



The Lambeth Conference

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Resolution 22

This Conference reaffirms Resolution 24 of the Conference of 1897 and further resolves that, though it may be desirable to recognise, in some cases and under certain special circumstances, the episcopal care of a bishop for his own countrymen within the jurisdiction of another bishop of the Anglican Communion, yet the principle of one bishop for one area is the ideal to be aimed at as the best means of securing the unity of all races and nations in the Holy Catholic Church.

Resolution 23

The Conference commends to the consideration of the Church the suggestions of the Committee on Foreign Missions, contained in their Report, for correlation and co-operation between missions of the Anglican Communion and those of other Christian bodies.

Resolution 24

While the educative value of the Book of Common Prayer and the importance of retaining it as a bond of union and standard of devotion should be fully recognised, every effort should be made, under due authority, to render the forms of public worship more intelligible to uneducated congregations and better suited to the widely diverse needs of the various races within the Anglican Communion.

Resolution 25

National and local Churches are at liberty to adopt native forms of marriage and consecrate them to a Christian use, provided that:

- a. the form used explicitly states that the marriage is life-long and exclusive;
- b. the form is free from all heathen and idolatrous taint;
- c. provision is made for the due registration of the marriage, and for other formalities according to the law of the land.

Resolution 26

This Conference also desires to express its deep sense of the missionary value of the recent Pan-Anglican Congress; and commends to the careful study of the whole Anglican Communion the solemn facts of duty, opportunity, and responsibility, in regard to the non-Christian world, which that Congress elicited and affirmed.

Resolution 27

In any revision of the Book of Common Prayer which may hereafter be undertaken by competent authority the following principles should be held in view:

- a. the adaptation of rubrics in a large number of cases to present customs as generally accepted;
- b. the omission of parts of the services to obviate repetition or redundancy;
- c. the framing of additions to the present services in the way of enrichment;
- d. the fuller provision of alternatives in our forms of public worship;



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desires to express its conviction that there are cardinal elements in the positive teaching current in theosophical circles and literature which are irreconcilable with the Christian faith as to the person and mission of Christ and with the missionary claim and duty of the Christian religion as the message of God to all mankind. The Conference warns Christian people, who may be induced to make a study of theosophy by the seemingly Christian elements contained in it, to be on their guard against the ultimate bearing of theosophical teaching, and urges them to examine strictly the character and credentials of the teachers upon whose authority they are encouraged or compelled to rely.

**Quoted in the Report of the Committee as*

:(i) "to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour",

(ii) "to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science",

(iii) "to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man."

Resolution 65

Spiritualism, Christian Science, Theosophy - Theosophy

The Conference, believing that the attraction of theosophy for some Christian people lies largely in its presentation of Christian faith as a quest for knowledge, recommends that in the current teaching of the Church due regard should be given to the mystical elements of faith and life which underlie the historic belief of Christendom, and on the other hand urges all thinking people to safeguard their Christian position by a fuller study of the Bible, Creed, and sacraments in the light of sound Christian scholarship and philosophy.

Resolution 66

Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality

Recognising that to live a pure and chaste life before and after marriage is, for both sexes, the unchangeable Christian standard, attainable and attained through the help of the Holy Spirit by men and women in every age, the Conference desires to proclaim the universal obligation of this standard, and its vital importance as an essential condition of human happiness.

Resolution 67

Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality

The Conference affirms as our Lord's principle and standard of marriage a life-long and indissoluble union, for better or worse, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, and calls on all Christian people to maintain and bear witness to this standard.

Nevertheless, the Conference admits the right of a national or regional Church within our Communion to deal with cases which fall within the exception mentioned in the record of our Lord's words in St. Matthew's Gospel, under provisions which such Church may lay down.

The Conference, while fully recognising the extreme difficulty of governments in framing marriage laws for citizens many of whom do not accept the Christian standard, expresses its firm belief that in every country the Church should be free to bear witness to that standard through its powers of administration and discipline exercised in relation to its own members.



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Resolution 9

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference believes that the conditions of modern life call for a fresh statement from the Christian Church on the subject of sex. It declares that the functions of sex as a God-given factor in human life are essentially noble and creative. Responsibility in regard to their right use needs the greater emphasis in view of widespread laxity of thought and conduct in all these matters.

Resolution 10

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference believes that in the exalted view of marriage taught by our Lord is to be found the solution of the problems with which we are faced. His teaching is reinforced by certain elements which have found a new emphasis in modern life, particularly the sacredness of personality, the more equal partnership of men and women, and the biological importance of monogamy.

Resolution 11

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference believes that it is with this ideal in view that the Church must deal with questions of divorce and with whatever threatens the security of women and the stability of the home. Mindful of our Lord's words, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," it reaffirms "as our Lord's principle and standard of marriage a life-long and indissoluble union, for better or worse, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, and calls on all Christian people to maintain and bear witness to this standard."* In cases of divorce:

1. The Conference, while passing no judgement on the practice of regional or national Churches within our Communion, recommends that the marriage of one, whose former partner is still living, should not be celebrated according to the rites of the Church.
2. Where an innocent person has remarried under civil sanction and desires to receive the Holy Communion, it recommends that the case should be referred for consideration to the bishop, subject to provincial regulations.
3. Finally, it would call attention to the Church's unceasing responsibility for the spiritual welfare of all her members who have come short of her standard in this as in any other respect, and to the fact that the Church's aim, individually and socially, is reconciliation to God and redemption from sin. It therefore urges all bishops and clergy to keep this aim before them.

Resolution 12

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

In all questions of marriage and sex the Conference emphasises the need of education. It is important that before the child's emotional reaction to sex is awakened, definite information should be given in an atmosphere of simplicity and beauty. The persons directly responsible for this are the parents, who in the exercise of this responsibility will themselves need the best guidance that the Church can supply.

During childhood and youth the boy or the girl should thus be prepared for the responsibilities of adult life; but the Conference urges the need of some further preparation for those members of the Church who are about to marry.

To this end the Conference is convinced that steps ought to be taken:

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1. to secure a better education for the clergy in moral theology;
2. to establish, where they do not exist, in the various branches of the Anglican Communion central councils which would study the problems of sex from the Christian standpoint and give advice to the responsible authorities in diocese or parish or theological college as to methods of approach and lines of instruction;
3. to review the available literature and to take steps for its improvement and its circulation.

