

STANDING COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (SCER) is charged with recommending to General Convention “a comprehensive and coordinated policy and strategy on relations between this Church and other Churches” and “to make recommendations to General Convention concerning interchurch cooperation and unity.” In addition the SCER is responsible for coordinating this Church’s participation in “governing bodies of ecumenical organizations to which this Church belongs by action of the General Convention.” (Title I, Canon 1.2.(n)(5). Thus the SCER works closely with the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and the Presiding Bishop as chief Ecumenical Officer to monitor this Church’s Full Communion partners, to develop and sustain a variety of dialogues with the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Moravian, United Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches, and to coordinate this Church’s participation in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and the World Council of Churches. The SCER met five times during the triennium and remained in close contact in between meetings.

Reports to the 74th General Convention

II. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS FOR GENERAL CONVENTION

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The passage of *Called To Common Mission* by the 73rd Convention of the Episcopal Church inaugurated a full communion relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The new Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, the Rev. Mark Hanson, was installed in October of 2001 according to the provisions of *Called to Common Mission*, which included three bishops in the historic succession participating in the laying on of hands, including Presiding Bishop Griswold. For examples of practical cooperation and joint mission between the churches, please consult the website of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/elca/cooperation.

Paragraphs 23 and 24 of CCM mandated the creation of a joint commission. The Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC) meets twice each year to identify issues pertaining to the “full communion” relationship between our two churches and refer them to appropriate national staff or program units of the two church bodies to address. The Coordinating Committee is not a decision making body for either church. The sole area in which the Committee is a decision making body is in the matter of putting forth a commentary on the text of CCM. This commentary is available from the website of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the Episcopal Church, www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/elca/ccmcommentary.

One of the matters that received extensive consideration was the matter of how to receive individuals from either church that are transferring membership to the other. The LECC asked the SCER, which also had considerable discussion on this issue, to submit the following resolution to the 74th General Convention:

Resolution A085 ELCA Member Reception

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the rubrics concerning Confirmation with forms for
- 2 Reception and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows (BCP, 412) allow such reception of members of the
- 3 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

EXPLANATION

In both our traditions, Holy Baptism “by water and the Holy Spirit” establishes full membership in Christ’s body, the Church (LBW, p. 121; BCP, p. 298). Baptism is the sacramental basis for mission and ministry of the whole church and all its members.

At its 2001 Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America passed an ordination bylaw, allowing exceptions to be granted for pastors to preside at the ordination of pastors. There have been three such exceptions granted, and these persons are not eligible for transfer for service in the Episcopal Church. Both the SCER and the International Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (an internationally representative group established to monitor all Anglican ecumenical relations which may give advice, but its purpose is neither prescriptive nor compulsory) have considered this matter.

In the belief that wider rather than minimal discussion is appropriate to this situation, the SCER hereby offers the following resolution:

Resolution A086 Lutheran Ordination Bylaw

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the House of Bishops is hereby requested to establish a
- 2 committee to monitor the ways and extent to which the ELCA ordination bylaw exception may cause any
- 3 additional limitations upon the full communion that has been jointly established and to report their
- 4 findings and any recommendations to the next General Convention.

EXPLANATION

At its 2001 Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America passed a bylaw to *Called to Common Mission* which allows the ordination of ELCA pastors by other than bishops in unusual circumstances contrary to *Called to Common Mission* paragraph 20. It is the hope that this bylaw will not impair or hinder the relationship of full communion between our two churches. However we are mindful also of the difficulty that this development poses for Anglican relations with certain other ecumenical partners, especially as this further limitation upon the interchangeability of pastors/presbyters has been questioned by the Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations.

Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue

The Moravian-Episcopal dialogue was authorized by the 1997 General Convention and met five times during the triennium. The Moravian Church in America is part of the worldwide church called the Unity of the Brethren who trace their origin to the Hussite movement in 15th century Bohemia. The Moravian Church in the United Kingdom has engaged in significant dialogue with the Church of England, producing the *Fetter Lane Common Statement* in 1995. In the USA, the Episcopal Church-Moravian Church dialogue emerged from a local North Carolina dialogue.

Significant progress has been made in discussion of the interchangeability of ministries and for establishing a relationship of Interim Eucharistic Sharing. The following resolution to establish Interim Eucharistic Sharing was drafted by the dialogue team and was approved by the SCER to be brought to the 2003 General Convention. An identical resolution was passed by the Provincial Synods of the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces, which met in the summer of 2002.

Resolution A087 Interim Eucharistic Sharing with the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ and the Synods of the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern
2 Provinces) concurring, That the 74th General Convention meeting in Minneapolis, MN, July 30-August 8,
3 2003, authorize continuing dialogue with the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern
4 Provinces) which may lead to a future proposal of Full Communion including interchangeability of clergy
5 for ministry of Word and Sacrament; and be it further
6 *Resolved*, the House of _____ and the synods of the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern
7 Provinces) concurring, That the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, meeting in
8 Minneapolis, MN, July 30-August 8, 2003, establishes Interim Eucharistic Sharing between the Episcopal
9 Church and the Moravian Church under the following guidelines:
10 1. Moravian Provincial Elders' Conferences and Episcopal diocesan authorities are hereby encouraged to
11 authorize joint celebrations of the Eucharist.
12 2. An authorized liturgy of the host church must be used, with ordained ministers of both churches
13 standing at the Communion Table for the Great Thanksgiving.
14 3. The Preacher may be from either church.

EXPLANATION

1. We welcome and rejoice in the substantial progress of the dialogue between the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces), authorized in 1997 and meeting 1999-2002, and of the progress of the initial North Carolina Moravian-Episcopal dialogue, which met from 1994-1997. Similar progress has been made in other Moravian-Anglican dialogues, including the dialogue between the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland and the Church of England that resulted in the *Fetter Lane Declaration* of May 19, 1995. We share the hope of the *Fetter Lane Declaration*: "We look forward to the day when full communion in faith and life for the sake of our common mission is recognized by our churches."
2. We acknowledge with thanksgiving the dialogue between the Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which resulted in a full communion agreement in 1999 on the basis of the document *Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion*.
3. We recognize in one another the faith of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic, and undivided church as it is witnessed in the Moravian Church in America in the *Moravian Book of Worship*, the *Ground of the Unity*, the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living*, and the *Books of Order* of the Northern and Southern Provinces and the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons* of the Episcopal Church.

In addition we concur with the points of agreement in the *Fetter Lane Common Statement*:

- "a We accept the authority of and read the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Each church provides a lectionary, and in the course of the Church's year appropriate Scriptures are read to mark the festivals and seasons.

