mode but out of the life and experience of the Church. Three widely contentious issues of the last fifty years, the

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<sup>15</sup> Declaration of Principles, 1893 s.11a)i)

<sup>16</sup> Sec. 8 General Synod Canon on “Discipline” where the term is specifically defined with reference to the authority of ecclesiastical courts to deal with specific offences.

marriage of divorced persons, the reception of the Holy Communion by the unconfirmed and the ordination of women to the priesthood all arose out of pastoral concern.

The marriage of divorced persons became an issue because of the church's desire to provide pastoral care for the increasing number of its members who were divorced. Responses varied greatly across the church. In some dioceses re-married persons were not allowed to receive the sacrament. In others they had to refrain from receiving it for a period of time. Still others had no restriction.

There had been a General Synod Canon on marriage since 1902, which was amended in 1946 to allow a church annulment after a civil divorce. The presence of that canon made it clear that the matter could only be dealt with by General Synod. In 1967 when a new canon was proposed it was ruled to be a matter of discipline and therefore had to be passed at two successive synods having been referred to Provincial and Diocesan Synods for consideration (but not approval) between the two votes.

The question of the reception of Holy Communion by those who are not confirmed, and in particular children, arose out of a renewed emphasis on baptism conferring full membership in the Church, changed perceptions about how and when children learn, and a centuries old uneasiness with the theology and practise of confirmation. The practise of admitting only the confirmed to the sacrament was clearly based on the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer which is Canon XIV of General Synod and could therefore have been considered a part of the discipline or worship of the church. Yet when, over the course of several General Synods, the matter was debated and decided it was not treated as a matter of discipline or worship and no attempt was made to effect a change in Canon XIV. The Synod simply established guidelines under which Bishops and Dioceses could implement the practise.

The ordination of women to the priesthood arose because many in the Church believed the exclusion of women from ordered ministry was unjust and women were voicing their belief that they were being called. There was no mention of ordination to the priesthood being restricted to men in our constitution, canons or the Book of Common Prayer and so

it was not immediately clear that this was a matter for General Synod. Indeed a case could have been made that it was properly a diocesan matter since ordination is a prerogative of the bishop. However, by common consent, General Synod did deal with it, not by enacting a new canon but by a resolution that authorized the ordination of women to the priesthood and requested the House of Bishops to implement it.

It is apparent that there is no single clear process to determine whether or not a matter is one of doctrine, discipline or worship and therefore the prerogative of General Synod. It is through struggling with an issue that the 'mind of the church' about where and by whom it should be resolved emerges.

The confederal nature of our church means that undesignated powers rest with the dioceses and/or diocesan bishops. This seems to suggest that when it is unclear at what level a matter should be decided, the power to decide it should rest at the diocesan level unless the 'mind of the church' deems it to belong at another level. In short, when jurisdiction in a contentious matter is not specified, it will be decided at the highest level that has the will to decide it.

### **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS POSED IN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- (a) The Task Force has reviewed canons of the General Synod, and of provincial and diocesan synods relating to jurisdiction over doctrine and discipline. A summary of our findings is contained in Appendix 1 of our report.
- (b) The Task Force has reviewed the Strategic Plan and determined that it offers no guidance on jurisdiction over doctrine and discipline.
- (c) The Task Force consulted by mail bishops, chancellors and principals of theological colleges and a copy of our interim report was submitted to the General Synod in 2001 for discussion and comment.
- (d) While the Task Force concludes that formal jurisdiction over doctrine and discipline rests with the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, in practice this jurisdiction has been exercised with a careful circumspection and with due regard to



local expression. In a country as diverse as Canada with a wide variety of settings in which the Church is called to ministry, this flexibility of jurisdiction has served the Church well and can continue to do so. Therefore, we do not propose any further efforts at definition of jurisdiction.

The Most Rev. David Crawley

The Rev. Canon Dr. Kim Murray (Chair)

The Most Rev. Arthur Peters (until December 31, 2001)

The Hon. Ronald Stevenson

Dr. Stephen Toope

## **APPENDIX: JURISDICTIONAL CANONS IN REVIEW**

We have reviewed the constitutional documents of the General Synod and the four Provincial Synods as they relate to doctrine and discipline.

The Solemn Declaration adopted by the General synod in 1893, and expressly accepted by the Provincial Synods of Rupert's Land, Ontario and British Columbia, commits the Church to maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments and Discipline of Christ as commanded by Him as the Church of England had received them and set them forth in its formularies and in the Articles of Religion. The Synod of the Province of Canada made a similar commitment, in different language, in its 1861 Declaration of Principles.

Originally, “matters of doctrine, worship and discipline” were declared to be within the jurisdiction of the General Synod subject to certain rights and canons of the Provincial Synods of Canada and Rupert's Land and of the synods of dioceses outside those provinces.