Resolution 13

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference emphasises the truth that sexual instinct is a holy thing implanted by God in human nature. It acknowledges that intercourse between husband and wife as the consummation of marriage has a value of its own within that sacrament, and that thereby married love is enhanced and its character strengthened. Further, seeing that the primary purpose for which marriage exists is the procreation of children, it believes that this purpose as well as the paramount importance in married life of deliberate and thoughtful self-control should be the governing considerations in that intercourse.

Resolution 14

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference affirms:

1. the duty of parenthood as the glory of married life;
2. the benefit of a family as a joy in itself, as a vital contribution to the nation's welfare, and as a means of character-building for both parents and children;
3. the privilege of discipline and sacrifice to this end.

Resolution 15

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

Where there is clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience.

Voting: For 193; Against 67.

Resolution 16

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference further records its abhorrence of the sinful practice of abortion.

Resolution 17

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

While the Conference admits that economic conditions are a serious factor in the situation, it condemns the propaganda which treats conception control as a way of meeting those unsatisfactory social and economic conditions which ought to be changed by the influence of Christian public opinion.

Resolution 18

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

Sexual intercourse between persons who are not legally married is a grievous sin. The use of contraceptives does not remove the sin. In view of the widespread and increasing use of contraceptives among the unmarried and the extension of irregular unions owing to the diminution of any fear of consequences, the Conference presses for legislation forbidding the exposure for sale and the unrestricted advertisement of contraceptives, and placing definite restrictions upon their purchase.

Resolution 19

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

Fear of consequences can never, for the Christian, be the ultimately effective motive for the maintenance of chastity before marriage. This can only be found in the love of God and reverence for his laws. The Conference emphasises the need of strong and wise teaching to make clear the Christian standpoint in this matter. That standpoint is that all illicit and irregular unions are wrong in that they offend against the true nature of love, they compromise the future happiness of married life, they are antagonistic to the welfare of the community, and, above all, they are contrary to the revealed will of God.

Resolution 20

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

The Conference desires to express the debt which the Church owes to the devotion of those who in constantly changing conditions and in the face of increasing difficulties have maintained and carried forward the preventive and rescue work of the Church. Such devotion calls for greatly increased interest and support from all the members of the Church.

The removal of the causes which lead to the necessity for such work must first and foremost be sought in the creation of that healthier atmosphere and in the more thorough giving of sex instruction which are recommended in the preceding Resolutions. And this is recognised to the full by the leaders in the work. There is, however, at the present time urgent need for:

- a. much greater financial support, so that the workers may be adequately trained and adequately paid,
- b. more regular interest on the part of churchpeople generally in them and in their work,
- c. the help which men of the Church can give in technical and legal matters, as also in personal service.

The Conference further desires in this connection to place on record its appreciation of the work done by women police in Great Britain, in the British dominions and in the United States of America, and by those many social workers, in different parts of the world, who give themselves to the same difficult task.



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Resolution 93

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

The Church has a primary duty in the pastoral care of those who are married or are about to be married, not less than in the exercise of discipline for upholding Christian standards. To this end:

(a) regular and systematic instruction of the congregation on the meaning and responsibilities of marriage, and particular preparation of engaged persons, should be regarded as a normal pastoral duty in every parish, and all parish priests should be equipped for these tasks; and

(b) Church people should be urged to co-operate in the valuable work in education, guidance, and reconciliation done by many marriage guidance councils and other similar bodies, which uphold Christian standards of marriage.

Resolution 94

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

The Conference affirms that the marriage of one whose former partner is still living may not be celebrated according to the rites of the Church, unless it has been established that there exists no marriage bond recognised by the Church.

Resolution 95

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

Mindful of the needs of those who are in deep distress and claim the Church's sympathy, the Conference urges that provincial and regional Churches should consider how best their pastoral responsibility towards those who do not conform to our Lord's standard can be discharged.

Resolution 96

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

Confirmed members of the Church who marry contrary to the law of the Church, as accepted in the provincial or regional Church to which they belong, should be regarded as subject to the discipline of the Church in respect of admission to Holy Communion. Their admission to Holy Communion lies within the discretion of the bishop, due regard being had to their own spiritual good and the avoidance of scandal to others. It is important that the practice within each province or regional Church in this matter should be uniform. We restate Resolution 11(b) of the Lambeth Conference 1930, as follows:

That in every case where a person with a former partner still living is remarried and desires to be admitted to Holy Communion the case should be referred to the bishop, subject to provincial or regional regulations.

Resolution 97

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

Inasmuch as easy divorce in Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere, has gravely weakened the idea of the life-long nature of marriage, and has also brought untold suffering to children, this Conference urges that there is a strong case for the reconsideration by certain states of their divorce laws.

Resolution 98

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

The Conference earnestly warns members of our Communion against contracting marriages with Roman Catholics under the conditions imposed by modern Roman canon law, especially as these conditions involve, among other things, a promise to have their children brought up in a religious system which they cannot themselves accept.

Resolution 99

The Church's Discipline in Marriage

The Conference stresses the importance of building up a sound Christian tradition of family life in the younger Churches of the Anglican Communion, and therefore urges their members to observe loyally the marriage canons and rules of their provinces or dioceses.

Resolution 100

Baptism and Confirmation

The Conference, acknowledging that the Christian Church derives all its life from God, the Holy and Eternal Trinity, and is dependent upon his creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity, calls upon the members of the Anglican Communion to pray for spiritual renewal throughout the world.

Resolution 101

Baptism and Confirmation

Believing that one and the same Spirit sustains and orders the life of the Church, the Conference emphasises the essential unity and interdependence of the ministry of the word and the ministry of the sacraments.

Resolution 102

Baptism and Confirmation

The Conference emphasises the importance of thinking of divine grace in terms of personal relations between God and man, and of faith as personal surrender and adherence to Christ.

Resolution 103

Baptism and Confirmation

Recognising that in its ministrations of the sacramental rites of initiation the Anglican Communion preserves the essential factors of Christian tradition with a proper emphasis upon their moral and rational requirements, the Conference considers that it is not desirable to change the present sequence of Baptism, Confirmation, and admission to Holy Communion.



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Resolution 109

The Reconciling of Conflicts Between and Within Nations - The United Nations

The Conference draws attention to the work of the Committee of the Churches on International Affairs (within the World Council of Churches) and urges Anglicans to support its efforts to bring an informed Christian opinion to bear on international issues.