- “b We accept the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Apostles’ Creeds and confess the basic trinitarian and christological dogmas to which these creeds testify. That is, we believe Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true Man, and that God is one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁷
- “c We celebrate the apostolic faith in worship, and centrally in liturgical worship, which is both a celebration of salvation through Christ and a significant factor in forming the *consensus fidelium* (the common mind of the faithful). We rejoice at the extent of ‘our common tradition of spirituality, liturgy, and sacramental life,’ which has given us similar forms of worship, common texts, hymns, canticles, and prayers. We are influenced by a common liturgical renewal. We also rejoice at the variety of expressions shown in different cultural settings.¹⁸
- “d Baptism is both God’s gift and our human response to that gift in repentance and faith.¹⁹ It is a sign of God’s gracious activity in the life of the person baptized. Baptism with water in the name of the Triune God is the sacrament of union with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, initiating the one baptized into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Baptism is related not only to a momentary experience, but to life-long growth into Christ.²⁰ Both our churches offer baptism to adults and infants and regard it as unrepeatable. Since we practise and value infant baptism, we also take seriously our catechetical task for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ.²¹ The life of the Christian is necessarily one of continuing struggle yet also of continuing experience of grace.²² In both our traditions infant baptism is followed by a rite of confirmation, which includes invocation of the Triune God, renewal of the baptismal profession of faith and a prayer that through renewal of the grace of baptism the candidate may be strengthened now and for ever.²³
- “e We believe that the celebration of the Eucharist (or the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion) is the feast of the new covenant instituted by Jesus Christ in which we set forth his life, death, and resurrection and look for his coming in glory. In the Eucharist the risen Christ gives his body and blood under the visible signs of bread and wine to the Christian community. ‘In the action of the Eucharist Christ is truly present to share his risen life with us and unite us with himself in his self-offering to the Father, the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice which he alone can offer and has offered once for all.’²⁴ In the Eucharist, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church experiences the love of God and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ and proclaims his death and resurrection until he comes and brings his Kingdom to completion.²⁵
- “f We believe and proclaim the gospel, that in his great love God, through Christ, redeems the world. We ‘share a common understanding of God’s justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits...Both our traditions affirm that justification leads to “good works”; authentic faith issues in love’.²⁶
- “g We share a common hope in the final consummation of the Kingdom of God, and believe that in this eschatological perspective we are called to work now for the furtherance of justice and peace. Our life in the world and in the Church is governed by the obligations of the Kingdom. ‘The Christian faith is that God has made peace through Jesus “by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1.20), so establishing the one valid centre for the unity of the whole human family.’²⁷
- “h We believe that the Church is constituted and sustained by the Triune God through God’s saving action in word and sacraments, and is not the creation of individual believers. We believe that the Church is sent into the world as sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. But we also recognize that the Church, being at the same time a human organization, stands in constant need of reform and renewal.²⁸
- “i We believe that all members of the Church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. There are therefore various gifts of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the community and the fulfilment of its calling.²⁹ Within the community of the Church the ordained ministry exists to serve the ministry of the whole people of God. We hold the ordained ministry of word and sacrament to be a gift of God to his Church and therefore an office of divine institution.³⁰
- “Both our churches have a threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon and believe it to serve as an expression of the unity we seek and also a means of achieving it.³¹ Within this threefold ministry the

bishop signifies and focuses the continuity and unity of the whole Church. Apostolic continuity and unity in both our churches is expressed in the consecration and ordination of bishops in succession. The ordination of other ministers in both our churches is always by a bishop, with the assent of the community of the Church.³² Integrally linked with the episcopal ordination is our common tradition that the bishop has a special pastoral care for the clergy as for the whole church.

“j A ministry of oversight (*episcopate*) is a gift of God to the Church. In both our Churches it is exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways. It is necessary in order to witness and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the Church.³³ In both our traditions in the course of history the exact structure and distribution of oversight functions have varied.”

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We find this agreement sufficient to hereby establish a relationship of interim eucharistic sharing.

4. We encourage development of common life throughout the Moravian and Episcopal Churches by such means as the following:
 - a. Mutual prayer and mutual support, including covenants and agreements at all levels;
 - b. Common study of the Holy Scriptures, the histories and theological traditions of each church, and the material prepared by the dialogue;
 - c. Joint programs of worship, religious education, theological discussion, mission, evangelism, and social action;
 - d. Joint use of facilities.
5. This resolution and experience of Interim Eucharistic Sharing will be communicated at regular intervals to the other Moravian provinces, to other churches of the Anglican Communion throughout the world, to other churches with whom this Church is in full communion, as well as to the ecumenical dialogues in which Moravians and Anglicans are engaged, in order that consultation may be fostered, similar experiences encouraged elsewhere, and already existing relationships of full communion strengthened.

¹⁷ Cf. *Anglican Lutheran International Conversations: the Report of the Conversations 1970-1972*, authorized by the Lambeth Conference and the Lutheran World Federation (London, 1973) (*Pullach*), paras. 23-25.

¹⁸ Cf. *Helsinki*, para. 31; *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982) (*BEM*), *Baptism*, paras 17-23, *Eucharist* paras 27-33, *Ministry*, paras 41-44.

¹⁹ Cf. *BEM*, *Baptism*, para. 8.

²⁰ Cf. *BEM*, *Baptism*, para. 9.

²¹ Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches, *The Porvoo Common Statement* (CCU Occasional Paper No. 3, 1993) (*Porvoo*), para 32(g).

²² Cf. *BEM*, *Baptism*, para. 9.

²³ Cf. *Porvoo*, para 32(g).

²⁴ *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para. 65.

²⁵ Cf. *BEM*, *Eucharist*, para. 1.

²⁶ *Helsinki*, para. 20; cf. paras 17-21.

²⁷ *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para. 18; cf. para 43 and *Pullach*, para. 59.

²⁸ Cf. para. 21 above.

²⁹ Cf. *BEM*, *Ministry*, para. 7.

³⁰ Cf. *Helsinki*, paras 32-43; *God's Reign and Our Unity*, paras. 91-97, *BEM*, *Ministry*, paras 4 and 12.

³¹ Cf. *BEM*, *Ministry*, para. 22.

³² Cf. 'The Office of Bishop in our Churches: Texts', appended to this Common Statement.

Response to ARCIC Document *Gift of Authority*

In May 1999, Anglican-Roman Catholic International Consultation (ARCIC) issued its third agreed statement on authority, *The Gift of Authority* (hereafter shortened to *GA*). This document explores further the nature and practice of authority in the two churches and makes concrete suggestions as to the challenges and issues each church faces in relationship to the other in this area. The Anglican Communion Office has requested official responses to *GA* from the Provinces. SCER's response is included as part of this report.

For further developments in Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues, including the important establishment of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM, whose goal is to look at areas of practical cooperation for the two churches), the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC, chaired by Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold), and the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the USA (ARCUSA, which meets twice yearly), please consult

www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/romancatholic/developments.

The following response to *GA* was drafted and approved by the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations in consultation with the seminaries of the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers. The specific questions asked by the Anglican Communion Office are appended to the response.

**RESPONSE TO THE GIFT OF AUTHORITY
BY THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES**

Formulated by the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations and the Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Introduction

1. *The Gift of Authority* (1998; hereafter *GA*¹) continues the substantial history of dialogues and formal documents of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). Since the time of Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Paul VI, Bishop of Rome, our Churches have diligently and officially sought to explore together the faith we hold in common. The ultimate goal of these explorations has been to promote and sustain mutual respect and understanding in order to build that consensus which would ultimately culminate in the restoration of full communion between us. This goal of unity both baptismally, which now exists, and ecclesiastically, which does not now exist, is grounded in our shared knowing of the truth that there is one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all.
2. While profound and important strides forward have been made in developing consensus around our theologies of ministry and ordination, and Eucharist,² ARCIC has consistently found the area of authority and ecclesiology to be difficult and, as yet, insoluble. *GA* is intended to take the conversation further, as it grows out of the responses and concerns that emerged from *Authority in the Church I & II*³ and out of developments in the two Churches in the intervening years. In formulating *GA*, ARCIC has carefully and courageously addressed a number of complex and controversial issues between and within our Churches. We are grateful to ARCIC for its work, and we welcome *GA* as a contribution to the ongoing conversation that is needed as we continue to live more deeply into communion with each other.
3. When the eleventh meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council commended *GA* to the Provinces of the Anglican Communion for "careful and critical study," each Province was asked to consider particular questions. (See Appendix I) As the body authorized by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. "to make recommendations to General Convention concerning interchurch cooperation and unity,"⁴ the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations has considered these questions carefully and prayerfully. We have also consulted with diocesan ecumenical officers and others involved in the Episcopal

¹ *The Gift of Authority*. London: Catholic Truth Society; Toronto, Canada, Anglican book Centre; and New York: Church Publishing, Incorporated, 1999. Chapter II (Reference hereafter will be by Chapter and section, viz., I.7).