Now, the Declaration of Principles of the General Synod gives that Synod authority and jurisdiction with respect to “the definition of the doctrines of the Church in harmony with the Solemn Declaration.” None of the provincial synod constitutions assert provincial jurisdiction over any matter of doctrine.

The General Synod also has authority and jurisdiction with respect to several aspects of ecclesiastical discipline, i.e. the trial of persons accused of ecclesiastical offences. The constitutional documents of the Synods of the Provinces of Canada, Rupert's Land and Ontario say those synods have authority with respect to the ecclesiastical discipline and trial of bishops. That overlaps, and may conflict with, the authority of the General Synod. Those documents, as well as the Declaration of Principles of the General Synod, give the provincial synods jurisdiction with respect to the Provincial Courts of Appeal, the regulation of the ministrations of clergy and the oaths and subscriptions of clergy. The Constitution of the Provincial Synod of British Columbia neatly defines that Synod's

jurisdiction as “the power to deal with all matters affecting the general interest of the church within its territorial jurisdiction other than those delegated to the General Synod.” It does not contain any specific reference to either doctrine or discipline.

Canons and resolutions of the General Synod of a coercive character or involving penalties or disabilities are not operative in the Province of Rupert’s Land until they are accepted by the synod of that province. The constitution of the Provincial Synod of Rupert’s Land also preserves its right to pass on any subject that fell within that synod’s jurisdiction in 1893 when the General Synod was created.

Acting under its authority in matters affecting the general interest and well-being of the whole Church, the General Synod has legislated with respect to discipline in the broad sense of the right ordering of Christian life and community, e.g. in certain provisions of the licensing and marriage canons. It has made non-canonical pronouncements in other areas of discipline with respect to such matters as admission to communion and the ordination of women.

## Appendix G

In the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada, meeting in Mississauga on October 28, 2002, issues the following statement in response to the decision of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster to bless same-sex unions.

We are called to be one in the Body of Christ. (John 17:21) We know that on the issue of same-sex unions differing convictions are deeply held in the House of Bishops, throughout our church and beyond. The decision of New Westminster has caused pain for some and joy in others. Over the past four years this Diocese undertook an extensive process of study that led them to their decision. We recognize that members of the diocese on every side of the issue have suffered pain.

Eight parishes of the Diocese of New Westminster have requested alternative Episcopal oversight for themselves. Before the fracture widens we urge all involved to engage in a process of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) on the basis of the general principles passed by the Diocesan Synod in June 2002. Although the precise terms of the conversation will be established within the Diocese we propose that the following elements should be part of it.

1. The conversation should be enabled by a mutually agreed to facilitator.
2. The process should provide 'safety' for all participants by setting at least these standards:
  - a. Being respectful of each others' faith journey.
  - b. Listening respectfully
  - c. Asking 'inviting' questions
  - d. Attempting to understand from the view points of others

We request that those outside the diocese respect the integrity of this process and allow it to proceed without intervention.

In recent years some dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada have made individual decisions to recognize or forbid, and in this one instance, to bless same-sex unions. We have spent much of our time at these meetings discussing our response to these situations. We are unable to speak with a unanimous voice on this issue of national concern especially with regard to the subject of homosexuality in the light of scripture. We are referring the matter of the blessing of same-sex unions to our national governing body, the General Synod (2004) for discussion and if possible, resolution.

We agree that we will not make individual decisions in any additional dioceses during the interim. Until the time of resolution all bishops are asked to uphold the 1997 Guidelines of the House of Bishops on Human Sexuality.

We call the church to prayer in this difficult and demanding time in our life in Christ.

## Appendix H

### RESOLUTION 72: EPISCOPAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DIOCESAN BOUNDARIES

This Conference:

1. reaffirms its unity in the historical position of respect for diocesan boundaries and the authority of bishops within these boundaries; and in light of the above
2. affirms that it is deemed inappropriate behaviour for any bishop or priest of this Communion to exercise episcopal or pastoral ministry within another diocese without first obtaining the permission and invitation of the ecclesial authority thereof.
3. urges all political and community leaders to seize every opportunity to work together to bring about a just and peaceful solution.

## Appendix J

### RESOLUTION V.13: EPISCOPAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DIOCESAN BOUNDARIES

This Conference:

- (a) reaffirms Resolution 72 of the Lambeth Conference of 1988 "Episcopal Responsibilities and Diocesan Boundaries"; and
- (b) requests the Primates to encourage the bishops of their Province to consider the implications of Resolution 72 of the Lambeth Conference 1988.

## Appendix K

### RESOLUTION I.10: HUMAN SEXUALITY

This Conference:

- (a) commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality;
- (b) in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage;
- (c) recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;
- (d) while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;
- (e) cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;
- (f) requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;
- (g) notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.