Resolution 110

The Reconciling of Conflicts Between and Within Nations - Condemnation of Racial Discrimination

The Conference affirms its belief in the natural dignity and value of every man, of whatever colour or race, as created in the image of God. In the light of this belief the Conference affirms that neither race nor colour is in itself a barrier to any aspect of that life in family and community for which God created all men. It therefore condemns discrimination of any kind on the grounds of race or colour alone.

The Conference would urge that in multi-racial societies members of all races shall be allowed:

- (a) a fair and just share in the government of their country;
- (b) a fair and just share in the control, development, and rewards of the natural resources of their country, including advancement to the highest level of attainment;
- (c) the right to associate freely in worship, in education, in industry, in recreation, and in all other departments of the common life.

Resolution 111

The Reconciling of Conflicts Between and Within Nations - The Church in an Industrial Age

The Conference urges the provinces of the Anglican Communion to give special study to the task, strategy, and ministry of the Church within industrial society, and by the use of bold and imaginative experiments to strengthen the impact of the Christian faith upon the whole life and pattern of industry.

Resolution 112

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference records its profound conviction that the idea of the human family is rooted in the Godhead and that consequently all problems of sex relations, the procreation of children, and the organisation of family life must be related, consciously and directly, to the creative, redemptive, and sanctifying power of God.

Resolution 113

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference affirms that marriage is a vocation to holiness, through which men and women share in the love and creative purpose of God. The sins of self-indulgence and sensuality, born of selfishness and a refusal to accept marriage as a divine vocation, destroy its true nature and depth, and the right fullness and balance of the relationship between men and women. Christians need always to remember that sexual love is not an end in itself nor a means to self-gratification, and that self-discipline and restraint are essential conditions of the freedom of marriage and family planning.

Resolution 114

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference welcomes, with thankfulness, the increasing care given by the clergy to preparation for marriage both in instructing youth, through confirmation classes and other means, and also immediately before marriage.

It urges that the importance of this ministry should continue to be emphasised and that special attention should be given to our Lord's principle of life-long union as the basis of all true marriage.

Resolution 115

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference believes that the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the consciences of parents everywhere; that this planning, in such ways as are mutually acceptable to husband and wife in Christian conscience, is a right and important factor in Christian family life and should be the result of positive choice before God. Such responsible parenthood, built on obedience to all the duties of marriage, requires a wise stewardship of the resources and abilities of the family as well as a thoughtful consideration of the varying population needs and problems of society and the claims of future generations.

Resolution 116

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference calls upon all Church people to have in mind that, since our Lord's ministry gave a new depth and significance to forgiveness, his Church and the families within it must be a forgiving society, and that there are no wrongs done by its members, one to another, that are unforgivable, or in which a costly forgiveness may not lead to repentance and, through repentance, to reconciliation and a new beginning in living together.

The Conference believes that many tensions in marriage and family life are allowed to reach a breaking point because self-righteousness or a sense of injury takes priority of [sic] forgiveness, and that marital relations also break down because those involved do not in time take counsel with a wise adviser. It affirms that no husband or wife has the right to contemplate even legal separation until every opportunity of reconciliation and forgiveness has been exhausted.

Resolution 117

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference welcomes the growth of marriage guidance councils, which prepare people for marriage and assisting in maintaining a stable married life. It recommends that the clergy and Church people of mature faith and with the right qualifications should be encouraged to offer themselves for training as counsellors. It believes that such counsel, given as a Christian vocation by well-trained Christian husbands and wives, is a volunteer service of great value, makes an important contribution to the community, and deserves government support.

Resolution 118

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference recognises that divorce is granted by the secular authority in many lands on grounds which the Church cannot acknowledge, and recognises also that in certain cases where a decree of divorce has been sought and may even have been granted, there may in fact have been no marital bond in the eyes of the Church. It therefore commends for further consideration by the Churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion a procedure for defining marital status, such as already exists in some of its provinces.

Resolution 119

The Family in Contemporary Society - Marriage

The Conference believes that the Resolutions of the 1948 Lambeth Conference concerning marriage discipline have been of great value as witnessing to Christ's teaching about the life-long nature of marriage, and urges that these Resolutions, and their implications, should continue to be studied in every province.

Resolution 120

The Family in Contemporary Society - Polygamy

(a) The Conference bears witness to the truth that monogamy is the divine will, testified by the teaching of Christ himself, and therefore true for every race of men.

(b) It acknowledges that the introduction of monogamy into societies that practice polygamy involves a social and economic revolution and raises problems which the Christian Church has as yet not solved.

(c) The Conference urges upon Church members the continuance of thorough study and earnest prayer that God may lead his Church to know the manner of its witness and discipline in this issue.

(d) The Conference, recognising that the problem of polygamy is bound up with the limitations of opportunities for women in society, urges that the Church should make every effort to advance the status of women in every possible way, especially in the sphere of education.

(e) The Conference further requests His Grace the President to refer this problem to the Advisory Council on Missionary Strategy.

Resolution 121

The Family in Contemporary Society - The Christian Family



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Resolutions from 1968

true nature and depth, and the right fullness and balance of the relationship between men and women. Christians need always to remember that sexual love is not an end in itself nor a means to self-gratification, and that self-discipline and restraint are essential conditions of the responsible freedom of marriage and family planning.

115. The Conference believes that the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the consciences of parents everywhere; that this planning, in such ways as are mutually acceptable to husband and wife in Christian conscience, is a right and important factor in Christian family life and should be the result of positive choice before God. Such responsible parenthood, built on obedience to all the duties of marriage, requires a wise stewardship of the resources and abilities of the family as well as a thoughtful consideration of the varying population needs and problems of society and the claims of future generations.

The Conference commends the Report of Committee 5 of the Lambeth Conference 1958, together with the study entitled "The Family in Contemporary Society" which formed the basis of the work of that Committee, to the attention of all men of good will for further study in the light of the continuing sociological and scientific developments of the past decades.

Resolution 23

Marriage Discipline

The Conference recognises that polygamy poses one of the sharpest conflicts between the faith and particular cultures.

The Church seeks to proclaim the will of God in setting out the clear implications of our Lord's teaching about marriage. Hence it bears witness to monogamous life-long marriage as God's will for mankind.

The Conference believes that such marriage alone bears adequate witness to the equal sanctity of all human beings which lies at the heart of the Christian revelation; yet recognises that in every place many problems concerning marriage confront the Church.

The Conference therefore asks each province to re-examine its discipline in such problems in full consideration with other provinces in a similar situation.

