

# ARC Dialogue Examines Difficult Questions Images of God: Reflections on Christian Anthropology

*“A context in which to approach many of the difficult questions that confront” the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches is presented in a document on Christian anthropology released Dec. 22 by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the United States. The national-level dialogue group said it was hoped that this report would “offer a reasonable approach within which each church can better understand the different teachings and practice of the other as regards human sexuality, Christian marriage, the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood, Marian doctrines and devotions, and the communion of saints, and by which further studies of our teachings on these questions can be conducted in more profitable and less polemical ways.” Each of those issues is discussed in the report*

*— issues that are of central concern to the ongoing dialogue involving the two churches. The purpose of the study, a covering letter noted, was “to identify those areas in Christian anthropology which contribute to the understanding of our relation as men and women in Christ and in Christ to one another.” The text of the report follows.*

## Introduction

1. For the past four years, ARC-USA has given its attention to Christian anthropology. We have tried to explore together a large theological context within which several subjects of deep concern to our two churches may profitably be considered: the church’s teaching about human sexuality and Christian marriage; the role of Mary in the life, devotion and theology of the

church; and the admission of women to the ordained ministry. The following paper indicates the range of this theological exploration and some of the agreements and disagreements which we have discovered. As in many other matters, our disagreements do not always follow along lines of church membership.

## I. Jesus as the Image of God

### A. Jesus Shows Us What God Is Like

2. There is unanimous and complete agreement among us, based on a common interpretation of New Testament texts and acceptance of the decisions of the early ecumenical councils, that the only adequate “image” of God is Jesus Christ. One has only to recall such New Testament passages as Colossians 1:15, “He is the image (*eikon*) of



the invisible God, the first-born of all creation," and Hebrews 1:3, "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power."

3. Although God is a mystery which the human mind can never penetrate, God in his mystery has revealed himself to us in a unique and ultimate manner in his Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. Our ability to speak of God and apprehend what he has done in Christ, however, is based upon the fact of creation. God was revealing himself in the act of creation, which occurred before Jesus Christ, and even before human beings, appeared in the evolving universe. The use of that creation is the only way we, a part of it, can refer to God.

4. The work of God in Christ and the new dispensation offered to the world by the Father in his Son is best appreciated in terms of creation and recreation. Redemption in Christ is recreation in him, a new type of total dependence upon him; in this sense, new life in Christ can only be understood on the basis of the first creation which the Son came to restore and lead beyond itself by the power of his Spirit.

5. The new creation, although it is more than nature, can only be referred to in terms of the natural order God first created; in fact, Christians believe that the Word of God, the agent of the new creation, is also the means by which God first created the universe. The Epistle to the Hebrews, in the verse preceding the one we have already quoted, speaks of the Son as he through whom the world was created (1:2), and the Gospel of John refers to the Word who became flesh in Jesus as the one through whom "all things were made" (1:2).

6. Creation and recreation are the key to each other in the Christian life, and so it is that the methodology we have employed in this study has found it necessary, on the one hand, to use nature as a key to understanding who God is and what he does in Christ, and, on the other hand, to use recreation in Christ as the key to understanding the purpose of the first creation, which preceded it in time.

7. Theological anthropology is a central concern to our churches because it provides and probes concepts, images and symbols from creation for receiving and appropriating, expressing and communicating our understanding of the God in whom we believe.

8. God is infinite. Our finite minds can have no comprehensive knowledge of him, but Christians believe that Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, indicates to us in human terms who God is and what God is.

9. Our churches together affirm the Christology of the Chalcedonian definition: "at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood,

truly God and truly man (the word used was *anthropos* (human), not *aner* (male),...begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer (*theotokos*); one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, recognized in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." Thus Jesus Christ is simultaneously one in being with the Father as regards his Godhead, and one in being with us as regards his humanity. He is, therefore, described, as we have seen, as the image of the invisible God.

