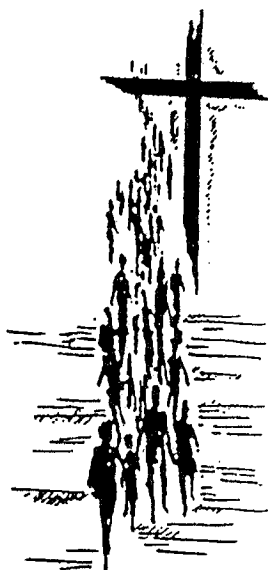


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# **ON THE WAY TOGETHER: A PEOPLE CREATED FOR THE COMMON GOOD**



*A Study Guide to the Joint Statement of the Anglican/Roman Catholic  
Dialogue of Canada*

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# ON THE WAY TOGETHER: A PEOPLE CREATED FOR THE COMMON GOOD

## Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada

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## JOINT STATEMENT

### ***Preface:***

Members of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada have been revisiting our common moral tradition in response to the statement of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church*.<sup>1</sup> We wish to affirm this joint statement, in particular the recognition that "Anglicans and Roman Catholics derive from the Scriptures and Tradition the same controlling vision of the nature and destiny of humanity and share the same fundamental moral values" (*Life in Christ*, Introduction). This insight applies to our participation as members of Canadian society. We reaffirm that in our common heritage there are principles which shape our participation in the human community. These are increasingly challenged by the present climate of social and economic change. As representatives of our two churches, we affirm them as a basis of our common witness to the Gospel and an expression of our common faith in the Trinity.

### ***Introduction - A Shared Heritage:***

In our times Canadians face many critical questions. The rapid movement of globalization is producing social instability and economic uncertainty for many. Together with men and women across Canada, we ask, "What kind of society will we have in the new millennium?" and "Where are the decisions being made which affect our lives?" For each day more women and men are confronted by the prospect of unemployment. Workers face growing demands. The poor and the vulnerable encounter increasing hardship. Families struggle with mounting pressures. Young people despair for their future.

We are encouraged to see new networks of collaboration and cooperation being forged as people seek to respond to these growing concerns. We, the members of the Anglican - Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada, see in our present context a call to our two churches to witness together to the unity and communion which God desires for the human community. The uncertainty of our moment in history renders our common witness more urgent than ever.

Through dialogue and study the members of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada have discovered anew that we share a common heritage which informs our participation in human community and in the shaping of our society. This common heritage is rooted in our common faith in the Trinity. Through baptism we participate in the life of the divine Trinity, a life of communion, of being in relation with God, with other persons and with all of creation. Together we wish to affirm the following marks of such a life of communion and participation in the world:

#### ***1. Created for Communion:***

Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions strongly affirm the dignity of the human person. The Holy Scriptures teach us that every human person is created in God's image and likeness. By the fact of our createdness, we live in a profound relationship of interdependence with all of creation. No matter what differences exist between people – such as colour, gender, creed, or social status – all persons share equal dignity. From each one's dignity as a creature of God flow the basic human rights to such necessities of life as food, clothing, shelter, education, work, freedom for religious expression and freedom to participate in the shaping of society. We are created for a communion implying relation with God, with other persons, and

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<sup>1</sup> Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II), *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church*. London: Church House/Catholic Truth Society, 1994.

with creation. From such communion our personhood grows and develops to its fullness. Every human has the dignity of a person created for communion.

## **2. Freedom for Responsiveness:**

Our common tradition balances the dignity and rights of the individual with the good of the whole community. A genuine notion of human freedom seeks to balance personal rights with duties and obligations because in Christ we have been set free *for* communion with God in the whole of creation. We hold that human persons "may not exercise a freedom that claims to be independent, wilful and self-seeking. (...) The freedom that is properly theirs is a freedom of responsiveness and interdependence. They are created for communion, and communion involves responsibility, in relation to society and nature as well as to God" (*Life In Christ*, 7). Authentic freedom is accomplished in responsibility.

## **3. The Common Good:**

Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions teach that living out the Gospel includes living in a relationship of justice and love with our neighbours. This common good which shapes us in turn requires that each of us contribute to the common good according to our means and the needs of others. We are called to follow the example of Christ's self-giving love. At times this is a call to renounce what is rightfully ours in order to respond to a greater need of others in the human community. At other times we may be called to defend our human rights for the sake of the common good. In each case we must ask what, because of Christ, solidarity and communion with others require of us. Portrayals of ethical and moral questions which see only the competition of one group's rights with those of others betray a diminished concern for the common good. "Those who are in communion participate in one another's joys and sorrows (...), they share together to meet the needs of one another and of the community as a whole" (*Church As Communion*, 15). As people of communion, we are committed to the common good.

## **4. Sharing Resources:**

Since we believe that God's blessings are for all people, we consider that the unanswered need of the poor in the midst of our comfort is a symptom of diminished community. Jesus emptied himself to identify with the poor and oppressed, with the outcast and the voiceless. His followers are called to do the same. We know that some of his disciples provided for the needs of others "out of their resources" (Lk 8.3b), and others had "all things in common" sharing their goods "as any had need." (Acts 2:44-45). Their example of self-emptying prompts us today "to critique every form of society based on the unbridled pursuit of wealth and power" (*Life In Christ*, 21) and to hold up a proper balance between our own claims and the need of others. The voiceless in Canadian society include the growing numbers of disenfranchised and homeless people who dwell in our cities, women and children living in poverty, aboriginal peoples, and uncounted women and men who search for meaningful work. As Christians we stand together with them. In so doing, we not only show we share in God's compassion for the poor but find ourselves made whole. Together we are ready to work for a more just sharing of our resources so that none will go in need and our community will be complete.