## Appendix L

### **Theme Three: Human Sexuality<sup>17</sup>**

Human sexuality is the gift of a loving God. It is to be honoured and cherished by all people. As a means for the expression of the deepest human love and intimacy, sexuality has great power.

The Holy Scriptures and Christian tradition teach that human sexuality is intended by God to find its rightful and full expression between a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage, established by God in creation, and affirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Holy Matrimony is, by intention and divine purpose, to be a life-long, monogamous and unconditional commitment between a woman and a man. The Lambeth Conference 1978 and 1998 both affirmed 'marriage to be sacred, instituted by God and blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ'.

The New Testament and Christian history identify singleness and dedicated celibacy as Christ-like ways of living. The Church needs to recognise the demands and pressures upon both single and married people. Human beings define themselves by relationships with God and other persons. Churches need to find effective ways of encouraging Christ-like living, as well as providing opportunities for the flourishing of friendship, and the building of supportive community life.

We also recognise that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We wish to assure them that they are loved by God, and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ. We call upon the Church and all its members to work to end any discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and to oppose homophobia.

Clearly some expressions of sexuality are inherently contrary to the Christian way and are sinful. Such unacceptable expression of sexuality include promiscuity, prostitution, incest, pornography, paedophilia, predatory sexual behaviour, and sadomasochism (all of which may be heterosexual and homosexual), adultery, violence against wives, and female circumcision. From a Christian perspective these forms of sexual expression remain sinful in any context. We are particularly concerned about the pressures on young people to engage in sexual activity at an early age, and we urge our Churches to teach the virtue of abstinence.

All human relationships need the transforming power of Christ which is available to all, and particularly when we fall short of biblical norms.

We must confess that we are not of one mind about homosexuality. Our variety of

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<sup>17</sup> *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998, Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1999, pp. 93-95*



understanding encompasses:

- those who believe that homosexuality is a disorder, but that through the grace of Christ people can be changed, although not without pain and struggle.
- those who believe that relationships between people of the same gender should not include genital expression, that this is the clear teaching of the Bible and of the Church universal, and that such activity (if unrepented of) is a barrier to the Kingdom of God.
- those who believe that committed homosexual relationships fall short of the biblical norm, but are to be preferred to relationships that are anonymous and transient.
- those who believe that the Church should accept and support or bless monogamous covenant relationships between homosexual people and that they may be ordained.

It appears that the opinion of the majority of bishops is not prepared to bless same sex unions or to ordain active homosexuals. Furthermore many believe that there should be a moratorium on such practices.

We have prayed, studied and discussed these issues, and we are unable to reach a common mind on the scriptural, theological, historical, and scientific questions which are raised. There is much that we do not yet understand. We request the Primates and the Anglican Consultative Council to establish a means of monitoring work done in the Communion on these issues and to share statements and resources among us.

The challenge to our Church is to maintain its unity while we seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discern the way of Christ for the world today with respect to human sexuality. To do so will require sacrifice, trust and charity towards one another, remembering that ultimately the identity of each person is defined by Christ.

There can be no description of human reality, in general or in particular, outside the reality of Christ. We must be on guard, therefore, against constructing any other ground for our identities than the redeemed humanity given us in him. Those who understand themselves as homosexuals, no more and no less than those who do not, are liable to false understandings based on personal or family histories, emotional dispositions, social settings and solidarities formed by common experiences or ambitions. Our sexual affections can no more define who we are than can our class, race, or nationality. At the deepest ontological level, therefore, there is no such thing as “a” homosexual or “a” heterosexual; there are human beings, male and female, called to redeemed humanity in Christ, endowed with a complex variety of emotional potentialities and threatened by a complex variety of forms of alienation.

## Appendix M

### RESOLUTION III.2 : THE UNITY OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

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

- a. believes such unity is essential to the overall effectiveness of the Church's mission to bring the Gospel of Christ to all people;
- b. for the purpose of maintaining this unity, calls upon the provinces of the Communion to uphold the principle of 'Open Reception' as it relates to the ordination of women to the priesthood as indicated by the Eames Commission; noting that "reception is a long and spiritual process" (Grindrod Report);
- c. in particular calls upon the provinces of the Anglican Communion to affirm that those who dissent from, as well as those who assent to, the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate are both loyal Anglicans;
- d. therefore calls upon the Provinces of the Communion to make such provision, including appropriate episcopal ministry, as will enable them to live in the highest degree of Communion possible, recognising that there is and should be no compulsion by any bishop in matters concerning ordination or licensing;
- e. also affirms that "although some of the means by which communion is expressed may be strained or broken, there is a need for courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect, and prayer for one another, and we confirm that our desire to know or be with one another, remains binding on us as Christians."