10. Jesus' whole life of self-giving leads to his sacrificial death on the cross and indicates the unfathomable depth of the love of God. It is through Jesus the Christ, truly divine and truly human, that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are revealed. God is shown to be a communion of divine persons, mysteriously related in infinite, personal, self-giving love.

11. Our churches together affirm that God is triune. Both subscribe to the definitions of Christian faith set forth by the first ecumenical councils: in the one God, who is love, there are three persons, of one substance, uncreated, and eternal — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (cf. *Quicumque Vult*)

12. Jesus is truly human, truly endowed with human consciousness, intellect and will. He has the same type of appetites and feelings, and goes through the same processes of thinking and willing, that we do as we exercise our freedom, responsibility and rationality in the world. Image of the mysterious God, Jesus as truly human also reveals what human beings are called to be and do, namely, to love God with one's whole heart and mind and soul and to love one's neighbor as oneself; to show such great love as to lay down one's life for one's friend. Jesus' resurrection, the newness of life granted him after his sacrificial death on the cross, reveals the power of such love to bring all human beings into that communion with God which is their eternal destiny.

13. Because God incarnate as Jesus was truly human, he was committed to all aspects of the created order, limiting as they are. He was a male. He belonged to a particular family; he spoke a particular language. Joseph followed a particular trade, which Jesus also followed (Mk. 6:3). Jesus belonged to Israel, and was heir of Israel's religious tradition.

14. Are these particularities relevant to the image of God in him? Although we may affirm things about God on the basis of our knowledge of Jesus, those affirmations must be subject to careful and critical evaluation to determine their theological significance. One source of disagreement among us, not strictly according to church

allegiance, is caused by different opinions regarding the relevance of sexuality in the revelation of God in Christ in general, and regarding the theological significance of Jesus' maleness in particular.

## II. Human Sexuality as Significant for the Imaging of God

### A. Images of God: Male and Female

15. Since human beings are made in the image of God, and are sexual, the question presents itself: Is God imaged forth more adequately in one sex rather than the other? We find in the biblical evidences a clear preponderance of masculine over feminine imagery for God. In the Old Testament, God is depicted, for example, as shepherd, king, father and husband: as shepherd, true guardian of Israel (Gn. 49:24), gatherer of stray sheep, who leads them to their own pasture, binds up their wounds, watches over and feeds them as he guides them toward messianic restoration (Ez. 34:11-12); as king, ruler of Israel (Nm. 23:21), leader of all nations (Ps. 22:29), creator (Ps. 74:12) and savior of Israel (Is. 33:22); as a father who loves his child, Israel (Hos. 11:1), provides for him (Ex. 4:22f; Dt. 1:31), has compassion on him and forgives him (Is. 64:8; Jer. 31:20; Ps. 103:13f); as a husband who rejoices in his bride (Is. 62:5) and longs for the affection of his wayward wife (Is. 54:5-8). Some understand this imagery to depend in large part upon the patriarchal structure of the social order in ancient Israel.

16. There are also passages in the Old Testament where God's actions and attitudes in relation to Israel are depicted in feminine images. God's mother-love for his child is faithful and unconditional: God knows what it is to carry a child in the womb, to cry out in labor, to give birth (Is. 46:3-4; Dt. 32:18; Is. 42:13-14); God's attachment to his child is just as strong as any nursing mother's (Is. 49:14-15); her tender compassion (Jer. 31:20) moves her to carry her child at her breast and comfort him (Is. 66:12-13), and to stand by her child all the days of its life. The psalmist envisions God as mother (Ps. 131:1-2), as mid-wife (Ps. 22:9f) and as mistress of a household (Ps. 123:2), an image echoed in the Wisdom literature (Prov. 9:1-6). God's Wisdom, personified, is feminine (Wis. 7:25-8:1). Wisdom shares in the divine attributes, and appeals to the faithful disciple to embrace her as bride and mother (Prov. 4:6-8, Sir. 15:2; Wis. 8:2); she can satisfy the heart's desire.