² See *The Final Report (Windsor, 1981)*. Cincinnati, OH: Forward movement Publications and Washington, D.C.: Office of Publishing Services, U.S. Catholic Conference. 1982.

³ *Authority in the Church I* (1976), *Elucidation* (1981), *Authority in the Church II* (1981). Hereafter, *AC I/II*, or *AC/E*.

⁴ Canon I.1.2(n).5.

Church's ecumenical efforts. This response includes our careful consideration of these questions and what we have heard in response to them and to GA itself.

4. Our general response is this: GA contributes one articulation of a way to understand and embody authority and primacy institutionally. The document uses Scripture and some elements of tradition to build and support its argument. It is particularly helpful in uncovering some elements of Anglican lack of clarity on where authority does reside and might reside within the Anglican Communion. However, our general response to GA requires us to say that it falls short of its goal in several substantive ways. We conclude that it has not substantively furthered our relationship together or our movement toward our final goal.

5. At the same time, we do not believe that GA marks an end. Rather, precisely because of its contents, it raises important issues and questions that call for further conversation, thinking, and work by our Churches. GA challenges the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church to be more self-critical about our theology and praxis⁵ of authority, be that the primary authority of Scripture, or the authority of various offices and structures within our church and between member churches of the Anglican Communion. These issues are difficult and will require a new level of honesty and risk within and from both Churches in order to embrace creatively and constructively God's call to us to move forward toward full communion.

6. With gratitude, we acknowledge and accept GA as a part of a conversation that is of serious content and nature, and is important to us in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. We remain fully committed to the goals of full communion and unity, and entirely convinced of the necessity of continuing conversation and work toward those ends. It is only in our mutual steadfast commitment to continue in dialog that we have the possibility of bringing our Churches into deeper relationship, and ultimately into full communion with one another in that unity for which our Baptism calls and empowers us by the Spirit in our one Lord. To further our conversations, we believe that we must speak frankly and clearly, yet within the rubric of "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4. 15).

The Response and Critique

IN GENERAL

7. The theology and praxis of authority within the Church is rightly recognized by ARCIC as an essential topic around which we must come to common understanding and theology if we are to move toward full communion and unity. How that common understanding and theology are embodied in our current praxis is a further question, one that GA does not address. Instead, until §58, GA gives an idealized view of the church with little reference to actual current or desired future practice.⁶ Yet the issue of how authority is exercised in the concrete must be addressed as part of our movement toward full communion. GA's failure to do so contributes to the reluctance of many in both Churches to agree with ARCIC's claim that its work "has resulted in sufficient agreement on universal primacy as a gift to be shared, for us to propose that such a primacy could be offered and received even before our churches are in full communion."⁷

8. The experience of the Anglican Communion indicates that praxis is a matter in which we do not necessarily need uniformity.⁸ We believe that this holds true between our two Churches as well as within each of them. GA does not appear to allow this possibility.

9. While GA seeks to address three areas of authority our Churches posed for further exploration,⁹ the direction, argument, and conclusions do not represent a wide consensus either within the Episcopal Church (USA) or the Anglican Communion, though it is asserted that they do represent a consensus among members

⁵ That is, the interplay of practice and reflection that is present in the church at every level.

⁶ This continues the practice of the earlier ARCIC documents on authority. See *AE I*, Preface.

⁷ GA §60

⁸ Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, 4.

⁹ *GA*, Introduction, p. 10. These areas are: (1) the relationship of Scripture and Tradition to the exercise of authority, (2) collegiality, conciliarity, and the role of the laity, and (3) Petrine primacy in relationship to Scripture and Tradition. The 1988 Lambeth Conference also identified primatial jurisdiction as an area needing discussion. (1988 Lambeth Conference: Resolution 8 and Explanatory Note regarding ARCIC I) GA does not directly address this issue.

of ARCIC. In part, we believe this is because ARCIC has not taken adequately into account important theological developments in the Anglican Communion since AC II (1981). Of particular importance to the question of authority in the church is the theology of baptism and ministry found in *The Book of Common Prayer* 1979. Further, ARCIC has not been a body representing the breadth and riches of the Anglican Communion. We believe these two factors have negatively affected the approach of GA.

10. We agree with GA's position that the "root of all authority is through the activity of the Triune God, who authors life in its fullness," indeed "new life for all."¹⁰ As ARCIC's *Church as Communion* states, "God's purpose is to bring all people into communion with himself within a transformed creation."¹¹ Yet, as the document moves into the institutional implementation of authority given in service of the divine purpose, there is an increasing emphasis on the power and decision-making that is claimed for the Office of Bishop. This is matched by an underdeveloped, vague treatment of the role, responsibilities, and authority of the laity, as well as a generally underdeveloped consideration of the importance and relationships of all the People of God to power, authority, and decision-making. This is at odds with the understanding and practice of authority of ECUSA and the Anglican Communion, in which all the baptized are given authority in the church.¹²

11. GA addresses the relationship between Scripture and authority in the church by beginning with an interpretation of 2 Cor. 1:18-20 ("God's 'Yes' to us and our 'Amen' to God") that provides a central model of authority as a gift that originates in God and is entrusted to the People of God. This model is intended to provide a clear and understandable theological and conceptual center for the document.¹³ However, as the document develops, this model becomes ever less persuasive, and in some sections functions as a convenient literary device rather than an adequate support for the claims made.¹⁴ Thus, GA does not provide an adequate view of the relationship between Scripture and authority in the church.

AUTHORITY

12. The fundamental understanding of the exercise of authority in the church given by GA is too juridical and narrow, equating authority with power and the exercise of power. This equation is contrary to GA's own interpretation of 2 Cor. 1:18-20¹⁵ and to its various assertions that authority is properly exercised fundamentally as a form of servanthood.¹⁶

13. GA claims to develop a coherent argument or explication of authority by building on the work of AC I & II.¹⁷ We note that while GA offers one possible and plausible development of these earlier ARCIC documents, it is one that does not take adequately into account concerns expressed by the Anglican Communion, including ECUSA, particularly regarding the role of the laity and the relation between universal primacy and collegiality.¹⁸ Nor does it adequately take into account important theological developments in the Anglican Communion in our theology of baptism.

14. The methodology of GA in developing its particular understanding and application of "authority" as well as the interpretation of its central biblical model is one of argument by assertion.¹⁹ There is an assumption of large amounts of knowledge, and of the logic that connects the assertions being made. It is not *prima facie*

¹⁰ GA, I.7

¹¹ *Church as Communion*, 16, quoted in GA I.7

¹² See, for example, BCP "Catechism" 855-856.

¹³ GA, §7-10.

¹⁴ E.g., §19-25, 43, 50.

¹⁵ Cf. GA §7-9

¹⁶ E.g., GA §§ 9, 12, 37, 42, 46, 47, 51, 52

¹⁷ Both *AC I & II* contain more precise and coherent definitions and understandings of authority. It appears that in *GA*, there is a break, which is unexplained, from the development of the understanding of authority in these previous two documents of ARCIC.

¹⁸ *The Emmaus Report (prepared for Anglican Consultative Council 7 [1987] and the Lambeth Conference [1988])*, 64-69.

¹⁹ GA Preface para. 3

clear what either the logic or the connections are. Given the importance and sensitivity of the matters treated, this clarity is sorely needed.

15. Theologically, authority is a matter of relationships: between God the Father and Jesus the Son of God, between God and the Church, among members of the Church which is the People of God. God is the source or author of all authority, but authority is given to all the People of God so that all may freely and willingly participate in the fulfillment of God's promises, in communion with one another and with God. Thus authority is properly understood as dispersed among the People of God, regardless of their order of ministry,²⁰ but in a way that is conducive to Christian freedom and communion.