## **5. Gauging the Community's Health:**

Today governments and corporations are seeking to reduce deficits and pay back debts. This is an important aspect of responsible fiscal policy. However, we must ask if the human and social cost resulting from present economic restructuring is not too high a price to pay. Too many people are excluded from participation. As people of communion, we hold that the confirmation of a sound economic strategy is the well-being of the whole human community. While profit is one indication of a healthy economic life, for Christians, the primary gauge of corporate health is the extent to which every person is enabled to contribute to the common good and to the betterment of society. Often, when persons experience unemployment, they

are denied the opportunity to participate in the most basic way in the renewal of their society. An economy where a few prosper inordinately at the expense of the many, or where the contribution of some of society's members is viewed as expendable, falls short of the fullest concern for the common good. Healthy economic life means justice for all and the participation of all.

#### ***6. Authority and Good Government:***

Anglicans and Roman Catholics share a common tradition which recognizes the need of authority for the building of community. As responsible citizens and participants in society, we support the important task of those who are entrusted with authority in our society. The human community must not be jeopardized by the inclination of individuals to follow their own opinion without reference to the wider implications of their choices. We have need of a public authority that affirms the importance of balancing private interests with social responsibility, and will guide the energies of all towards the common good. Christians have the responsibility to call our governments to be accountable in their task of working for the common good so as to create a climate where the good of each individual can be realized. This includes a particular responsibility to hear the concerns and respond to the need of the poor and vulnerable members of society.

As men and women called to communion, we must speak out when public authorities act in a manner which excludes any group from their concern. Genuine authority and good government serve the common good.

#### ***7. Civility and Generosity:***

It is natural that, when many aspects of the future seem uncertain, different visions of society emerge within the public forum. In a democratic society they can and indeed must be discussed openly if we are to find a common way forward. This exchange must take place in a spirit of civility and generosity. Our society cannot survive a polarization of public discourse where the interests of one group are pitted against another, where those with differing views are devalued, or where some are blamed for the ills of all. Recognition of the right of all to participate creates a spirit of civility and generosity. In such a climate our actions are characterized by mutual respect and esteem, our attitudes are those of patience and openness, grounded in our recognition of all as members of the same family. True generosity is a response to the recognition that we are each and all indispensable parts of one another.

#### ***8. Common Action:***

The momentous scale of social and economic change affecting the world community tempts us to remain passive with a great and growing sense of powerlessness. Because we are made for communion we are, however, active participants in, not passive subjects of the social change which affects our neighbourhoods, our communities, our society. Anglicans and Roman Catholics are members of two global communities of people who find their meaning in communion with God, with other persons, and with creation. An increasing number of fellow citizens are denied any meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes which have an impact on their lives. In this climate of alienation and uncertainty, our shared tradition impels us to join with all people of good will to participate actively in creating communities of reconciliation and hope, and to work together for a society where the participation and contribution of all is valued and enabled. These communities will be the seeds of hope for a new society. We are called to active participation in common action.

#### ***9. The Teaching of Christ:***

Our churches exist within the particular context of Canadian society and culture. This context shapes our identity, and we affirm and celebrate the legacy of generosity and goodwill which have been characteristic of Canadian society. This affirmation, however, is from the perspective of a further identity as Christians which impels us to discern and guide our participation in society by the teaching of Christ. In accordance

with his teaching we are called to challenge some aspects of our culture and work to transform our society for the good of all. In particular, the gospel calls us to work for the transformation of unjust structures and systems that stand in the way of the full realization of the dignity of human persons and their full participation in society. The gospel informs the decisions we make each day in our family life, in the workplace, in our neighbourhood, our community.

***10. The Reign of God's Reconciling Love:***

We affirm that the Church is a communion of women and men gathered together in Christ. Jesus Christ has reconciled all creatures to God. In so doing he has also reconciled us to each other. The fact of our journey together towards full ecclesial communion attests to the gift of Christ's reconciling love. The church is called to be a sign of that communion which God wills for all humanity. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church is called to proclaim the reign of God's reconciling love, and to be the sign and first fruits of its coming (*Life In Christ*, 19). Our response to the gift of Christ's reconciling grace, received in baptism, is lived out in ongoing conversion to the gospel through our daily lives. As Christians growing together in communion we are called to proclaim the reign of God's reconciling love by witnessing to our common faith.

***Conclusion: Commitment to a Common Mission***

Years of ecumenical dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics have led us to a deep awareness that we share many genuine bonds of real, if imperfect, communion rooted in a common heritage and tradition of faith. "This common tradition carries with it a 'missionary imperative' - a call to preach the Gospel, to live the life of the Gospel in the world, and to work out a faithful and fruitful response to the Gospel in our encounter with different cultures" (*Life In Christ*, 14). We commit ourselves to cooperate in every way we can to speaking out whenever the harmony of that community is threatened or diminished and to the building of a truly human community.

## STUDY GUIDE

### Introduction

Members of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada have been revisiting our common moral tradition in response to the statement of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church*.<sup>2</sup> We wish to affirm this joint statement, in particular the recognition that “Anglicans and Roman Catholics derive from the Scriptures and Tradition the same controlling vision of the nature and destiny of humanity and share the same fundamental moral values” (*Life in Christ*, Introduction). This insight applies to our participation as members of Canadian society. We reaffirm that in our common heritage there are principles which shape our participation in the human community. These are increasingly challenged by the present climate of social and economic change. As representatives of our two churches, we affirm them as a basis of our common witness to the Gospel and an expression of our common faith in the Trinity.