17. In the New Testament, the reference to God as Father predominates. God is uniquely the Father of Jesus Christ (Mt. 11:27 and par.). This name, "Father," becomes synonymous with God in the fourth Gospel. Jesus teaches his disciples to address God as Father in prayer



(Mt. 6:9-13, Lk. 11:2-4), following his own example (Mt. 11:25f; Mk. 14:36; Jn. 11:41f, 12:27f, and ch. 17). In and through Christ we become God's adopted children, able in the power of the Spirit to share in his relationship with the Father (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15f). Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, is a male. The maternal love of God for Israel, however, is recalled in Jesus' lament over Jerusalem: He longs to gather her children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Mt. 23:27).

18. Female imagery of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit appears in certain strands of patristic and medieval theological reflection and piety. The Wisdom texts of the Old Testament are brought forward and interpreted as describing an eternal aspect of God in feminine terms; these are at times associated with the Word and at times with the Holy Spirit. Greek theology in Byzantium pursued this line of thought and dedicated many churches to the divine Sophia. The Holy Spirit is hymned as "mother" by St. Ephrem, and Christ is praised as "mother" by Clement of Alexandria and later by St. Anselm and Dame Julian of Norwich. In the medieval West, mystics and theologians exhibit great freedom in applying masculine and feminine names to God. The maternal imagery of bearing, birthing, nursing, nurturing, comforting and so on, carries forward in the spiritual writings of this period a rich expression of divine-human intimacy. Christ himself was sometimes depicted as feminine and motherly (often drawing on the mother-hen passage): giving us birth from his pierced side, feeding us on his own flesh and blood, embracing us tenderly as his beloved children. Christian religious experience and theological reflection, then, have discovered a full range of human characteristics, male and female, in the sacred humanity of Jesus.

19. The unseen God, however, is beyond sexuality. Our attempts to speak of God necessarily rely on analogy and symbolism. Nor can human images and symbols for God avoid having either a masculine or feminine character. But, of course, God is neither male nor female; rather, as creator, God virtually includes the perfections of both sexes, as well as those of all creatures.

### B. Sexual Union and the Imaging of God

20. The decisive statement affirming that both male and female image God, and that they image him equally, is to be found in the book of Genesis: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Gn. 1:27) This text helps us to realize that the image of God resides not simply in the solitary human being, but even more in human beings in interpersonal relation-

ships. For human beings by nature seek their fulfillment not just in sexual union, but in ever wider forms of community. Sexual relationship is thus a pointer to such wider community.

21. But it is not only as individuals that male and female human beings image God: The division of humankind into two sexes creates a framework for interrelationships that image self-giving in God. As embodied persons we exist either as women or men. Sexuality is a given, irreducible mode of being in the world. Our bodies are not merely the somatic envelopes of our spirits, nor are they purely instrumental. Rather, we exist as a substantial unity of body and spirit. And we are saved in our bodied existence. Whereas sexuality is manifested in bodily differences, it is erroneous to equate sexuality with its genital expression.

22. Taking marital union as that which is meant to express self-donation in love, this nuptial relationship then becomes a paradigm for the relationship between God and ourselves, as well as for other experiences of human relatedness. For one thing, it highlights the dimension of "otherness" which is often described in terms of sexual duality or complementarity. Men and women fulfill complementary functions in regard to procreation and the steps leading to it. This procreative complementarity does not in itself imply superiority or inferiority, domination or subservience. On the contrary, it underlines the call to communion and images identity-in-difference in a human way. The value of the sexual relation as a paradigm lies, in fact, in this remarkable and unexpected quality: that precisely through the intense and exclusive relation of husband and wife comes an equally intense and profound relation to the child, the other.

23. If the relationship of male and female is thus taken as a paradigm, it follows that all forms of human community should be structured as open communions, open beyond themselves *because* of the close bonds which tie the members together. Humans who belong together by birth, by culture, by language, by historical and geographical heritage, by shared tastes and purposes, will be joined in such a way that their union will always remain open to the wider human community, and ultimately to the universality of humanity in time and space.