Resolution 24

The Ministry - The Laity

The Conference recommends that no major issue in the life of the Church should be decided without the full participation of the laity in discussion and in decision.

Resolution 25

The Ministry - The Laity

The Conference recommends that each province or regional Church be asked to explore the theology of baptism and confirmation in relation to the need to commission the laity for their task in the world, and to experiment in this regard.

Resolution 26

The Ministry - The Laity

The Conference requests that information about experiments in lay training be made available to the whole of the Anglican Communion.



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(c) We all should search out ways to identify with those who suffer and are poor, and be involved personally in efforts to bring them justice, liberation, healing, and new life in Christ.

(d) We should remember always that the power of the Spirit is not to be presented as either an exemption from suffering or a guarantee of success in this life. The road from Palm Sunday to Pentecost must pass through Good Friday and Easter. It is at the cross that new life through the Holy Spirit is found, and in the shadow of the cross that Christians must pray "Come, Holy Spirit."

Resolution 8

The Church's Ministry of Healing

The Conference praises God for the renewal of the ministry of healing within the Churches in recent times and reaffirms:

1. that the healing of the sick in his name is as much a part of the proclamation of the Kingdom as the preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ;
2. that to neglect this aspect of ministry is to diminish our part in Christ's total redemptive activity;
3. that the ministry to the sick should be an essential element in any revision of the liturgy (see the Report of the Lambeth Conference of 1958, p.2.92).

Resolution 9

Stewardship

1. The Conference calls for continuing emphasis on stewardship teaching and practice. We urge all Anglicans, especially in the western world, to review their value systems, so that life-styles may become related to necessities rather than affluence and consumerism. We commend the biblical principle of tithing as a guide for normal Christian living.
2. In the opinion of the Conference, the scriptural injunction "he who would be chief among you, let him be the servant of all" requires bishops to reject pretentious life-styles and by example to lead their clergy and people in the wise use of the personal resources and also those of the Church.
3. We ask that dioceses should increasingly share their financial resources (by a specific amount each year) and skilled persons with those whose resources are more slender.

Resolution 10

Human Relationships and Sexuality

The Conference gladly affirms the Christian ideals of faithfulness and chastity both within and outside marriage, and calls Christians everywhere to seek the grace of Christ to live lives of holiness, discipline, and service in the world, and commends to the Church:

1. The need for theological study of sexuality in such a way as to relate sexual relationships to that wholeness of human life which itself derives from God, who is the source of masculinity and femininity.
2. The need for programmes at diocesan level, involving both men and women,
 - (a) to promote the study and foster the ideals of Christian marriage and family life, and to examine the ways in which those who are unmarried may discover the fullness which God intends for all his children;
 - (b) to provide ministries of compassionate support to those suffering from brokenness within marriage and family relationships;

- (c) to emphasise the sacredness of all human life, the moral issues inherent in clinical abortion, and the possible implications of genetic engineering.

3. While we reaffirm heterosexuality as the scriptural norm, we recognise the need for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research. The Church, recognising the need for pastoral concern for those who are homosexual, encourages dialogue with them. (We note with satisfaction that such studies are now proceeding in some member Churches of the Anglican Communion.)

Resolution 11

Issues Concerning the Whole Anglican Communion

The Conference advises member Churches not to take action regarding issues which are of concern to the whole Anglican Communion without consultation with a Lambeth Conference or with the episcopate through the Primates Committee, and requests the Primates to initiate a study of the nature of authority within the Anglican Communion.

Resolution 12

Anglican Conferences, Councils and Meetings

The Conference asks the Archbishop of Canterbury, as President of the Lambeth Conference and President of the Anglican Consultative Council, with all the Primates of the Anglican Communion, within one year to initiate consideration of the way to relate together the international conferences, councils, and meetings within the Anglican Communion so that the Anglican Communion may best serve God within the context of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

Resolution 13

Lambeth Conferences

In order that the guardianship of the faith may be exercised as a collegial responsibility of the whole episcopate, the Conference affirms the need for Anglican bishops from every diocese to meet together in the tradition of the Lambeth Conference and recommends that the calling of any future Conference should continue to be the responsibility of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and that he should be requested to make his decision in consultation with the other Primates. While recognising the great value which many set on the link with Canterbury, we believe that a Conference could well be held in some other province.

Resolution 14

The Wider Episcopal Fellowship

The Conference requests the Archbishop of Canterbury: 1. in consultation with the Primates, to convene a meeting of Anglican bishops with bishops of Churches in which Anglicans have united with other Christians, and bishops from those Churches which are in full communion with Anglican Churches; and to discuss with them how bishops from these Churches could best play their part in future Lambeth Conferences; 2. to recognise the deep conviction of this Lambeth Conference that the expressed desire of both the Lusitanian and Spanish Reformed Churches to become fully integrated members of the Anglican Communion should receive both a warm and a positive response.

Resolution 33

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission

This Conference:

1. welcomes the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission which was set up jointly by the Lambeth Conference of 1968 and by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity;
2. recognises in the three Agreed Statements of this Commission* a solid achievement, one in which we can recognise the faith of our Church, and hopes that they will provide a basis for sacramental sharing between our two Communion if and when the finished Statements are approved by the respective authorities of our Communion;
3. invites ARCIC to provide further explication of the Agreed Statements in consideration of responses received by them;
4. commends to the appropriate authorities in each Communion further consideration of the implications of the Agreed Statements in the light of the report of the Joint Preparatory Commission (the Malta Report received bringing about a closer sharing between our two Communion in life, worship, and mission);
5. asks the Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council to bring this Resolution to the attention of the various synods of the Anglican Communion for discussion and action;
6. asks that in any continuing Commission, the Church of the South and the East be adequately represented.

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) * "Eucharistic Doctrine" (the Windsor Statement, 1971), "Ministry and Ordination" (Canterbury, 1973), and "Authority in the Church" (Venice, 1976).

Resolution 34

Anglican-Roman Catholic Marriages

The Conference welcomes the report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on "The Theology of Marriage and its Application to Mixed Marriages" (1975).

In particular we record our gratitude for the general agreement on the theology of Christian marriage there outlined, and especially for the affirmation of the "first order principle"* of life-long union (ie. in the case of a breakdown of marriage). We also welcome the recognition that the differing pastoral practices of our two traditions do in fact recognise and seek to share a common responsibility for those for whom "no course absolutely consonant with the first order principle of marriage as a life-long union may be available."