#### Communion and Participation – Ten Principles:

- Every human person is created for communion.
- Authentic freedom is accomplished in responsibility and interdependence.
- As people of communion we are committed to and shaped by the common good.
- We share in God’s compassion for the poor.
- Healthy economic life means justice for all and the participation of all.
- Genuine authority, including good government, serves the common good.
- Recognition of the dignity of all creates a spirit of civility and generosity.
- We are called to active participation in common witness.
- Our participation in society is guided by the teaching and example of Christ.
- By living in this way, we proclaim the reign of God’s reconciling love.

In the statement which follows, these principles are developed further. It is our hope that this common statement may be of use to Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and indeed to all Christians engaged together in common witness. The Study Guide may be a helpful resource for study and faith sharing among neighbouring parish communities, ministerial associations, and ecumenical groups of reflection and action.

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<sup>2</sup>Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II), *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church*. London: Church House/Catholic Truth Society, 1994.

## **Suggested Process**

Each of the principles which we have identified and affirm as belonging to our common heritage of faith is presented together with a number of questions for personal reflection and group discussion. Selected biblical references and several brief references from documents of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church are provided for further consideration. It is hoped that these will aid in focusing your study and discussion. A list of references and further reading is provided at the end of this document for those who wish to pursue any of these points further. The study guide may serve as a resource for a series of gatherings. You may wish to plan a series meetings: one to introduce the document and the reflection process, and a number of meetings to focus on any or all of the ten principles. We suggest a concluding meeting or gathering for common prayer to renew your commitment to common witness and to the principles which inform our common action.

### **Preparation**

Participants are strongly urged to *read and reflect upon the materials for each session in advance*. You may wish to note important points or questions. This preparation will enable a more effective participation in group discussions. Be sure to read the "Introduction" to the Common Statement (p. 2) before your first session.

It is suggested that a period of 1 to 1 ½ hours be set aside for each session. Each session is structured as follows:

### **Opening Prayer**

A proposed format for prayer and reflection to begin the session. For the readings, we suggest you use the NRSV translation of the Bible.

### **Common Statement**

Each session is based upon a portion of the text of the Common Statement. It is recommended that this be read aloud by a group member prior to discussion. In addition, it may be helpful to provide some quiet time to reread the text and to consider the materials from "A Shared Heritage."

### **Discussion**

Questions are provided to orient the group's discussion and reflection on the text.

### **Putting Faith into Practice**

To conclude each session, group members are asked to consider some learning they want to remember or "take home" from the session for their daily living. The group leader may wish to suggest a brief closing prayer.



## A SHARED HERITAGE

### Introduction

In our times Canadians face many critical questions. The rapid movement of globalization is producing social instability and economic uncertainty for many. Together with men and women across Canada, we ask, "What kind of society will we have in the new millennium?" and "Where are the decisions being made which affect our lives?" For each day more women and men are confronted by the prospect of unemployment. Workers face growing demands. The poor and the vulnerable encounter increasing hardship. Families struggle with mounting pressures. Young people despair for their future.

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Through dialogue and study the members of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada have discovered anew that we share a common heritage which informs our participation in human community and in the shaping of our society. This common heritage is rooted in our common faith in the Trinity. Through baptism we participate in the life of the divine Trinity, a life of communion, of being in relation with God, with other persons and with all of creation. Together we wish to affirm the following marks of such a life of communion and participation in the world:

- Every human person is created for communion.
- Authentic freedom is accomplished in responsibility and interdependence.
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- We share in God's compassion for the poor.
- Healthy economic life means justice for all and the participation of all.
- Genuine authority, including good government, serves the common good.
- Recognition of the dignity of all creates a spirit of civility and generosity.
- We are called to active participation in common witness.
- Our participation in society is guided by the teaching and example of Christ.
- By living in this way, we proclaim the reign of God's reconciling love.

*Each of the sessions which follow is a reflection on one paragraph of the joint statement. Each paragraph attempts to summarize one of the ten principles.*

## CREATED FOR COMMUNION

### Session 1

#### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

*Genesis 1.26-31*

#### Reflection

*The biblical story of creation tells us that we are created in the image and likeness of God, whom Christians confess as a Trinity of persons. We also learn from this story that we are created in a relationship of interdependence.*

#### Leader:

Holy and ever-living God, we praise you for the gift of all creation. We thank you for creating us in your image and likeness. Help us to reflect your image more faithfully each day in all that we say and do and are.

*All: Amen.*

#### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions strongly affirm the dignity of the human person. The Holy Scriptures teach us that every human person is created in God's image and likeness. By the fact of our createdness, we live in a profound relationship of interdependence with all of creation. No matter what differences exist between people - such as colour, gender, creed, or social status - all persons share equal dignity. From each one's dignity as a creature of God flow the basic human rights to such necessities of life as food, clothing, shelter, education, work, freedom for religious expression and freedom to participate in the shaping of society. We are created for a communion implying relation with God, with other persons, and with creation. From such communion our personhood grows and develops to its fullness. Every human has the dignity of a person created for communion.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

## A SHARED HERITAGE

Personality is developed in community, but the community must be one of free persons. The Christian must therefore judge every social system by its effect on human personality. (*Lambeth 1948, 5*)

“The Conference regards the matter of human rights and dignity as of capital and universal importance. We send forth the following message as expressing our convictions in Christ for the human family world-wide. We deplore and condemn the evils of racism and tribalism, economic exploitation and social injustice, torture, detention without trial and the taking of human lives as contrary to the teaching and example of our Lord in the Gospel. Man is made in the image of God and must not be exploited.”