### C. Jesus Christ as Both Image of God and Model of True Humanity

24. Jesus Christ is the uniquely given model of true humanity to appear in human history. He alone is Second Adam. Both male and female find representative expression in him, and in him there can be no difference between male and female being in the image of

God. The Synod of Douzy (860) declared *et Eva ipsa est Adam*. Thus "Eve herself is indeed human (Man)," which reflects the belief that in Christ male and female are profoundly identical in their humanity. This identity was established in the creation. Human disobedience, however, disrupted this communion with God; and under the conditions of human life distorted by sin, the identity has been rendered imperfect, a fact symbolized by the different curses pronounced on Adam and Eve. Everywhere in history the relation between male and female labors under some degree of alienation. But in Christ, Christians believe that the relation of all persons to God has been restored, and in that redemptive act all are reconciled to each other. In the situation of redeemed humanity in the kingdom of God, and in the church which anticipates that perfection, male and female are once more identical in their capacity to be images of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

### D. Sexuality Belongs to the Order of Creation

25. The creation account in Genesis shows that the embodiment of human persons as male or female is part of God's design. Though the human person shares the condition of sexuality with most other material life-forms, human sexuality is of a different order. The creating and nurturing activity of the living God can be reflected and symbolized by sexuality in any part of the created order. Human sexuality, however, whether male or female, is that of a free and responsible creature capable of self-possession and deliberate self-donation in love. The fact of human sexuality, therefore, opens human beings to the possibility of entering into loving communal relationships which reflect the communion of divine self-giving love in God.

26. Yet the Genesis account vividly tells us of the entrance of sin into human life and the consequent distortion of the imaging of God in the human person. We find, as a result of sin, that persons, instead of being open to the other in self-donating love, become self-centered, self-seeking and self-absorbed. They become incapable of either giving or receiving the very love they were created to image. Instead, they experience sexual disorder, a drive either to dominate others or to be subservient to others. Coercive power tends to replace love as the strongest cohesive force in human community.

27. History testifies to much destructive inequity between men and women and to the evolution of roles in a way that undermines the dignity of both sexes. An example would be the



responsibilities prescribed for women which even in the industrial democracies isolated women from the process of political enfranchisement and placed women in a position of legal inferiority to men until the success of the suffrage movement. The result of this legal treatment of women contributes even today to their being treated as inferior. Although such roles frequently come to be described as normative, one cannot rightly appeal to Christian theology to justify them.

#### *E. Reconstitution of the Divine Image in Christ*

28. The fundamental Christian assertion is that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Son of God, crucified and risen, the divine image has appeared in history in an unbroken and undistorted form. In Jesus Christ, the church sees in the midst of a sinful and alienated world what humanity was created to be and what God is truly like. Following St. Paul, we call him the Second Adam. At the incarnation, the new Adam and the new Eve appeared in history. In Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, the human enterprise begins afresh. The new creation has begun.

29. Jesus did not embody the image of God within a covenant of marriage, but rather by his whole — though single — life of sacrificial, self-giving love, culminating in his death for the world. Celibate love is, therefore, shown capable of revealing God's love without detracting from the witness given by marital love.

30. The doctrine of the image of God was developed during the first centuries of the church in light of Christian teaching about the triune God. Whereas for many this early development, especially in the West after Augustine, saw the Trinity imaged in the intrapersonal unity of the human person (memory, intellect and will), much contemporary trinitarian theology adds to this psychological analogy the comparison of the intra-trinitarian relationships with the ontological unity achieved in a loving community of persons. This communitarian analogy presupposes that the unity of the divine persons is not unlike the unity of a loving community in which each exists for the other and by reason of their mutual interrelationships.

31. The Spirit of God, present in our historical existence, working in and through the human spirit, calls each human person into a communion of love with the triune God. This relationship of the Holy Spirit to each human spirit may reconstitute in love each person's relation to self, and the person's communion with others and with the whole creation. "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then

heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." (Rom 8:15-16, cf. Rom 5:5)

32. In other words, in the course of our present life, where the effects of sin have not been completely overcome, this basic human capacity for communion given by God in creation can be actualized, Christians believe, only by the work of the Holy Spirit. By grace, through faith, we are taken up into the relationship between the Son and the Father, and also into the mission of the Son's self-giving love for the world.