We also endorse the recommendations of the Commission in respect of inter-Church marriages:

- (1) that, after joint preparation and pastoral care given by both the Anglican and Roman Catholic counsellors concerned, a marriage may validly and lawfully take place before the duly authorised minister of either party, without the necessity of Roman Catholic dispensation;
- (2) that, as an alternative to an affirmation or promise by the Roman Catholic party in respect of the baptism and upbringing of any children, the Roman Catholic parish priest may give a written assurance to his bishop that he has put the Roman Catholic partner in mind of his or her obligations and that the other spouse knows what these are.

We note that there are some variations in different regions in the provisions of Roman Catholic directories on inter-Church marriages. We nevertheless warmly welcome the real attempts of many Roman Catholic episcopal conferences to be pastorally sensitive to those problems arising out of their regulations, which remain an obstacle to the continued growth of fraternal relations between us. In particular, we note a growing Roman Catholic understanding that a decision as to

the baptism and upbringing of any children should be made within the unity of the marriage, in which the Christian conscience of both partners must be respected. We urge that this last development be encouraged.

The problems associated with marriage between members of our two Communion continue to hinder inter-Church relations and progress towards unity. While we recognise that there has been an improved situation in some places as a result of the "Motu Proprio," the general principles underlying the Roman Catholic position are unacceptable to Anglicans. Equality of conscience as between partners in respect of all aspects of their marriage (and in particular with regard to the baptism and religious upbringing of children) is something to be affirmed both for its own sake and for the sake of an improved relationship between the Churches.

Resolution 35

Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

The Conference:

1. welcomes the achievement of the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission as expressed in the Moscow Agreed Statement of 1976, and believes that this goes far to realise the hopes about Anglican-Orthodox dialogue expressed at Lambeth 1968;
2. requests the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission to continue to explore the fundamental questions of doctrinal agreement and disagreement in our Churches; and to promote regional groups for theological dialogue which would bring to the Commission not only reactions to their work, but also theological issues arising out of local experience;
3. requests that all member Churches of the Anglican Communion should consider omitting the Filioque from the Nicene Creed, and that the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission through the Anglican Consultative Council should assist them in presenting the theological issues to their appropriate synodical bodies and should be responsible for any necessary consultation with other Churches of the Western tradition.

Resolution 36

Cultural Identity

The Conference recognises with thanksgiving to God the growth of the Church across the world and encourages every particular Church to strengthen its own identity in Christ and its involvement with the community of which it is part, expressing its faith through the traditions and culture of its own society except where they are in conflict with the essentials of the Gospel.

Resolution 37

Other Faiths: Gospel and Dialogue

1. Within the Church's trust of the Gospel, we recognise and welcome the obligation to open exchange of thought and experience with people of other faiths. Sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit among them means a positive response to their meaning as inwardly lived and understood. It means also a quality of life on our part which expresses the truth and love of God as we have known them in Christ, Lord and Saviour.
2. We realise the lively vocation to theological interpretation, community involvement, social responsibility, and evangelisation which is carried by the Churches in areas where Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Islam are dominant, and ask that the whole Anglican Communion support them by understanding, by prayer, and where appropriate, by partnership with them.
3. We continue to seek opportunities for dialogue with Judaism.



The Lambeth Conference

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Resolution 32

World Peace

This Conference:

1. Welcomes recent new directions in Soviet policy as a constructive contribution to world peace.
2. Urges the leaders of the western nations to review their foreign and defense policies to allow for new opportunities for co-operation with the Soviet Union.
3. Appeals to all governments with nuclear forces to cease the production of nuclear weapons and to plan together an international programme for the dismantling of such weapons.
4. Urges the major world powers to recognise and respect the self-determination of smaller states and not to penalise them when their decisions conflict with the foreign policies of these major powers.

Resolution 33

Human Rights

This Conference:

1. Endorses the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and asks the provinces of the Anglican Communion to support all who are working for its implementation.
2. Commends to all Churches the good practice of observing "One World Week" in proximity to United Nations Day, 24 October, as a means of highlighting human interdependence and the need to eliminate exploitation.
3. Urges the Church to speak out against: (a) torture, used as a cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners, burning down of people's homes, granaries, and the confiscation of livestock and denial by governments of supplies of medical facilities and relief food by international organizations to people in areas of armed conflict; (b) all governments who practice capital punishment, and encourages them to find alternative ways of sentencing offenders so that the divine dignity of every human being is respected and yet justice is pursued; (c) the incarceration of prisoners of conscience, challenging governments to search for treatment and punishment of convicted persons in accordance with internationally accepted standards; (d) any denial of the principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty by due, fair and impartial procedures of law.
4. Commends the work of various international human rights organisations campaigning to support the freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and their work on behalf of human rights activists throughout the world who are persecuted for their defence of those fundamental freedoms.

Resolution 34

Marriage and Family

This Conference:

1. Reaffirming the 1978 Lambeth statement on marriage and the family, calls the Churches of the Anglican Communion to ministries that prepare couples for marriage, sustain them throughout their lives together with the spiritual, pastoral, and community life of the Church and, in the face of increasing stresses, encourage and support them with the resources of the Church as an extended family.
2. Recognises that the same range of pressures no less affect clergy marriages and families and recommends that each diocese identify some means of providing confidential counselling and support services for clergy families; 3. Noting the gap between traditional Christian teaching on

pre-marital sex, and the life-styles being adopted by many people today, both within and outside the Church:

(a) calls on provinces and dioceses to adopt a caring and pastoral attitude to such people; (b) reaffirms the traditional biblical teaching that sexual intercourse is an act of total commitment which belongs properly within a permanent married relationship; (c) in response to the International Conference of Young Anglicans in Belfast, urges provinces and dioceses to plan with young people programmes to explore issues such as pre-marital sex in the light of traditional Christian values.

4. Recognising the political, economic and social pressures on family life: (a) affirms the family in its various forms, as the fundamental institution of human community; (b) calls our Churches to the development of support systems for families at every level within the Church and to the advocacy of public policies supportive of family life; (c) commends in particular the developing Family Network inaugurated by the Anglican Consultative Council and encourages participation in the continuing educational and pastoral work of the Network; (d) recognises that these pressures serve to diminish the economic wellbeing and status of women, welcomes the World Council of Churches "Decade for Solidarity with Women," and encourages dioceses to consider how they might through their theological, structural and pastoral approaches help to achieve a fuller recognition of the contribution and status of women in the Church and society.