(*Lambeth 1978, 3*)

[The Conference] encourages people everywhere to make changes, personal and corporate, in their attitudes and life-style, recognizing that wholeness of living requires a right relationship with God, one's neighbour, and creation.

(*Lambeth 1988, 40*)

All women and men are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same calling and destiny; there is a basic equality between all and it must be accorded greater recognition. (...) Furthermore, while there are just differences between people, their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions.

(Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World*, 29)

Beyond human and natural bonds, already so close and strong, there is to be discerned in the light of faith a new *model* of the *unity* of the human race, which must ultimately inspire our *solidarity*. This supreme *model of unity*, which is a reflection of the intimate life of God, one God and three persons, is what we Christians mean by the word *communion*. This specifically Christian communion, jealously preserved, extended and enriched with the Lord's help, is the *soul* of the Church's vocation to be 'sacrament' ...

(John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, 40)

## Discussion

1. *What attitudes and actions help build relationships of communion?*
2. *What messages, attitudes, structures support/undermine relationships between yourself and God, others, and creation?*
3. *What tangible provisions are required to show that the dignity of a human life is respected? Are these needs met for everyone in your community?*

## Putting Faith into Practice

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: “I want to remember ...” or “I want to put our common faith into action by ...”*

## FREEDOM FOR RESPONSIVENESS

### Session Two

#### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

*Galatians 5. 13-15*

#### Reflection

*What does Paul tell us about freedom in the Letter to the Galatians?*

*Leader:* Loving God, you have called us into the freedom of your sons and daughters. We praise and thank you for the gift of freedom. Help us to respond to your gift by loving one another as you have loved us.

*All:* Amen.

#### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Our common tradition balances the dignity and rights of the individual with the good of the whole community. A genuine notion of human freedom seeks to balance personal rights with duties and obligations because in Christ we have been set free *for* communion with God in the whole of creation. We hold that human persons “may not exercise a freedom that claims to be independent, wilful and self-seeking. (...) The freedom that is properly theirs is a freedom of responsiveness and interdependence. They are created for communion, and communion involves responsibility, in relation to society and nature as well as to God” (*Life In Christ*, 7). Authentic freedom is accomplished in responsibility.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from “A Shared Heritage.” Then consider the questions for discussion.*

### A SHARED HERITAGE

“We wish to stress that the advocacy of human rights must be understood in terms of mutual interdependence and not merely the self-assertion of individual rights abstractly. To claim human rights for oneself is to claim the same rights for others. Thus, rights, responsibilities and duties must be kept in balance.”

(*Lambeth 1988*, “Report on Christianity and Social Order,” 41)

“We fully share man’s aspiration for fellowship in an ordered society and for freedom of individual achievement, but we assert that no view of man can be satisfactory which confines his interests and hopes to this world and to this life alone; such views belittle man and blind him to the greatness of his destiny.”

(*Lambeth 1948*, 4)

“It is, however, only in freedom that people can turn themselves to what is good. The people of our times prize freedom very highly and strive eagerly for it. In this they are right. Yet they often cherish it improperly, as if it gave them leave to do anything they like, even when it is evil. But genuine freedom is an exceptional sign of the image of God in humanity.”

(Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World*, 17)

“In availing of any freedom people must respect the moral principle of personal and social responsibility; in exercising their rights individuals and social groups are bound by the moral law to have regard for the rights of others, and the common good of all.”

(Second Vatican Council, *Declaration On Religious Freedom*, 7)

## Discussion

1. *How do you define freedom?*
2. *How is this related to responsibility?*
3. *The Canadian Charter of Rights lists many rights for Canadian citizens but does not outline specific duties or obligations. As Christians, what duties or obligations would you list as required of us as free and responsible participants in society?*

## Putting Faith into Practice

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: “I want to remember ...” or “I want to put our common faith into action by ...”*

## THE COMMON GOOD

### Session Three

#### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

*Matthew 16.24-28*

#### Reflection

*Jesus desires what is good for those he loves. Yet, he calls his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. In doing so, he has a greater good in view which transcends any narrow self-interest.*

*Leader:*

We give you thanks, Lord Jesus, for calling us to be your disciples. Help us to learn your way of self-denial, to take up the cross and find life in following you.

*All: Amen.*

#### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions teach that living out the Gospel includes living in a relationship of justice and love with our neighbours. This common good which shapes us in turn requires that each of us contribute to the common good according to our means and the needs of others. We are called to follow the example of Christ's self-giving love. At times this is a call to renounce what is rightfully ours in order to respond to a greater need of others in the human community. At other times we may be called to defend our human rights for the sake of the common good. In each case we must ask what, because of Christ, solidarity and communion with others require of us. Portrayals of ethical and moral questions which see only the competition of one group's rights with those of others betray a diminished concern for the common good. "Those who are in communion participate in one another's joys and sorrows (...), they share together to meet the needs of one another and of the community as a whole" (*Church As Communion*, 15). As people of communion, we are committed to the common good.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*



## A SHARED HERITAGE

“We need to stress that the well-being of the whole human family is more important than egotistical self-interest.”