16. On the whole, GA fails to address adequately the Church's traditional practices of synodal, collegial, and conciliar discernment and decision-making over time, practices which involve the participation of laity, deacons, and priests as well as bishops. GA does not make it clear how and when there is broader participation in the decision-making of the Church by the priests, deacons, and laity. GA does indicate that decision-making involves "consultation" with all the baptized, but "consultation" is a vague term, vaguely used, and lacks a direct and serious commitment to the active role of members of the Church in addition to the Bishops. Further, to say that consultation ought to take place is not the same as saying that it will or must take place.²¹

17. In GA, the authority of priests, deacons, and laity of the Church along with bishops²² is not effectively addressed or included as is their right by Baptism. GA does not address the particular authority proper to bishops, priests, deacons, and laity as distinguishable orders within the People of God. Instead, the active participation of laity, deacons, and priests is downplayed, thereby giving the impression that Bishops are, as a function of their Office, the primary (if not only) natural recipients of definitive revelation and the power to make definitive judgments for the Church. Further, GA's emphasis on authority as the legislative prerogative of Bishops fails to recognize the existence of and the need for adequate and appropriate lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability beyond legislative processes.

18. The principle of inclusion of all is not merely a political democratization of power, authority, or primacy. Rather it is a principle sacramentally grounded in Baptism and a related ecclesiology that makes the whole People of God responsible for the Church's life. This does not deny or abrogate the reality that within the Church, the various Orders of baptismal ministry carry different degrees of responsibility and accountability, as well as particular and different roles and ministries for the life of the Church in itself and in the world. The issue that is not adequately addressed in GA and needs more and further consideration is that of sustaining explicitly the whole context of each Order within the entire People of God, specifically in terms of authority, power, and decision-making.

19. The portrait presented by GA of the exercise of authority among the people of God is not consistent with an ecclesiology grounded in Baptism, such as that of ECUSA. Nor is it an adequate or accurate representation of the theology and praxis of the Anglican Communion or of the Episcopal Church, in which there are already a variety of expressions of synodality, collegiality, and conciliarity (as well as primacy). We note that a similar variety exists in theory in the Roman Catholic Church, though actual practice may be minimal and/or sporadic.²³ This is not to say that we believe that our own understanding or practice, as Anglicans or as Episcopalians, is adequate, or that we are convinced it must be the model for a united church; we are keenly aware of our own shortcomings in both theology and practice. However, we do believe that synodality, collegiality, and conciliarity are indispensable elements of the church's theology and praxis of authority, and need to be seen as such in relation to primacy.

PRIMACY

²⁰ BCP, "Catechism," 855-856.

²¹ Cf. GA §57

²² BCP 517-518

²³ SEE, E.G., ARCUSA'S AGREED REPORT ON THE LOCAL/UNIVERSAL CHURCH, NOVEMBER 15, 1999.

20. The definition of primacy, the theology growing from it, and the praxis of primacy set forth in GA are seriously problematic from our perspective in part because they contradict the praxis of primacy of the Episcopal Church USA; and of the Anglican Communion, in which primacy among the constituent Provinces is thought of and embodied in a variety of ways. It seems to us that the notion of primacy advocated in GA would require Anglicans to sacrifice the particularity of our heritage and identity and be subsumed under what is essentially the existing understanding and practice of primacy by the Bishop of Rome. The form of primacy articulated as acceptable in GA may reflect the membership of ARCIC, but it does not reflect a consensus on primacy within Anglicanism. Nor does GA reflect a consensus within the Episcopal Church in the USA.

21. Moreover, in a dialogue between equal partner Churches, it is inappropriate to make a case, even implicitly, for one partner to be subsumed into the theology and praxis of the other. It is neither reasonable nor appropriate to assert, implicitly or explicitly, that either church should relinquish its particular identity and tradition as a requirement for full communion. In this regard, GA goes well beyond the *subsistit in* of *Lumen gentium* and marks a return to earlier, pre-Vatican II thinking and practice.²⁴

22. The issue here is GA's assertion of what ought to be (and implicitly what must be) the form and exercise of primacy theologically and in praxis. We make no claim that the Anglican Tradition has or claims to have all the answers or the only right way to embody primacy in and for the Church. We believe that a consensus on this matter within each Church and between our Churches is possible and desirable. We believe that the legitimate praxis of primacy can and ought to be broader rather than narrower, allowing an appropriate diversity without assuming that such diversity necessarily breeches the unity of the Church.²⁵ We would hope that our continued conversation and thinking may open the way for consensus on both the possibility and desirability of a form of primacy exercised in both Churches and specifically with regard to the Bishop of Rome.

23. GA reflects a rigid and detached hierarchical model of primacy that has historically demonstrated itself to be seriously problematic theologically, canonically, and practically. GA's task is made more difficult than it need be insofar as it approaches primacy and authority primarily from the perspective of structure and canons for the exercise of power. We urge a broadening of the context within which primacy in general, and specifically a special primacy for the Bishop of Rome, might be considered. The broader context would focus more intentionally on the relationship among the members of the Church and between a Bishop and the Church as a community of faith. Further, our understanding of primacy theologically and practically needs to be developed in relationship to the processes of decision-making within both our Churches, explicitly including all members of the Church as necessary participants.

24. GA does not explicitly address a particular instance of the exercise of authority that is of significant concern to Anglicans: the Bishop of Rome's exercise of direct, immediate, ordinary, universal jurisdiction. The exercise of such authority is incompatible with the understanding of authority in the Anglican Communion that we have highlighted throughout this response. Indeed, the manner in which universal primacy and direct, immediate jurisdiction have been exercised historically does not encourage us to receive this model. Nor does its exercise by the current Bishop of Rome subsequent to AC I and II and the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*.

25. The theology and practice of primacy in GA inadequately addresses issues of accountability and responsibility. Here again, the issue is an evident disparity between structure and canons on the one hand and the relationships, formal and informal, which inhere in the life of the Church and are essential to its life and

²⁴ *Lumen gentium* 1.8. The key sentence is, "*Hæc Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniantur, quæ ut dona Ecclesiæ Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.*" ("This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, *subsists in* the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity." Italics added)

²⁵ See BCP, "The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral," 876-877.

work. The relationship among the Orders of persons within the Church (Laity, Bishop, Priest, Deacon) as well as the personal relationships among the People of God are the context within which episcopacy, primacy, and authority are lived. Therefore, clear and reasonable lines of responsibility and accountability are essential for the good health of the People of God and the Church.

26. The matter of location of a universal primacy is a separate question. While it is historically correct to recognize the primacy of the See of Rome, and while (as GA says) the primatial ministry of the Bishop of Rome has been exercised for the benefit of both the whole church and the local church,²⁶ these are not the only relevant factors involved. The exercise of primacy of the Bishop of Rome has been and continues to be a source of controversy in our churches, controversy which has contributed to our unhappy divisions.²⁷ This historical legacy must be weighed along with the benefits of the exercise of primacy by this See.

27. We have concluded that the form of primacy advocated in GA does not reflect a consensus on primacy within the Episcopal Church USA or within Anglicanism. We have concluded that there is a need for further work that moves toward both greater theological depth and clarity as well as greater understanding of what constitutes good, reasonable, and faithful praxis. We hope that our continued conversation and thinking may open the way for consensus on both the possibility and desirability of a form of primacy exercised in both Churches and specifically with regard to the Bishop of Rome. The argument made in GA is, to us, too narrow and does not provide for a legitimate diversity of theology and praxis for primacy. We also believe that, for Anglicans, evident reform of the practice of primacy by the Bishop of Rome is necessary if a way to consensus is to be opened.