5. Affirms that effective ministries to families and to individuals, who are thereby enabled to experience the Church as an extended family, are signs of life and hope and are central to evangelism that proclaims and models the oneness that Christ wills for all people.

Resolution 35

Concerns of South Pacific Islands

This Conference, noting that in Churches of the South Pacific there is deep pain and anxiety in many tiny island sovereign nations in the region regarding the abuse and exploitation of their lands and seas by powerful external political and economic forces:

1. Affirms the desire of many indigenous peoples in the region to self-determination and to be in control of their own affairs and especially of the use of the vital resources of their lands and seas.

2. Supports them in their opposition to the testing of nuclear weapons, the dumping of nuclear waste and the establishment of further military bases in the region, and calls on France and the superpowers to cease these activities forthwith.

3. Further supports them in their resistance to all those powerful states and multinational corporations who, for immediate economic and political gain, rape and destroy the forests, fisheries and mineral deposits in the region.

4. Wishes to be identified with the stand of the Churches in Australia, New Zealand and Japan in support of these concerns and requests the member Churches of the Anglican Communion to make these matters known in their own countries and congregations as a matter of urgency, to pray for them and to press their governments for action.

Resolution 36

Poverty and Debt

This Conference:

1. Calls attention to the life-and-death urgency of the problems of world poverty.

2. Salutes the courage and solidarity of poor people who, at great personal cost, are struggling to achieve their own liberation from poverty and oppression.

3. Calls for an international, co-operating settlement, negotiated by both industrial and developing countries, that will establish policies to reduce interest charges and the level of indebtedness,



The Lambeth Conference

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Section III – Called to be faithful in a plural world.

oversight" (para. 5.20) as well as on the issue of a universal ministry in the service of Christian unity(cf. Agros Report, para. 162, and the Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, Ut unum sint 96);

- i. requests that this study should include consideration of the ecumenical implications involved and that the Primates should make specific recommendations for the development of instruments of communion not later than the 14th Lambeth Conference.

Resolution III.9

Inter-regional groupings

This Conference requests that at a forthcoming meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council ways and means be explored for bishops to gather in inter-regional groupings at convenient intervals for communion, exchange, renewal and theological reflection whereby they might be enabled to take back home ideas for guidance distilled from the global experience of fellow bishops.

Resolution III.10

Marriage and Family Life

This Conference, recognising the need for the Church to respond to the destructive pressures on the integrity of marriage and family life on behalf of the families in our care and noting that the local congregation bears a serious responsibility for giving counsel about the Christian understanding of marriage and family life -

- a. endorses the summary report of the International Anglican Family Network (IAFN Newsletter - July 1998);
- b. affirms that the local Christian community should give such counsel; and
- c. believes that the institutions charged with training people for and in Christian ministry must include in their programmes thoughtful and practical courses to prepare clergy and laity to give counsel and encouragement in Christian marriage and family life in the congregations where they serve.

Resolution III.11

Religious Freedom

This Conference challenges Anglicans, as servants of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour -

- a. to respect the rights and freedom of all faiths to worship and practise their ways of life;
- b. to work with all people of good will to extend these freedoms of worship, religious practice and conversion throughout the world;
- c. to stand by those who are being persecuted for their faith by our prayers, protests and practical support;
- d. to enter into dialogue with members of other faiths, to increase our mutual respect and explore the truths we hold in common and those on which we differ;
- e. to witness to our faith in the reconciling and saving activity of God in our Lord Jesus Christ working in us now through the power of the Holy Spirit; and
- f. to equip ourselves for our witness, dialogue and service by becoming better versed in the teaching and practice of our own faith, and of at least one other faith.



Lambeth Indaba

*Capturing Conversations and Reflections
from the Lambeth Conference 2008*

Equipping Bishops for Mission and
Strengthening Anglican Identity

3 August 2008

Section H: Human Sexuality

105. This section appears here to address the tensions that have arisen in our common life. It should have been titled “The Bishop and Homosexuality” because these discussions were the focus of this topic in the indaba groups. The self select sessions identified with human sexuality included Human Sexuality and the Witness of Scripture, Listening and Mission, The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality, Listening in Practice, Sexuality and Spirituality, Questions of Science, Culture and Christ, Culture and Homosexualities, Listening to the Experience of Homosexual People.

106. Faced with the issue of the ordination of women, the third meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 1976 spoke about the Communion in this way: “As in the first century, we can expect the Holy Spirit to press us to listen to each other, to state new insights frankly, and to accept implications of the Gospel new to us, whether painful or exhilarating.”²⁶ Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10, while reiterating clearly the traditional stance of the Church, also called for sensitive listening. The Bible study and indaba groups gave us the opportunity to meet in a spirit of generosity and prayerful humility which helped us to listen patiently to each other and to speak honestly.

107. Christians are called to exercise judgement and discernment in their vocation and discipleship, and to embrace that discipleship with humility and with generosity. The Lord himself warned us to avoid judgementalism²⁷. It is important therefore to be careful not to make dismissive judgements, because people have come to their decision after prayer and careful study of the Bible. Nor is there a monopoly on Christian charity: those who take different positions regarding this issue have often been the bearers of compassionate pastoral care to homosexual persons, though we must confess some failure in this regard. We come from different backgrounds, contexts and experiences. As Bishops we need to repent of the ways in which our hardness of heart toward each other may have contributed to the brokenness of our Communion at this present time. We need to repent of statements and actions that have further damaged the dignity of homosexual persons. People who have held traditional views on this matter have sometimes felt that they have been dismissed with ridicule or contempt.

108. There were repeated statements of the desire to remain in communion while attempting to maintain a generous space for ongoing discussions. Although there has been a great appreciation of one to one conversations, there is the need to develop further trust in the relationships that have started here. In addition to previous expressions of regret by both the House of Bishops and the General Convention of The Episcopal Church²⁸, some individual bishops of The Episcopal Church have expressed apologies in their groups, noting that they had not previously grasped the depth of the negative impact that their action in the consecration of a bishop living in a same gender union had caused in many parts of the Communion.

109. There were several references to the Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10, although it sometimes appeared that only one section was being referenced and not the whole

²⁶ ACC-3, page 55.

²⁷ Matthew 7:1-5

²⁸ See box below.

report on Human Sexuality to the 1998 Lambeth Conference or the whole resolution.

110. There is confusion about what “the issue” really means. There are three aspects that would help to clarify discussions:

- How the church evangelizes, disciples and provides pastoral care for homosexual people;
- How and on what basis the church admits people to Sacred Orders;
- How the church deals with the first two locally and globally.