(*Lambeth 1978*, 1.3)

“We call upon members to exercise their rights as citizens in their respective countries ... to create a moral climate which enables governments to act for the benefit of the world community rather than sectional interests ... to review their life-style and use of the world’s resources so that service of the well-being of the whole human family comes before the enjoyment of over-indulgent forms of affluence.”

(*Lambeth 1978*, 2)

“Because of the increasingly close interdependence which is gradually extending to the entire world, we are today witnessing to an extension of the role of the common good, which is the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily. The resulting rights and obligations are consequently the concern of the entire human race. Every group must take into account the needs and legitimate aspirations of every other group, and even those of the human family as a whole.”

(Second Vatican Council, *The Church In the Modern World*, 26)

“A man is alienated from himself if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and the formation of an authentic human community oriented towards his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to establish this solidarity between people.”

(John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, 41)

“Thus one would hope that those who, to some degree or another, are responsible for ensuring a “more human life” for their fellow human beings, whether or not they are inspired by a religious faith, will become fully aware of the urgent need to *change the spiritual attitudes* which define each individual’s relationship with self, with neighbour, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself; and all this in view of higher values such as the *common good* or, to quote the felicitous expression of the encyclical *On the Development of Peoples*, the full development “of the whole individual and of all people.”

(John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, 38)

## Discussion

1. *Name some examples of the tension you experience in your own life between self-interest and concern for the common good.*
2. *Name examples of this same tension at the local, regional and national level.*
3. *What are some of the ways that you and your community can work to promote the common good?*

## Putting Faith into Practice

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: “I want to remember ...” or “I want to put our common faith into action by ...”*

## SHARING RESOURCES

### Session Four

#### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

*James 2.14-20*

#### Reflection

*What does the Letter of James say to us about the relationship between our faith and the sharing of resources?*

*Leader:*

Loving God, you bless us with many good gifts. Help us today to put our faith into action and to share what you have given us with those in need.

*All: Amen.*

#### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Since we believe that God's blessings are for all people, we consider that the unanswered need of the poor in the midst of our comfort is a symptom of diminished community. Jesus emptied himself to identify with the poor and oppressed, with the outcast and the voiceless. His followers are called to do the same. We know that some of his disciples provided for the needs of others "out of their resources" (Lk 8.3b), and others had "all things in common" sharing their goods "as any had need." (Acts 2:44-45). Their example of self-emptying prompts us today "to critique every form of society based on the unbridled pursuit of wealth and power" (*Life In Christ*, 21) and to hold up a proper balance between our own claims and the need of others. The voiceless in Canadian society include the growing numbers of disenfranchised and homeless people who dwell in our cities, women and children living in poverty, aboriginal peoples, and uncounted women and men who search for meaningful work. As Christians we stand together with them. In so doing, we not only show we share in God's compassion for the poor but find ourselves made whole. Together we are ready to work for a more just sharing of our resources so that none will go in need and our community will be complete.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

## A SHARED HERITAGE

"[The poor] are victims of the oppression of an unjust economic order and an unjust political distribution of power, and at the same time they are deprived of the knowledge of God's special care for them. The comfortable as well need to be liberated. It is indeed good news that one can live simply and does not have to make the pursuit of wealth and security the prime purpose of life. God's purpose is for all people in one whole world."

(*Lambeth 1988, "Report on Mission and Ministry," 7*)

"To the poor, to the oppressed, to the homeless, to the unemployed and to those on the margins of society, the Church is to be voice and servant."

(*Lambeth 1988, "Report On Christianity and Social Order," 64*)

"The needs and rights of the poor, the afflicted, the marginalized and the oppressed are given special attention in God's Plan for Creation. Throughout his ministry Jesus repeatedly identified with the plight of the poor and the outcasts of society (e.g.: Phil 2.6-6; Lk 6.20-21). He also took a critical attitude towards the accumulation of wealth and power that comes through the exploitation of others (Lk 16.13-15, 12.16-21; Mk 4.19). This has become known as "the preferential option of the poor" in the scriptures." (CCCB, *Ethical Reflections on Canada's Socio-economic Order (1983)*, 15)

"... the *option* or *love of preference* for the poor. This is an option, or a *special form* of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate Christ, but it applies equally to our *social responsibilities* and hence to our manner of living, and the logical decisions to be made concerning the ownership and use of goods." (John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, 42)

## Discussion

1. *What do is the stance of the church towards the poor and the marginalized? (read inset)*
2. *Who are the voiceless and marginalized members of your community?*
3. *What can you do to manifest God's love for them?*

## Putting Faith into Practice

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: "I want to remember ..." or "I want to put our common faith into action by ..."*

# GAUGING THE COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

## Session Five

### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

***1 Corinthians 12.4-7; 14-26***

### Reflection

*St. Paul teaches us that just as all gifts have a single source in the Holy Spirit, they have a single purpose, the building up of the whole body. We cannot be indifferent to the sufferings or joys of any member of the human community.*

*Leader:*

Holy and ever-living God, we praise and thank you for the diversity of gifts that you have given us to build up the human community. Help us to live as members of one body, welcoming the gifts of each, sharing the pain of those who suffer and rejoicing with those who rejoice in you.