INDEFECTIBILITY AND INFALLIBILITY

28. The discussion of indefectibility and infallibility in the context of authority and primacy is inadequate, and crafted in a way that seems to us to conform to the understanding and practices of the Church of Rome (See par. 47). There is, as elsewhere in GA, a failure to distinguish clearly and precisely between the descriptive and ideal on the one hand, and the prescriptive and essential on the other hand. Everything is treated as of equal value and weight, and therefore of equal importance.²⁸ Yet ecclesiologically, everything is clearly not of the *esse* of the Church or of authority, primacy, and indefectibility.

29. The theology of infallibility within GA is presented as inherent to the Office of Bishop, but we do not find the argument persuasive, nor a significant advance on what has been said in AC II.²⁹ GA's position is problematic not only in terms of the definition and understanding of the episcopate within the Anglican Tradition, but also in terms of the episcopate's relationship to the authority of the baptized in our ecclesiology. There is a long-standing agreement among Anglicans that it is the church that is indefectible, and only because indefectibility is a gift given by God and guaranteed by grace. We are not persuaded that the same holds true of infallibility. Further, to say that the church is indefectible does not mean that the church can necessarily claim indefectibility at any given point or for any given statement.³⁰ For these reasons, we doubt that the concept of infallibility expressed in GA can be embraced by the Episcopal Church without a great deal more study and discussion. In the course of such study and discussion, the Episcopal church must continue to self-critical of its own limitations in both ecclesiology and praxis.

30. We would raise these questions for serious consideration: Is the doctrine of infallibility of the *esse* of episcopacy, in both theology and practice? Is it essential for a theology and praxis of authority? What is actually lost in these discussions if we were to emphasize indefectibility, while bracketing infallibility as something not necessary to full communion between our two Churches? If the essential issue is God's preservation of the church from error, in what other ways might this issue be addressed that will nurture and sustain the Church and promote unity and full communion between us?

²⁶ GA §46

²⁷ *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), §§ 88, 95.

²⁸ See *Unitatis redintegratio* III.11 regarding the concept of "hierarchy of truths."

²⁹ AC II §§ 23-22

³⁰ BCP, "The Articles of Religion," Article 21, 872.

THE TERMS OF FULL COMMUNION AND UNITY

31. Official Roman Catholic teaching claims that communion with the Bishop of Rome *understood as universal primate* is necessary to full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.³¹ In this teaching, this is one of the essential or necessary “marks” of the true Church; any church not having it is regarded as deficient or defective. While this issue is not directly or explicitly addressed in GA, we believe such an understanding is implicit in this document.³² The Anglican Communion has not found this understanding consonant with Scripture, nor with the Catholic tradition in which the Anglican Communion shares. Nor is it consonant with the Reformation tradition that is also part of our heritage and identity. For this understanding to be persuasive to Anglicans, what is needed is not a claim of necessity, but a clear and persuasive account of the benefits to the whole Church of universal primacy. GA presumes that earlier ARCIC work on authority has already provided such an account. We believe there are still important questions that must be addressed.

32. The question of the necessity to recognize the universal primacy of the Bishop of Rome raises a larger question: what constitutes unity in general, and what is the *esse* of that unity? This is a question that each Church must engage within itself, and in dialogue with the other. Our two Churches are committed to the unity of the Church as more than a theoretical proposition. We both agree that it is a Gospel mandate. We also agree that unity is not a matter of one Church conforming to what the other has traditionally determined to be “necessary.”

33. Further, the Episcopal Church USA maintains that until and unless all churches come to full communion, we are all lacking in the fullness of the faith and of unity in Christ. In this light, we must ask what might be the appropriate symbols of real, organic unity. For example, if our two Churches agree that the See of Rome is the primary center of unity, in what sense do we understand that unity to be embodied in that symbol? Is it organic, historical, canonical, sacramental, or does it have some other basis? How does that symbol function within the Church and among the Churches as a symbol of our unity?³³

34. We believe that further conversation is necessary about the essential nature of the Church. Specifically, the assertion of *Lumen gentium* that the “fullness of the Church subsists in” the Church of Rome must be addressed,³⁴ with attention not only to what this document was intended to say, but also to how is currently interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church. Herein lies a major theological question which has not been addressed by ARCIC. Yet it must be addressed: it is a profound part of how any resolution of the questions of primacy, authority, and the relationship between the Bishop of Rome and the Anglican Communion may be devised and implemented.

35. The Anglican tradition has always claimed to be part of the Catholic Church. The questions for Anglicans are, On what basis do we make this claim? Are there elements of the Catholic faith that are absent from the Anglican Tradition? What of catholic polity (bishops, priests, deacons, laity) that is essential for the support, nurture, and transmission of the Catholic faith is absent from Anglican Tradition? In what ways can the Anglican communion claim to meet *Lumen gentium*’s criterion³⁵ of governance “by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops” (“*a successore Petri et Episcopis*”)? Does Anglican diversity of understanding and practice in the particular area of universal primacy undermine or prevent full communion? If, as we believe is the case, the Anglican Communion lacks none of the essentials of the Church except full communion with

³¹ Note that the issue here is not communion with the Bishop of Rome *as bishop*. Clearly that is necessary to full communion. The issue, rather, is how the See of Rome is understood in distinction from all other Sees. See Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), 246.

³² E.g., GA §46-47, 52, 59-62; see also *Dominus Jesus* no. 16; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion,” *communio notio* (1992), 10.

³³ *Ut Unum Sint* §88, 95-96

³⁴ See above, n. 24.

³⁵ See n. 24.

other churches, there is no necessary theological reason why “governance in communion” (“*ejus communione gubernata*”) cannot become the real, logical, and necessary conclusion of these dialogues.

36. Both Churches have legitimate concerns and interest in the details of precisely how catholic faith is understood and how polity is structured and actually exercised. As GA notes, both Churches have equally hard questions to ask of themselves about their own ecclesiology and polity and the level of flexibility that they bring to the conversation. We have raised some additional questions and concerns here. Both Anglicans and Roman Catholics must be open to the possibility that the resolution will take a form not yet thought of or imagined, and that it will be a new thing for all of us.

Next Steps for the Dialog

37. To continue the work of ARCIC and to further the relationship between our two Churches, it seems to us that there are a number of important and weighty questions and issues that need to be addressed. We would propose the following topics, mindful that this list is not exhaustive, but indicates the major areas of concern needing further conversation and work.

38. The Anglican component of ARCIC must become more broadly representative of the Anglican Communion and its range of understandings and practices of authority, primacy, and the participation of all the Baptized in the life of the Church and its decision-making. The theology reflected in GA is not representative of either the Episcopal Church or other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and in many places is inconsistent with our theological understandings and practices.

39. ARCIC can and should continue in conversation on the problems and issues that emerge from GA. This should also be a priority for national and regional dialogues between the two Churches.³⁶

40. Further consideration is needed of the historical models of authority and primacy, as well as the ecclesiologies of the two Churches, with an eye to what new models of authority and primacy may emerge from such consideration.

41. Further consideration is needed of the relation of diversity and unity as these are related to the central issues of primacy, authority, and communion between our two Churches. Specifically, discussion is needed about the necessary extent of agreement and the range of acceptable diversity needed to preserve it. This discussion must take into account the actual practices of both Churches, as well as their theology.

42. Further work is needed to show how the central theological and biblical grounding for authority more clearly and directly applies to and connects with the issues at hand.

43. The ministry of the Bishop, in its totality and in particular relationship to authority, discernment, and decision-making must be set more firmly in the context of an explicit theology of the active participation of the whole People of God. Particular note needs to be taken of the role of all the Baptized together in the movement from *sensus fidei* to *consensus fidelium*.

44. Further work is needed to examine more deeply the nature of power and authority, the difference between them, and their relationship to and engagement within Catholic polity. For example, GA proposes that problems incapable of resolution be referred to a universal primate. On the other hand, the Lambeth Conference (1998) passed non-binding resolutions that such problems be referred to the Primates’ Meeting for resolution.³⁷ What insights into the nature of power and authority do each of these proposals provide, both for ecclesiology and for praxis? On what grounds is one deemed preferable to the other?