111. The issue of homosexual relations is as sensitive as it is because it conflicts with the long tradition of Christian moral teaching. For some, the new teaching cannot be acceptable on biblical grounds as they consider all homosexual activity as intrinsically sinful. Tension has arisen when those who hold the traditional teaching are faced with changes in the Church’s life or teaching without being able to understand or engage with a clear presentation of how people have come to a new understanding of scripture and pastoral theology.

112. The whole issue of homosexual relations is also highly sensitive because there are very strong affirmations and denials in different cultures across the world which are reflected in contrasting civil provisions, ranging from legal provision for same-sex marriage to criminal action against homosexuals. In some parts of the Communion, homosexual relations are a taboo while in others they have become a human rights issue.

113. In the framework of the bishop in mission, it is agreed that the ordination of a bishop living in a same gender union has compromised mission in many parts of the Communion and has had a profoundly disruptive effect on the Communion by detracting from other aspects of mission. There is anxiety that this will not turn out to be a single act but something that is likely to happen again and further compromise mission.

114. For some, the way the Communion has been perceived to handle polygamy has complicated the issue. Polygamy has been part of the history and of the present of some Provinces of the Communion. It is unacceptable in other parts of the Communion. The Communion made a space for such Provinces to deal with this issue at their local level. This they have done, setting clear standards while providing pastoral attention. The question from some is: why can we not make the same space in regard to homosexuality? In the case of polygamy, there is a universal standard – it is understood to be a sin, therefore polygamists are not admitted to positions of leadership including Holy Orders, nor after acceptance of the Gospel can a convert take another wife, nor, in some areas, are they admitted to Holy Communion.

115. There have been many aspects of the history of this current situation that have brought us to this point in time. In some parts of the Communion the issue of homosexuality has been under discussion for over thirty years, whereas for others it is a more recent conversation. In other places, there are legal or cultural reasons which constrain dialogue. In some Provinces, the acceptance of homosexual practice would be seen as a betrayal of the teaching of the missionaries who brought the faith, and experienced as a new form of colonialism. In the time frame of Christianity, or even of the Anglican tradition, there has not been enough time to allow for the Bishops of the Communion to come to a new consensus within Provinces or worldwide – either

to agree, or to live together in disagreement.

116. The issue of homosexuality has challenged us and our Churches on what it might mean to be a Communion. We are still learning how to be the Communion that God has called and gifted us to be.

117. For many Anglicans, the ordination of a bishop living in a same gender union is seen as questioning the authority of scripture and the Church's traditional reading on these matters. It calls into question traditional moral teaching concerning the nature of marriage. The question for many is "Whether the Bible transforms the culture or the culture is allowed to transform the Bible".

118. The ordination of a bishop living in a same gender union and the open blessing of same sex relationships has had many negative results including:

- Partnership in mission is lost and damaged, as we are diverted from our primary focus. In some places the church is ridiculed as the "gay church", so membership is lost. In some regions the issue has become a test of orthodoxy and a basis for hostile actions.
- Ecumenical and interfaith relationships have been damaged. Some ecumenical participants present underscored this point.
- Bishops cannot be a symbol of unity when their consecration itself divides the church. The unique focus for catholicity in the Communion is lost. Confidence in the validity of the Anglican Communion, the bonds of affection and our mutual interdependence is severely damaged.
- It is dishonouring to former Lambeth Conference decisions.

119. It was also reported that there has been positive effects in parts of Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Central America and in other parts of the world when homosexual people are accepted as God's children, are treated with dignity and choose to give their lives to Christ and to live in the community of faith as disciples of Jesus Christ with fidelity and commitment.

Possible Ways Ahead

120. There are competing visions of how the Communion should responsibly handle our current situation:

- "If your eye cause offence, pluck it out"²⁹ - decisive action
- "Let God be God" - allow God to transform our attitudes and behaviour while we look for further insights.
- "If it is from God it will last"³⁰ - Gamaliel's advice can be followed here, so wait.
- Some people are looking for a clear direction from the Communion, and from this conference in the form of a pastoral letter or direction.
- More "listening" is needed where the purpose is not "I win, you lose", but "Nobody wins, nobody loses" and we grow together in Christ.
- Ongoing dialogue itself is a "Christian witness". The Communion needs a 'catholic patience'.

²⁹ Matthew 5:29

³⁰ Acts 5.38, 39

- Further careful study of the Scriptures, theology, doctrine and other disciplines, such as theological anthropology, must be pursued together through a formal Commission at Communion-wide level. This would equip the bishops in their teaching office.
- Give pastoral care but do not canonize, regularize, legalize or endorse homosexual relationships.
- Cross-provincial and diocesan intervention must stop to create the time and space for the Spirit of God to “lead us into all truth”. The perspectives of bishops and dioceses need to be heard and respected.
- Legal action in the courts should be avoided if at all possible.
- Reaffirm the moral authority of the whole of the Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1:10, and the report commended in it, and continue its implementation, but not the style of debate that led to it. Acknowledge that some good work has been done on the resolution such as the development of listening processes, and the intentional development of closer relations among bishops and dioceses.
- Declare a “Decade of Sharing and Generosity” and keep walking, keep talking, keep listening together.

Resources

The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality – A resource to enable listening and dialogue, edited by Philip Groves; published by SPCK, 2008.

Resources on sexuality and the Listening Process, together with material from the Provinces are also available through the Anglican Communion website.
<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening>

For creating safe space for listening, go to www.dontthrowstones.info

Lambeth I.10 text may be found at

<http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1998/1998-1-10.cfm>

The report of Section 1 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference on Human Sexuality is published in The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998, Morehouse, 1999, pp.93,94

The Episcopal Church House of Bishops statement may be found at

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2007/9/26/ACNS4322>

The resolutions of the General Convention 2006 may be found at

http://gc2006.org/legislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=201&type=CURRENT

Section I: The Scriptures

121. The dispute concerning sexuality has reflected among some a deeper unease about the acceptance of the authority of scripture. It behoves us therefore to explore the nature of our understanding of scripture in the life of the Church.

122. Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the true light that enlightens all, incarnate in human form, full of grace and truth, from before time and forever³¹.