*All: Amen.*

### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Today governments and corporations are seeking to reduce deficits and pay back debts. This is an important aspect of responsible fiscal policy. However, we must ask if the human and social cost resulting from present economic restructuring is not too high a price to pay. Too many people are excluded from participation. As people of communion, we hold that the confirmation of a sound economic strategy is the well-being of the whole human community. While profit is one indication of a healthy economic life, for Christians, the primary gauge of corporate health is the extent to which every person is enabled to contribute to the common good and to the betterment of society. Often, when persons experience unemployment, they are denied the opportunity to participate in the most basic way in the renewal of their society. An economy where a few prosper inordinately at the expense of the many, or where the contribution of some of society's members is viewed as expendable, falls short of the fullest concern for the common good. Healthy economic life means justice for all and the participation of all.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

## A SHARED HERITAGE

“We need to see the necessary exchange of commodities in the market place as an area where human values can be affirmed and not ignored; to seek to ensure that those involved are not treated merely as functional units but as being worthy of and able to enter into relationships of friendship.”

(*Lambeth 1978, 1.1*)

“Many Canadians however continue to subscribe to the dominating set of social goals, standards and procedures which reward first those who are already rewarded, not those most in need. This mainstream mindset has its own measures of human worth: individualism is prized above cooperation, selfishness is ranked ahead of sharing, and acquisitiveness rather than simplicity is seen as the way to happiness. These aims, pursued with shrewdness and efficiency, are lauded by business executives and encouraged by political leaders as the characteristics best suited to economic expansion. By following such standards, Canada’s free-market economy has indeed achieved sustained growth. However, this has been accomplished at a mounting social cost. All people are not served ...” (CCCB, *Labour day Message, 1972: Simplicity and Sharing* )

“When a firm makes a profit, this means that productive factors have been properly employed and corresponding human needs have been duly satisfied. But profitability is not the only indicator of a firm’s condition. It is possible for the financial accounts to be in order, and yet for the people - who make up the firm’s most valuable asset - to be humiliated and their dignity offended. Besides being morally inadmissible, this will eventually have negative repercussions on the firm’s economic efficiency. In fact, the purpose of a business firm is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a *community of persons* who are endeavouring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society.”

(John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, 35)

### Discussion

1. *What are some of the measures of quality of life and security in your family and community?*

2. *What are the measures of security named by Lambeth 1978 and John Paul II? (read “A Shared Heritage”).*
3. *What would society look like if it promoted the human friendship and community of persons envisioned by Lambeth 1978 and John Paul II?*
4. *How would this change your family life? workplace? your community?*

## Putting Faith into Practice

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: “I want to remember ...” or “I want to put our common faith into action by ...”*



# AUTHORITY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

## Session Six

### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

***Romans 13.1-8 (Wisdom 1.1-2)***

### Reflection

*St. Paul presents the role of public authority as a sacred trust. In describing the duties of citizens, he presupposes that the authorities are to conduct themselves in an upright manner and to serve the interest of the community. Responsibility on the part of both public authority and citizens is summed up in the fulfillment of God's commandment of love.*

*Leader:*

Lord our God, you reign over us all. We pray for those who are entrusted with the leadership in our land. Guide them by your wisdom and enable them to be worthy servants. Help us to work with them for the good of all.

*All: Amen.*

### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Anglicans and Roman Catholics share a common tradition which recognizes the need of authority for the building of community. As responsible citizens and participants in society, we support the important task of those who are entrusted with authority in our society. The human community must not be jeopardized by the inclination of individuals to follow their own opinion without reference to the wider implications of their choices. We have need of a public authority that affirms the importance of balancing private interests with social responsibility, and will guide the energies of all towards the common good. Christians have the responsibility to call our governments to be accountable in their task of working for the common good so as to create a climate where the good of each individual can be realized. This includes a particular responsibility to hear the concerns and respond to the need of the poor and vulnerable members of society. As men and women called to communion, we must speak out when public authorities act in a manner which excludes any group from their concern. Genuine authority and good government serve the common good.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

## A SHARED HERITAGE

"The Conference .. denies that the individual exists for the state, but asserts that one of the principal ends of the state is the development of the personality, the highest good of the individual."  
(*Lambeth 1948*, 18)

"The Conference ... holds that while the state must take the precaution it regards as necessary to protect good order and peace ... the Church at all times and in all places should be a fearless witness against political, social, and economic injustice."  
(*Lambeth 1948*, 25)

"... authority is to be exercised for the achievement of the common good, which constitutes the reason for its existence."  
(John XXIII, *Peace On Earth*, 84)

"... political authority, either within the political community as such or through organizations representing the state, must be exercised within the limits of the moral order and directed towards the common good (...). When citizens are being oppressed by a public authority which oversteps its competence, they should not refuse whatever is objectively demanded of them by the common good; but it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and those of their fellow citizens against abuses of authority within the limits of the natural law and the law of the Gospel."  
(Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World*, 74)

### Discussion

1. Do you agree on the need for a public authority as described here? Why or why not?

2. *In what ways are your local, regional, provincial, national governments using their authority to promote the common good? In what ways are they not?*

3. *How do issues of the common good get recognized?*

4. *In what ways can you work to assure that this concern for the common good is heard?*

### **Putting Faith into Practice**

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: “I want to remember ...” or “I want to put our common faith into action by ...”*

# CIVILITY AND GENEROSITY

## Session Seven

### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a brief period of silence.*

### *Romans 12.9-19*

### Reflection

*In this passage Paul tells us that mutual esteem and sincere love must characterize the conduct of Christians towards all people, even their enemies. Such conduct promotes the harmony of the community.*

### *Leader:*

Merciful God, you call us to speak and act with genuine love for all, even those who would harm us. Strengthen us with your love in times of discord. In all times, teach us to speak and listen and act toward others with generosity and respect.