33. Jesus Christ is the one mediator of this love. He overcomes sin, death, and the law, through his dying and rising. Jesus' complete self-giving exposes as sin every act which obscures God's love. Love overcomes sin by forgiveness and by turning a person's self-centered affections to God's world. Love overcomes death, as the resurrection of Christ proclaims, and introduces the faithful to victorious participation in his resurrection.

34. Jesus represents the dawning of the epoch of the resurrection into human history. This introduces new possibilities for the imaging of God. Human sexuality points to an individual's need for others that finds its fulfillment in acts of mutual self-giving and in the openness of two — man and woman — standing side by side facing a third, the child. Besides this familial relationship, human beings are called to friendship, acquaintance and comradeship with other persons in daily social life, resulting in the joy that arises from human associations. Jesus reveals openness in all his relationships, in which he gave as well as received joy, warmth and affection. Jesus' openness fulfills and transcends the openness to which human sexuality points. He had both male and female disciples; his freedom and friendship with the women of his company were unusual for his place and time. With the "12" apostles his relationship was transforming. Moreover, he characteristically reached out beyond his chosen disciples to help and heal the poor, the sick, the outcast. An immediate consequence of the cross and resurrection, the very result of his whole life of self-giving, was a model set before the whole world by the preaching and example of the apostolic community.

35. The significance of a relationship to Jesus which has the quality of *agape* is expressed powerfully in the fourth Gospel: "No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends." (Jn. 15:15) The Johannine phrase, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13), applies in the first instance to Jesus whose death on the cross and glorious resurrection are both the cause and pattern of truly Christian friendship.

36. Christian marriage constitutes a special case of such friendship.

The depth of the union of persons achieved through a sexual relationship is increased and transformed by the love which "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (I Cor. 13:7) Such a union in Christ is called in Ephesians the *una caro* (one flesh) which symbolized the relationship between Christ and the church: "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:32)

37. But friendship in the more general case provides a second set of images of God in relation to creation, as powerful in their way as the image of a man and woman bound together in sexual union and in the covenant of marriage. Marriage might be said to symbolize for the church the exclusive and radical commitment of God to those whom God calls into covenant through Christ. Friendship in the wider sense, and even other forms of human community, when transformed by the *agape* of Christ, may be said to symbolize the fact that in the kingdom of heaven, where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Mt. 22:30), all persons are to be united to each other and to God by the self-donating love offered in the cross of Christ. In the church, where the kingdom of God both is already and is not yet, both sets of images are important for our understanding of God.

38. This vision of the kingdom of heaven introduces an eschatological perspective. In that consummation, all persons, male and female, are to be in so full and deep a relationship with one another as now is found on earth especially in marriage.

39. Since in human experience marital union is the means to a deep relationship, some would propose that, even in the present age, for each person some relationship besides marriage may include marital intimacy. In this context, something should be said about homosexuality.

40. There is a widely recognized distinction between homosexual orientation and genital homosexual acts. Homosexual persons, because they are human persons, are individually in the image of God. Where this has been forgotten, homosexual persons have suffered hurt and injustice in society and even exclusion from open participation in the life of the Christian community. Mitigation of this situation is urgently needed.

41. Both our churches teach that genital homosexual acts, like heterosexual genital acts outside of marriage, are morally wrong. Therefore a homosexual union, no matter how close or how evidently characterized by loyalty and self-giving love, does not constitute *una caro* (one flesh) or provide an image of God. Thus a homosexual relationship cannot be sanctified by the sacrament of marriage.



### III. The Image of God in the Ecclesial Communion

#### A. The Church as "Sacrament" of Unity

42. The church is sacramental. It is an effective sign and instrument of communion with God and of the unity of humankind. (LG 1 and 8) This vocation of the ecclesial community has two dimensions: first, the church itself is to be "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (St. Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.*, 23), and, second, it has the mission of restoring all people to this same unity (BCP 855).