123. God's first and eternal Word to us is Jesus. Because of this our reading and interpretation of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments possess a clear Christ-centred quality rooted in the Incarnation. St. John the Evangelist announces that "these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name".³² We proclaim Jesus as Saviour of the world and Lord of the Church. Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again, is the holy one of God through whom the meaning of the Scriptures is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

124. In the Anglican tradition, the Holy Scriptures are central to our life together as servants of God's mission. In like manner, the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the primary sources for equipping our apostolic ministry as bishops. Indeed, the bishops of our Communion, at the time of their ordination and consecration to the episcopate, claim for their ministries and in their own lives that they believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation. This affirmation of the authority of the Holy Scriptures in our common life is shared across the Communion, enshrined in the various prayer books, canons, and official documents of our tradition, and found deep in the heart of our vocation as bishops of the Church. It is clear to us that the Holy Scriptures do not belong to us alone and that the fullness of the revealed truth of God in Jesus Christ is a treasured gift from God that belongs to the whole church catholic. Together with the church universal, we are humbled by the custodianship of the sacred texts given into our care and we seek to honour that responsibility by living under God's Word in obedience, humility and joy.

125. For Anglicans, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are understood to be faithful and sufficient statements of the essentials of the biblical witness as revealed by the power of the Holy Spirit to us and to the whole church in every generation. We acknowledge the full reliability of the texts of the canonical Scriptures given to us by God, and seek to proclaim afresh with clarity and power the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. From this strong sense of biblical reliability the Church derives norms of moral and ethical life that are to be honoured by the whole Body of Christ; at the same time we discover biblically faithful means to respond pastorally to those who are unable to observe such norms. When serious disagreements arise among us about moral and ethical norms we are called to intensify our efforts to discover God's Word through continuing scriptural discernment. We rejoice in the Holy Scriptures as God's gift to the whole church for teaching and guidance, admonition, and pastoral care.

126. In the Anglican prayer book tradition, the following collect, composed by Archbishop Cranmer, sets a proper framework for our understanding of the Holy Scriptures in our lives as bishops and in the lives of all God's faithful people.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and

³¹ John 1:1-18

³² John 20: 31

inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

127. Praying this collect reminds us that an Anglican approach to Scripture honours the sacred texts as inspired and revealed by God while inviting us to use the resources of the human intellect to interpret and apply those texts for making faithful disciples and for the deepening of holy lives worthy of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Utilizing the God-given gifts of reason and tradition as resources for the interpretation of the Scriptures enables the fullest possible exploration of the whole counsel of God³³ and calls to mind the unfathomable depths and richness of the ways of God.³⁴ Biblical interpretation is the work of reverent inquiry that approaches the Holy Scriptures in a spirit of awe and wonder as holy writings different from all other texts.

128. In the history of the Anglican tradition, biblical scholarship and exegetical theology have held an honoured place. We rejoice that many faithful scholars of the Bible, both past and present, have been Anglicans and our Church and its ministry has been immeasurably enriched by their faithfulness. Such scholarship, however, does not happen in isolation from the ecumenical community of biblical theologians. We also note the importance of hearing again the voices of the preachers and teachers through the centuries as they sought to speak a lively word in their own time and place. We are grateful to God for the strong contributions made to our own understanding of God's Word by scholars and teachers of other traditions past and present.

129. Biblical scholars have a variety of exegetical tools for their use and employ many different methods of biblical exposition and interpretation. When used discerningly and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, these tools and methods can assist us in breaking open the Holy Scriptures and enrich our understanding of God's Word. As bishops of the Church, we commend the use of faithful biblical scholarship by our clergy and people in the full confidence that there is still more light and truth to break forth from God's Word.

130. In addition to the more formal means of biblical scholarship, our tradition makes use of a number of spiritual disciplines and practical methods that enhance our hearing of the Scriptures. For example, some Anglicans read the Scriptures to discern a rule of life for themselves and for their community. Others find the practice of praying with the Scriptures and utilizing the gifts of our monastic traditions as particularly powerful ways to listen for the Word of God. Still others find the discipline of the Daily Office a faithful means by which to engage the full range of the Scriptures. As bishops of the Communion we commend to our people every opportunity possible to encounter God in the living word of Holy Scripture, whether reading and studying for personal devotion, gathering with others for Bible study and holy conversation, or studying more formally under the care of a pastor or teacher, and in worship.

³³ Acts 20:27

³⁴ Romans 11:33

131. Worship and common prayer are central to our identity as Anglicans. Consequently the liturgical reading of Scripture and the ministry of preaching are primary aspects of how we listen for and hear God's Word to us. Preachers are called to expound the whole counsel of God and especially at the Eucharist to point God's people toward the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and hold him up as God incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again in glory.

132. We are grateful for the various lectionaries adopted by the Provinces of our Communion. The use of lectionaries for the Daily Offices and the Holy Eucharist greatly enhances the breadth of our hearing of Scripture and provides good discipline to those among us who are called to preach.

133. We are mindful that God's people hear Jesus, God's incarnate Word, and the vital preaching of Holy Scriptures, from within the varied contexts of their lives. Above we affirmed the faithful reliability of God's Word, and here we acknowledge that the context in which one seeks to listen shapes, at least in part, how one hears. Across our Communion we tell the good news of Jesus in many cultures, in many languages, and in the face of many different political, economic, and social realities. It is always our desire to proclaim the authentic Word of God for all, but we acknowledge that our people hear the Holy Scriptures conditioned by the needs and passions of their local situations. We recognize, for example, that communities that have faced natural disasters or systemic injustice will hear God's Word with different ears than others who are far removed from such realities. We note that the particularity of mission strategy from one place to another or difficult pastoral realities may have impact upon how the Holy Scriptures are heard. We are clear that the Word of God does not change from place to place and its light and truth applies throughout the whole of God's world. At the same time we acknowledge that our ability to hear God's Word is profoundly affected by the context in which we listen for it.

134. God's Living Word, incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth and revealed in Holy Scripture, challenges and transforms us in ways that can be full of joy and at other times quite unsettling. Even as our contexts influence our interpretation of Holy Scripture, we affirm that the Scripture also addresses our contexts with both judgment and consolation, with conviction and with grace. The Word of God has always held a primary and cherished place in the Churches of the Anglican Communion. So shall it always be.

135. As we face the challenges of our time, the Holy Scriptures will continue to be for us a springboard into mission – that the world may have life in all its fullness.³⁵

Section J: The Anglican Covenant (St. Andrew's Draft)

136. **Positive descriptions.** There were many positive responses to the idea of a Covenant. We recognise that any possible Covenant would be grounded in God's covenant with us. It would carry horizontal and vertical realities, reflecting the sign

³⁵ John 10:10