*All: Amen.*

### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

It is natural that, when many aspects of the future seem uncertain, different visions of society emerge within the public forum. In a democratic society they can and indeed must be discussed openly if we are to find a common way forward. This exchange must take place in a spirit of civility and generosity. Our society cannot survive a polarization of public discourse where the interests of one group are pitted against another, where those with differing views are devalued, or where some are blamed for the ills of all. Recognition of the right of all to participate creates a spirit of civility and generosity. In such a climate our actions are characterized by mutual respect and esteem, our attitudes are those of patience and openness, grounded in our recognition of all as members of the same family. True generosity is a response to the recognition that we are each and all indispensable parts of one another.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

### A SHARED HERITAGE

“... the way in which we approach our fellow human beings and, indeed, our total environment must reflect the pattern of Christ’s self-offering, by which he restored the relationships that sin had broken.”

(*Lambeth 1988*, “Report on Christianity and Social Order,” 14)

“Where there are divisions in the local community, the Christian congregation in that place should face them fearlessly and, by the action of its members, should serve as an agent of reconciliation.”

(*Lambeth 1958*, 100)

“Those also have a claim to our respect and charity who think and act differently from us in social, political, and religious matters. In fact, the more deeply, through courtesy and love, we come to understand their ways of thinking, the more easily we will be able to enter into dialogue with them. Love and courtesy of this kind should not, however, make us indifferent to truth and goodness.”

(Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World*, 28)

### Discussion

1. *What kind of society would you most want to live in?*



## COMMON ACTION

### Session Eight

#### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a period of silence.*

*1 Peter 3.15*

#### Reflection

*This epistle was written to encourage the early Christian community. Their hope, like ours, is not simply a future expectation, but is the motivation of our life and witness. What we do now shows the hope in us.*

*Leader:*

Lord Jesus, our sure and steadfast anchor, help us to remain firm in faith, hope and love and to proclaim you in word and deed each day.

*All: Amen.*

#### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

The momentous scale of social and economic change affecting the world community tempts us to remain passive with a great and growing sense of powerlessness. Because we are made for communion we are, however, active participants in, not passive subjects of the social change which affects our neighbourhoods, our communities, our society. Anglicans and Roman Catholics are members of two global communities of people who find their meaning in communion with God, with other persons, and with creation. An increasing number of fellow citizens are denied any meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes which have an impact on their lives. In this climate of alienation and uncertainty, our shared tradition impels us to join with all people of good will to participate actively in creating communities of reconciliation and hope, and to work together for a society where the participation and contribution of all is valued and enabled. These communities will be the seeds of hope for a new society. We are called to active participation in common action.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

### A SHARED HERITAGE

“The right and duty of Christians to speak and act on problems of social order needs no defence. It follows directly from our belief that this is God’s world, and that he has shown his care for it in creation, incarnation, and redemption, and in his promise that all things ultimately will be brought to fullness in himself.”

(*Lambeth 1988*, “Report On Christianity and Social Order,” 15)

“The Conference calls upon all Christian people to recognize their duty of exercising their full responsibility as citizens in the national and international policies of their governments.”

(*Lambeth 1958*, 102)

“We deem it opportune to remind our children of their duty to take an active part in public life, and to contribute to the common good of the entire human family as well as that of their own political community.”

(John XXIII, *Peace On Earth*, 146)

“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation. (...) [N]ew divisions are being born to separate man from his neighbour. Unless combatted and overcome by social and political action, the influence of the new industrial and technological order favours the concentration of wealth, power and decision-making in the hands of a small public or private controlling group. Economic injustice and lack of social participation keep man from attaining his basic human and civil rights.”

(1971 Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 6, 9)



1. *What are some of the ways in which you can participate actively in decision-making in your home? work place? civic community?*
2. *How can Christians act together and assure that our voice is included in the process of making decisions which affect our lives?*
3. *What are some of the ways that you can work with others in your community to give witness to our common hope?*

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: “I want to remember ...” or “I want to put our common faith into action by ...”*

## GUIDED BY THE TEACHING OF CHRIST

### Session Nine

#### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a period of silence.*

***Luke 4.16-19 (Isaiah 61.1-3)***

#### Reflection

*Jesus begins his teaching ministry with a proclamation of good news to the poor. In his presence the expectations of the jubilee, the Lord's year of favour, are fulfilled. We are guided in our daily living by his promise of release for the captives, sight for the blind, and freedom for the oppressed.*

*Leader:*

Lord Jesus, your words are spirit and life. Guide us in all that we do so we may proclaim your favour to all who long for your kingdom. Help us to bring liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed.

*All: Amen.*

#### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

Our churches exist within the particular context of Canadian society and culture. This context shapes our identity, and we affirm and celebrate the legacy of generosity and goodwill which have been characteristic of Canadian society. This affirmation, however, is from the perspective of a further identity as Christians which impels us to discern and guide our participation in society by the teaching of Christ. In accordance with his teaching, we are called to challenge some aspects of our culture and work to transform our society for the good of all. In particular, the gospel calls us to work for the transformation of unjust structures and systems that stand in the way of the full realization of the dignity of human persons and their full participation in society. The gospel informs the decisions we make each day in our family life, in the workplace, in our neighbourhood, our community.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

## A SHARED HERITAGE

“The Conference ... calls the Church to a faith in the living God which is adventurous, expectant, calm, and confident, and to a faith in the standards of Christ, who was, and is, and is to come, as the criterion of what is to be welcomed and what is to be resisted in contemporary society.”