45. The roles and relationships of the Churches to the Bishop of Rome must be discussed further with openness and straight-forwardness. Until a sound theological rationale is developed for the primacy of the

³⁶ Thus, we note ARCUSA’s current study of authority, and commend to it these issues and concerns. We also hope that various Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue groups discuss them as well.

³⁷ The proposal was that the Primates’ Meeting, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury should have authority to intervene in such matters. Further, it was proposed that in very exceptional cases, the Archbishop of Canterbury exercise an extra-ordinary ministry of oversight in the affairs of a province not his own for the sake of maintaining communion. Lambeth Conference Resolutions III.6(b); IV.13(b).

See of Rome, and until reform of the practice of primacy is evidently underway, we do not believe the Anglican Communion may accept the universal primacy of the Bishop of Rome.

46. Further work is needed to develop the role of leadership and servanthood in the exercise of authority. We believe that emphasizing the various relationships involved is necessary to such work

47. We strongly recommend that the following actions take place within the United States at national, diocesan, and regional levels. These actions are consistent with the Action Plan of Communion in Mission from the meeting of Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops at Mississauga in May, 2000, and with the work of IARCCUM.³⁸ The purpose of these actions is building mutual understanding, respect, and creative possibilities through intentionally developed relationships between Episcopal and Roman Catholic Bishops.

1. A joint meeting between the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church and the U. S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, with the clear understanding that each Church understands its Bishops to be bishops in historic succession.
2. Regular meetings of local Episcopal and Roman Catholic Bishops for study, reflection, conversation, and support; and for shared action insofar as that is possible
3. Collaboration in the various dioceses among parishes, especially in mission.
4. Concerted collaborative efforts to build greater awareness, knowledge, and joint activity at the local level.
5. A conference convened by the Episcopal Church of its ecumenical partners to examine the proposals of GA.

48. In conclusion, we reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Episcopal Church to the restoration of full communion between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church. We reaffirm that the Episcopal Church must be willing to examine and reform its own theology and praxis in order to live into this commitment. We welcome ARCIC'S document *The Gift of Authority* as a contribution to the ongoing conversation that is needed. We find GA helpful in indicating areas where Anglicans need greater clarity on the theology and praxis of authority both within our own Communion and between our Church and other Churches. At the same time, we find that GA falls short of its goal in several substantive ways. Further work is needed before it is appropriate or possible for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion to accept GA's proposals. We have offered these comments in the hope that they will contribute to this work, and to that full communion which is God's will for us, and for which we continually pray.

Appendix I

Questions for Study by the Provinces From the Office of Ecumenical Affairs and Studies Anglican Communion Office

- 1 With regard to the relation between Scripture and Tradition and the exercise of teaching authority:
 - a. To what extent does The Gift of Authority reflect the understanding and practice which the Anglican Communion has received?
 - b. What fresh insights into, or challenges to that understanding are suggested in The Gift of Authority?
 - c. What consequences does the understanding in The Gift of Authority have for deepening Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the future?
- 2 With regard to collegiality, conciliarity and the role of laity in decision making:
 - a. To what extent does The Gift of Authority reflect the understanding and practice which the Anglican Communion has received?
 - b. What fresh insights into, or challenges to that understanding are suggested in The Gift of Authority?

³⁸ International Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation for Unity and Mission.

- c. What consequences does the understanding in *The Gift of Authority* have for deepening Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the future?
- 3 With regard to the Petrine ministry of universal primacy in relation to Scripture and Tradition:
 - a. The Lambeth Conference of 1988 resolution III.8 (h) requested study “on whether effective communion, at all levels, does not require appropriate instruments, with due safeguards, not only for legislation, but also for oversight, as well as on the issue of a universal ministry in the service of Christian unity”. What fresh insights into, or challenges to this area are suggested in *The Gift of Authority*?
 - b. How can these insights or challenges be accepted into the life of the Anglican Communion?
 - c. What consequences does the understanding in *The Gift of Authority* have for deepening Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the future?

Resolution A088 Response to *Gift of Authority*

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the affirmations noted and the questions raised in the
- 2 report of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations be referred to ARCIC for further dialogue;
- 3 and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the Report of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations on the Gift of Authority
- 5 be transmitted to the Anglican Communion Office as the official response of this Church.

Resolution on “Open Communion”

At its October 2002 meeting, the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations discussed the increasingly common practice of open communion and its ecumenical implications. This practice is in conflict with Title I, Canon 17, Section 7 and the 1979 General Convention guidelines on eucharistic sharing. This conflict between official position and widespread practice raises questions and concerns in our ecumenical dialogues, in which agreement on the nature of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist is necessary to moving toward the full communion to which this church is committed. The SCER believes it is time for this matter to be addressed by the larger church. In order to maintain the integrity and credibility of the Episcopal Church in the ecumenical sphere, the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations urges the following resolution be adopted by the General Convention:

Resolution A089 “Open Communion”

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church
- 2 establish a task force to study the matter of the increasingly common practice of open communion to
- 3 report back to the 2006 General Convention; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, that this task force shall be comprised of Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and lay persons with
- 5 representation from the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, the Standing Commission on
- 6 Liturgy and Music, and the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons, as proposed by the Chairs
- 7 of those Commissions.

EXPLANATION

It has become increasingly common for Episcopal clergy to invite all persons, whether baptized or not, to receive Holy Communion. The clear provision of Title I, Canon 17, Section 7 is this: “No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this church.” The Guidelines on Eucharistic Sharing endorsed by the 1979 General Convention state that “It is no service to the unity of Christ’s Church when one group contributes to . . . undermining of discipline of another.” (1979 Journal of the General Convention, AA-81.) The unauthorized practice of “open communion” is at apparent odds with the official teachings of this church on Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. In official dialogues between this church and others, our appointed members are to represent the official position of this church. In light of the increasingly widespread practice of “open communion,” it is increasingly difficult for them to do so with credibility. Further, the practice appears to invite members of other churches to receive communion when to do so is contrary to their own church’s eucharistic discipline.

At the same time, the practice may indicate a shift in our own consensus of the faith that is to be the basis of our official teachings. In such a situation, we believe it is time for the church to give due and careful

consideration to the matter. Therefore, we are proposing the establishment of a task force with the expertise necessary to discuss a matter of this weight, complexity, and significance.

Resolution on Interfaith Relations

With the disbanding in the previous triennium of the Presiding Bishop's Advisory Committee on Interfaith Relations, a group appointed by the Presiding Bishop recommended that oversight of interfaith relations be lodged with the SCER. In 1999 this proposal was accepted by the SCER.

During the past triennium, the SCER has tried to assume its responsibilities for Interfaith relations, although it has confronted some obstacles. The SCER has recognized the authority of EIR office to oversee directly Interfaith Relations for ECUSA, in consultation with SCER, and has encouraged EIR to form a "taskforce" to help in Interfaith Relations. This taskforce has been organized, although for logistical reasons it has not yet met.

An important development has been the establishment of the Interfaith Education Initiative (IEI), a joint project between the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and Episcopal Relief and Development. The goals of the IEI are to provide resources in Interfaith Education, to strengthen local networks to facilitate local interfaith dialogue, and to help identify resource persons and experts in the field of Interfaith Education. A comprehensive website is available at www.interfaitheducationinitiative.org. The SCER has maintained contact with the project through regular reports from the IEI's Coordinator.

Given the challenges facing Christian-Muslim efforts at mutual understanding in wake of current world conflicts and in the midst of Anglican struggles in Africa, we are committed to establishing our own sustained educational and dialogical work in this regard on foundations of equitable and realistic respect for human rights. Despite taking on, in good faith and as requested, the oversight of Interfaith Relations, SCER has had to face the fact that its on-going and substantive work in ecumenical affairs practically precludes its ability adequately to supervise the essential work of Interfaith relations, and that while it has been a tremendous resource, the funding for the IEI will only continue through 2004.