43. The source and center of this ecclesial community is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, in the power of the Spirit. The action which most fully sacramentalizes the unity of the baptized is the eucharistic liturgy; at the table of the Lord all are made one body, one spirit with him in the one bread and the common cup. In this meal, the gift of Christ's life on the altar of the cross, the ultimate expression of self-donating love, is effectively proclaimed (Windsor 5). It is the power of this love which establishes the bonds of communion.

#### B. Baptism Establishes Equality in Christ

44. Through baptism the Holy Spirit conforms individual men and women to Christ in the mystery of his death and resurrection. The image of God, obscured by pride and disobedience, is restored in the waters of baptism. The newly baptized are reborn in Christ by the Spirit and truly put on Christ. Those who become members of one body by baptism all share in a common dignity, regardless of race, nationality, social condition or sex. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:28). All have the same grace of adoption and the same vocation to holiness. Our churches agree that men and women are equal before God, and therefore equal in dignity and equal in rights before each other. We set behind us patterns of discrimination based on the supposition that women are inferior to men and therefore may not be granted the same fundamental personal rights as men (GS 29).

45. Even when there is a commitment to equality between men and women, there remains a tension whenever the principle of equality is applied to concrete situations. Part of the tension is due to the fact that in our churches several lines of thought co-exist without being fully harmonized. These often work at cross purposes and are not always clearly identified. One may briefly describe three such anthropologies, though there may well be more.

46. Some would choose to emphasize the complementary roles of men and women in society and in the church.

These roles are understood to extend beyond those involved in marital union and the procreation of children. The notion of complementarity affects not only physical functions but the whole of the male or female personality. The advancement of women is approved and encouraged as long as their special nature is properly safeguarded. In church and society, equality is not identity, they urge, even if it is granted that in Christ and in the eyes of God, male and female are profoundly identical in constituting the image of God. The goal in the life of the church and the world is "effective complementarity, so that men and women bring their proper riches and dynamism to the building of a world, not leveled and uniform, but harmonious and unified, according to the design of the creator," (Paul VI, in "Women: Disciples and Co-Workers," *Origins* 4, May 1, 1975, p. 718). Different social roles, in this view, are not incompatible with equal dignity.

47. Others, on the basis of the same principle of baptismal equality, wish to state that physical characteristics aside, the elements of maleness and femaleness are by no means obvious, and their identification by no means straightforward. The diversity which is attested when the complementary dimensions of male and female are mentioned is also found within a "whole" person of either sex, who is usually discovered to display wide ranges of "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics in varying proportions. Therefore the division of roles in society and the church is not properly made on the basis of a complementarity between male and female. The effort to do this may in fact preclude the obedience of a man or a woman to a genuine vocation. This group, too, would affirm that in society and in the church, equality is not identity, even if equality implies identity in constituting the image of God. The world can best become the harmonious and unified whole according to the design of the creator by providing for both women and men the social and ecclesial freedom to offer themselves to any call from God.

48. It is also possible, and one may find grounds for this in some interpretations of the biblical and patristic traditions, to see maleness and femaleness as general ways of being fully human. Being determined more by culture than by nature, these ways may be interchangeable. They vary from place to place and they have changed through time. The freedom that comes from the Gospel both contributes to the emancipation of Christians from the cultural stereotypes of their milieu, and makes it possible for them to submit to such stereotypes if they so wish. In any case, the mutual relationship between male and female is not one of complementarity and it is not adequately

described as equality or "unitariness"; it is rather a supplementarity. Each, being already fully human, receives from the other a supplement of humanity.