(*Lambeth 1968*, 2)

“The Conference ... affirms that God’s love extends to people of every culture and that God judges culture according to the Gospel’s own criteria of truth, challenging some aspects of culture while endorsing and transforming others for the benefit of the Church and society.”

(*Lambeth 1988*, 22)

“Arguments that seek to affirm the Church’s mission of individual renewal but deny its mission to seek social renewal, or arguments which affirm the Church’s mission to seek social renewal at the expense of individual renewal, are both distortions of how God has created us. We are created in and through each other, and can only be redeemed through each other - a new creation. We must carry out God’s mission individually and together.” (*Lambeth 1988*, “Report on Christianity and Social Order, 18)

“One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and their day to day conduct. (...) Let Christians follow the example of Christ who worked as a craftsman; let them be proud of the opportunity to carry out their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprises with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are ordered to the glory of God.”

(Second Vatican Council, *Church in the Modern World*, 43)

## Discussion

1. What are some examples of generosity and good will in your context



# THE REIGN OF GOD'S RECONCILING LOVE

## Session Ten

### Opening Prayer

*A group member reads aloud the biblical text, followed by a period of silence.*

*Ephesians 2.13-22*

### Reflection

*In Christ, the wall of division has been broken down. Through baptism, all Christians are born again and are reconciled in Christ. The unity of Christians is a sign to the world of a new humanity.*

*Leader:*

Almighty God, through the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus you have broken down the walls of division. Through the gift of baptism you have reconciled us to yourself and brought us into communion with one another. We pray for all Christians. May your Spirit help us to grow in unity and love.

*All: Amen.*

### Common Statement

*One participant reads the text of the statement aloud.*

We affirm that the Church is a communion of women and men gathered together in Christ. Jesus Christ has reconciled all creatures to God. In so doing he has also reconciled us to each other. The fact of our journey together towards full ecclesial communion attests to the gift of Christ's reconciling love. The church is called to be a sign of that communion which God wills for all humanity. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church is called to proclaim the reign of God's reconciling love, and to be the sign and first fruits of its coming (*Life In Christ*, 19). Our response to the gift of Christ's reconciling grace, received in baptism, is lived out in ongoing conversion to the gospel through our daily lives. As Christians growing together in communion we are called to proclaim the reign of God's reconciling love by witnessing to our common faith.

*Allow some quiet time to reread the text and to quietly consider the texts from "A Shared Heritage." Then consider the questions for discussion.*

## A SHARED HERITAGE

“The gospel is a proclamation of God’s love for all men and of his will that all men should be one in the family of the children of God. It is, therefore, a gospel of reconciliation. In the home, at work, in industrial disputes, in the exercise of economic power whether as employers or employed, in the bitterly divisive issue of race, it is for the laity to bring to bear a Christian influence towards social justice, compassion, and peace.”

(*Lambeth 1968, Message*)

“Because the very life of God himself is flowing in its fellowship, breaking down the barriers which men and women have erected against God and against one another, the Church is intended here and now to be a kind of first-fruits of God’s Kingdom of love. In the Church, people and relationships are transfigured. Changed lives and changed relationships provide a hint and foretaste of a world in which all hatred and alienation will be overcome.”

(*Lambeth 1988, Ecumenical Relations, 33*)

“... let them bear witness to our common hope ... Cooperation among all Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. (...) Such cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be ever increasingly developed, particularly in regions where social and technical evolution is taking place. It should contribute to a just appreciation of the dignity of the human person, the promotion of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, and advancement of the arts and science in a Christian spirit. Christians should also work together in the use of every possible means to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and national disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing, and the unequal distribution of wealth.”

(Second Vatican Council, *Decree On Ecumenism, 12*)

“We are called to preach the Gospel, urging it ‘in season and out of season’ (2 Tm 4.2). In many parts of the world Anglicans and Catholics attempt to witness together in the face of growing secularism, religious apathy and moral confusion. Whenever they are able to give united witness to the Gospel they must do so, for our divisions obscure the Gospel message of reconciliation and hope.

(Pope John Paul II and Archbishop George Carey, *Common Declaration, 1996*)

## Discussion

1. *What are you doing in your parish community to live and proclaim the communion which already exists among Christians?*
2. *What other activities of your parish community could be carried out with other Christians in your neighborhood?*
3. *What concrete steps can you take together to become a more effective sign of reconciliation to society?*

## Putting Faith into Practice

*The leader of the group asks each participant to briefly summarize one important aspect of learning gained from this study and discussion. Participants might begin with the phrase: "I want to remember ..." or "I want to put our common faith into action by ..."*

## COMMITMENT TO A COMMON MISSION

### Common Statement: Conclusion

Years of ecumenical dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics have led us to a deep awareness that we share many genuine bonds of real, if imperfect, communion rooted in a common heritage and tradition of faith. “This common tradition carries with it a ‘missionary imperative’ - a call to preach the Gospel, to live the life of the Gospel in the world, and to work out a faithful and fruitful response to the Gospel in our encounter with different cultures” (*Life In Christ*, 14). We commit ourselves to cooperate in every way we can to speaking out whenever the harmony of that community is threatened or diminished and to the building of a truly human community.

*To conclude this process of common study and dialogue, we encourage your communities to formally and publicly renew your commitment to participate together with other Christians in the mission of the Church in a service of common prayer and worship.*



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