In light of the pressing world challenges that bear upon interfaith understanding, and the realities of supporting interfaith work in ways that sustain its energy and purpose, along with continuing to support the work of the IEI through 2004, this Commission intends to present a proposal for a full-time Associate Deputy for Interfaith Relations to the General Convention of 2006. We propose the following resolution:

Resolution A090 Christian-Muslim Dialogue

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 74th General Convention reaffirms Resolution 1997-
- 2 D069 on "Substantive Dialogue Between Christian and Muslim Communities", which calls for a "dialogue
- 3 that maintains the theological integrity of both faith communities and commitment to genuine human
- 4 rights and religious freedom as affirmed by the 71st General Convention (1994-D015)"; be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That the General Convention directs current and future ECUSA efforts at Christian-Muslim
- 6 dialogue and education to embody and strengthen that resolution's commitments to dialogue founded on
- 7 "genuine human rights and religious freedom", as embodied in the United Nations Declaration on Human
- 8 Rights (1948), Article 18, which states that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and
- 9 religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in
- 10 community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice,
- 11 worship, and observance"; and be it further
- 12 *Resolved*, That the General Convention directs that such efforts strengthen the peaceful and secure
- 13 religious witness of other Christians around the world in their ministry among Muslim neighbors,
- 14 particularly in areas of experienced religious oppression.

III. ONGOING GENERAL CONVENTION MANDATES

United Methodist Church - Episcopal Church

The United Methodist-Episcopal Church bilateral authorized by the 2000 General Convention met twice during the triennium and is scheduled to meet six times during the 2003-2006 triennium. The dialogue set its goals as "full communion, including interchangeability of ministries, for the sake of common mission and

witness.” The first meeting included presentations on our shared Anglican and American experiences, as well as divergences between the two churches, and the second began to explore questions of how authority is exercised in both our churches, examined the ecclesiology of our two communions, and studied the covenant documents proposed by the British Methodist Church and the Church of England and the final report of the Anglican-Methodist International Commission, *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*.

Anglican-Oriental Orthodox

The Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission met in the summer of 2001 and set an agenda to draft a common statement on Christology in time for the Lambeth Conference of 2008. The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (IASCER), including its Episcopal Church representatives, has requested the Provinces of the Anglican Communion to submit the text of the Agreement for study by those who have responsibility for monitoring faith and order issues in their provinces requesting them to offer any comments they may have to IASCER by 30 October 2003.

Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue

The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops (SCOBA) and the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church both agreed to resume an official dialogue. A Steering Committee consisting of representatives of both churches met during the triennium. The documents which were issued by the dialogue during the time period of 1976-1991 were researched and produced, and dialogue teams were appointed. Currently the Steering Committee is attempting to find a suitable date for the bilateral to take place.

Consultation on Church Union / Churches Uniting in Christ Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC)

For over forty years, the member churches of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) have met together seeking ways to make full communion possible. The 73rd General Convention resolved that the Episcopal Church “commit itself to continuing participation in COCU and to a process of engagement and dialogue beginning in 2002 with the inauguration of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC)” and affirmed this Church’s commitment to the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral and commended it as the theological basis for a future reconciled ministry between the member churches.

In January of 2002, the CUIC inauguration was held in Memphis, TN, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Delegates from the nine member churches approved this new relationship on behalf of their respective Communion. CUIC identifies eight marks descriptive of this new relationship and calls for dialogue whose goal is full reconciliation of ministry by 2007, with approval of “A Call to Christian Commitment and Action to Combat Racism.”

While enthusiastically supporting the anti-racism initiative, the Episcopal delegation made it clear that the Episcopal Church cannot enter into a relationship that includes the mutual recognition of ordained ministry, unless it has assurance that future reconciliation would include bishops in historic succession and a common and fully interchangeable three-fold ministry.

On Monday, January 21, 2002, the Episcopal Church’s delegates to the Memphis Assembly participated in the march on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to the National Civil Rights Museum where representatives of the nine member communions as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America signed a proclamation condemning racism and pledging their commitment to overcome this insidious evil in our society, and issued an “Appeal to the Churches.”

Before the close of the Memphis plenary the CUIC Coordinating Council had an organizational meeting. Each Communion has one member on the Council. Additionally, the Council has established three task forces to facilitate its work: Racial Justice, Ministry and a Local and Regional task force. All three task forces are active with full representation. For important information about these new developments in CUIC, please consult the website of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/cuic.

It should be noted that one of the ways in which CUIC asks member churches to inaugurate this new relationship is through joint prayer and celebration of the Eucharist. At its March 2002 meeting the SCER authorized the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations to update this Church’s guidelines for

Eucharistic sharing within the context of CUIC. These guidelines are available from the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations at www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/guidelines.

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.-Episcopal Church Dialogue

The Episcopal Church-Presbyterian Church, USA dialogue, established by the 73rd General Convention met four times during the triennium. The group will continue to meet twice a year and coordinate its meetings with the CUIC Ministry Task Force. The Episcopal-Presbyterian dialogue will be critical for the future goal of reconciliation of ministries by 2007 within the context of CUIC. Four goals were established for the dialogue: Clarification of our common apostolicity, exploring how our churches see themselves as expressions of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church; reconciliation of Ministry, including the ministry of the baptized and the ordained ministry, with particular the focus on the two churches' understanding of how *episcopate* is both shared and how it is focused in the historic episcopate as well as the place of the office of presbyter in both our traditions; to intentionally coordinate the work of the bilateral with the CUIC Ministry Task Force; and to discover ways for reception of the dialogue with our denominations.

Continuing Churches

In response to General Convention 2000 Resolution D047, the SCER invited the Rt. Rev. Keith Ackerman to its October 2001 to consult with the Commission on the most appropriate course of action in reaching out to non-ECUSA expressions of Anglicanism. The SCER commissioned the Ecumenical Relations Office to draft a letter inviting these "Continuing" Churches to dialogue. A letter was sent twenty-six different "Continuing" Anglican jurisdictions. As they were not in the same category as the "Continuing" Churches, a similar but slightly different letter was sent to the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Charismatic Episcopal Church. The letter regretted the divisions between Anglicans, and suggested agreeing to disagree on the issues which divide us in order to engage in a dialogue towards mutual understanding of one another. Twelve different groups responded favorably.

Accordingly, at its March 2002 meeting the SCER requested that a questionnaire be circulated to those churches which responded in order to determine which issues could be identified for discussion at a future meeting. The questionnaire was circulated and the responses were gathered.

The Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations issued an invitation to the churches which responded, inviting them to an organizational meeting to discuss future goals for this dialogue. A plenary meeting was held in December, 2002, and chaired by Bishop Christopher Epting along with representatives from the Standing Commission, to discuss the feasibility of moving forward with such a dialogue. In the final analysis, the "Continuing" Churches were unable or unwilling to send a delegation. SCER will have to consider how to proceed, given this apparent lack of interest.

Reformed Episcopal-Anglican Province of America-Episcopal Church Trilateral

As part of the action taken in regard to Resolution D047, the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations invited the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Anglican Province in America into a trilateral dialogue with the Episcopal Church. This decision was made for two reasons. The first was due to the special relationship between the Episcopal Church and these two churches. The Episcopal Church has been involved in bilateral dialogues with both churches in the past: the Reformed Episcopal Church in the 1930s and 1990s, and the Anglican Province in America's predecessor body, the American Episcopal Church, in the 1980s. Second, it seemed to be the proper way to proceed given the forthcoming full, organic merger planned between these two churches. The first meeting of the trilateral was held in January, 2003 and examined previous dialogue between the churches, the issues which divide the churches, and the possibility of establishing a formal dialogue. By consensus, representatives of the churches agreed to proceed with the dialogue. The dialogue team is scheduled to meet regularly during the 2003-2006 triennium, and established the goal of full communion.

Evangelicals and Pentecostals

The SCER was given a mandate by the 1997 and 2000 General Conventions to seek open dialogue with Evangelicals and Pentecostals. SCER has taken initial steps to outline what the purpose and scope of these discussions might be. We invited an expert on evangelicalism in the United States to address our February

2003 meeting. SCER is also monitoring and encouraging the participation of Evangelicals and Pentecostals in the Global Christian Forum process (in part an outgrowth of the WCC) and the Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.

National Council of Churches of Christ, USA

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations continues to fulfill its canonical charge and to monitor this Church's involvement in the National Council of Churches. Dr. Thomas Ferguson presented a detailed report for SCER about the Episcopal Church's history and involvement with the venerable ecumenical organization over the years, and which recommended that the SCER return to its previous practice of having a standing subcommittee to monitor this church's participation in the NCCC and WCC. This proposal was adopted, and a Standing Subcommittee was appointed to monitor this church's participation in the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. For more information on the programs which the NCCC supports, please consult their website, www.ncccusa.org

Dr. Robert Edgar, General Secretary, was able to report over the summer of 2002 that NCCCUSA ended its fiscal year June 30 with a balanced budget. The organization's programs include Christian education, economic and environmental justice efforts, and interfaith dialogue. The NCCCUSA was very active following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The Rev. Canon Patrick Mauney serves as President of Church World Service and Witness, now separate from the NCCCUSA.

Christian Churches Together in the USA

Bishop Christopher Epting, Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, represents the Episcopal Church in a brainstorming effort known as "Churches Together in the USA" to look into the possibility of a successor organization to the NCCCUSA which might include Roman Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal participation. A second meeting was held at Fuller Seminary in Los Angeles in January of 2003 to further explore the possible nature, scope, and shape of CCTUSA. This meeting witnessed significant involvement from a wide variety of Evangelical, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Churches. It is the hope that this organization could be launched in 2005. The SCER will continue to monitor the development of Christian Churches Together during the next triennium. For more information on Christian Churches Together, including news releases and documentation, please consult www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/cct.

World Council of Churches

Questions on the future shape of the ecumenical movement and of the World Council of Churches dominated the 2002 WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva and highlighted many of the concerns which have marked this conciliar fellowship during the triennium. An important step towards renewing the structure, style and ethos of the WCC was taken when the Central Committee received and endorsed with some procedural changes the Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. Main themes of the report included ecclesiology, social and ethical issues, common prayer, a consensus-model of decision-making, and future membership and representation in the Council.

The 158-member Committee also reviewed the WCC's program plans for 2003-2005 with a view to strengthening the organization and charting a course for the future. The Central Committee made two more decisions affecting the future of the organization. It appointed an 18-person search committee that will seek candidates to succeed Dr. Konrad Raiser as General Secretary when he retires in 2003, and also selected Porto Alegre, Brazil, as the site for the next General Assembly in 2006.

The Episcopal Church continues to participate in the US Board of the World Council of Churches, which is comprised of representatives of member churches of the WCC. The WCC maintains a US Office consisting of several staff members. The role of the US Office has been to promote awareness of WCC programs in the US Churches, assist in fundraising and development for the churches, and to hold an annual meeting to promote ecumenical activities and cooperation among member churches.

In addition, in January of 2003 a meeting was held at the Episcopal Church Center to discuss this church's participation in the program work of conciliar ecumenical bodies. The Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations invited members of the church's General Assembly delegation, Standing Commission on

Ecumenical Relations, and all Episcopalians serving on program or governance committees of the NCCC or WCC, in an effort to coordinate the church's work in conciliar ecumenism. Important progress was made in facilitating communication between a number of Episcopalians involved in a wide range of conciliar ecumenical work, as well as with the SCER.

IV. ADDITIONAL ECUMENICAL COMMITMENTS

Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers

The Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO) continue to fill the role as educators of clergy and laity, councils of advice to bishops, representatives of their bishops at ecumenical gatherings, and as grassroots initiators of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and cooperation. During the triennium, a major focus of EDEO was continued participation in the National Workshops on Christian Unity. In addition, EDEO held annual Winter Meetings of the Executive Committee. The winter meeting serve as a time for planning, both for the Annual Meeting and for other actions and activities of EDEO. During the triennium the Executive Committee of the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (NADEO), the Roman Catholic parallel body, and the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network (LERN), met in conjunction with the EDEO Executive Board.

Episcopal - Russian Orthodox Church Joint Coordinating Committee

The Russian Orthodox Joint Coordinating Committee was established in 1989 by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Patriarch Pimen, and first met in 1991. The goal of the Committee is to facilitate practical cooperation between the two churches. This has involved seminarian exchanges, theological dialogues, and collaboration in models of military and other chaplaincies. Representatives of the Episcopal Church traveled to Moscow in June, 2002, at the invitation of Metropolitan Kyrill of Smolensk, Chair of the Department of External Church Relations for the Moscow Patriarchate, to renew the work of the Committee. Fruitful discussions were held with Metropolitan Kyrill as well as with Metropolitan Sergei of Solnechnogorsk, the Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate and director of the Department of Charities. The meeting with Metropolitan Kyrill and the staff of the Department of External Church Relations highlighted the historic ties between our two churches, focused on the need for renewed theological dialogue, and explored possible areas of future cooperation. The visit with Metropolitan Sergei celebrated the warm and close relationship between the Russia Committee of the Diocese of New York and the Department of Charities, and explored how to transfer the work of Russia Committee within the context of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and other relevant departments at the Episcopal Church Center.

A meeting of the full Coordinating Committee is scheduled for the summer of 2003.

Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations

The Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations held two meetings during the triennium. This group has been established to monitor all Anglican ecumenical relations and may also give advice where it thinks necessary, but its purpose is neither prescriptive nor compulsory.

Regarding the bylaw of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America permitting planned exceptions in certain circumstances for ordinations by pastors, rather than bishops, in unilateral violation of the promise made by that church in the bilateral agreement that was voted, IASCIER transmitted the following notice to the Presiding Bishop and other authorities of the Episcopal Church by a separate letter which the SCER feels bound to share in this report to the General Convention: "IASCIER is concerned about unilaterally altering agreements after they are signed, in light of the developments in Anglican-Lutheran relations in the U.S.A., namely the implications of the ECLA bylaw concerning ordination 'in unusual circumstances,' which contradicts the agreement in 'Called to Common Mission.' Such a development seems to undermine ecumenical method and could potentially hinder progress in dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans in other parts of the world. IASCIER maintains that the ordination by pastors in Lutheran Churches which have entered binding agreements with Anglican Churches is an inconsistency which would be difficult to explain to other ecumenical partners, especially the Orthodox and Oriental Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Anglicans do not consider ordination solely by pastors/presbyters to be an acceptable practice within an agreement of this nature which is intended to bring about a fully interchangeable ministry. IASCIER has a

similar concern about the continuing practice of ordination by Deans in the Church of Norway, which Anglicans had anticipated would be phased out in the light of the Porvoo agreement.”

In response to this notification, the SCER has submitted a resolution which may be found in Section I.

Episcopal Church Representatives to Dialogues and Ecumenical Agencies

For the complete list of Episcopal Church representatives on all of our dialogue teams as well as the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches, please go to

www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism/representatives.

BUDGET

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations will meet approximately five times during the next triennium. This will require \$38,000 in 2004, \$37,000 in 2005 and \$38,000 in 2006 for a total of \$113,000 for the 2004-2006 triennium.