#### C. Christian Vocations

49. In accord with the new commandment given us by the Lord, "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12), commitment to the love of God and neighbor is at the heart of every Christian's calling. From the first centuries of Christian life, the pagans observed: "These Christians, see how they love one another." (Tertullian, *Apol.* 39)

50. The call to love of neighbor is not restricted to the Christian community, but extends into the social and political structures of the workplace. Christians, by reason of their baptismal commitment of faith and charity, profoundly nourished at the table of the eucharist, are sent forth in mission to proclaim the Gospel and to bring gospel values to bear on the daily events of family and civic life and on the larger world of work, politics, science, the arts, the media, the international order and so on. This transformation of the social order is the task of all Christians, especially lay persons, who by the witness of an integrally Christian life sanctify the world from within.

51. *The single life.* Jesus, while remaining single, perfectly fulfilled his Father's will in all things. The church needs to esteem the single life as a possible vocation in its own right, and regard it not as a rejection of marriage but as a grace-filled state by which the human person may image forth the divine love. The witness to this love offered by single persons, or by groups of single persons who share a common life, has been accepted by the church as a fruitful imaging of the trinitarian life of self-donating love (LG 41). In our age, Christians are rediscovering that there is a vocation to the single life. Many who respond to that vocation believe that they are called as individuals to find their community among those in the local church. Others respond to a call to join a community or association within the church which provides them support in this vocation.

#### Consecrated Virginity, Committed Celibacy and Religious Chastity

52. In our churches, chastity and virginity consecrated to God by vow, and celibacy for the sake of the kingdom (Mt. 19:22), are held in high esteem. Those called to this mode of imitation of Jesus experience their vocation as a special gift of grace. Their voluntary surrender of the great good of Christian marriage is a sign of preferential love for the Lord and the church, his body, an icon of the eschatological state in which there is no more marriage (Mt. 22:30). They especially symbolize for the church the extensive quality of Jesus' love



which was open to all, complementing the symbol of intensive love provided by couples married in Christ. Commitment to the celibate life should free men and women to be available for loving service to the wider community. This state can be understood as a call to a nuptial relationship directly with Christ patterned on the love between Christ and the church described in Ephesians 5:32.

53. Both our churches interpret this eschatological witness as a counterpart and support to the incarnational witness of the love between married persons. These vocations are mutually enriching for the building up of the whole body of Christ in *agape*.

54. *Christian marriage*. Both our churches agree that matrimony is an "authentic sacramental means of grace" (ARC 12-Year Report). As such, Christian marriage is a way of salvation not only for the couple, but for the sake of the whole church. Both our churches agree that in marriage "the man and woman enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the church and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows" (BCP 861).

55. It is our conviction that the life-giving and the love-making powers of the marital act are of equal dignity and value. Each aspect is an "authentic sacramental means of grace" (ARC 12-Year Report). And, although there are serious differences in formal teaching and pastoral practice between our churches regarding artificial contraception and divorce, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Special Commission on the Theology of Marriage and Its Application to Mixed Marriages offers hope that they need not be divisive. What is of primary significance, however, is that both our churches perceive that marriage sacramentalizes the "nuptial meaning of the body" (John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman*, pp. 106-112). "The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy, for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord" (BCP 423).

56. The Scriptures provide, among many, three points of comparison which help to illuminate the reality of sacramental marriage. One we have already noted (no. 22) is the teaching that male and female taken together constitute an image of God. In the "one flesh" (Gn. 3:22) of their nuptial relationship, they are an image of God. God, however, according to biblical revelation, has no consort. The only nuptial relationship of the God of Israel is with the people he has created and redeemed. The covenant relationship between God and Israel, then, is

likened to the bond of marriage between man and woman. God is pictured as the husband of a desert bride, the chosen people (Is. 54:5; Ezk. 16:8-14). The covenant pledge, "I will be their God and they will be my people" (Jer. 31:33), suggests the marriage vow. The new covenant is described as God's generous restoration of the marriage relationship which has been violated by Israel's "adultery" with the gods of the nations (Hos. 2:14-16; 19-23; Is. 62:3-5). Finally, the New Testament brings forward this symbolism by presenting Christ as the bridegroom of the church (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:4; 12:2,9). The nuptial relationship which characterizes the union of Christ and the church is set forth as a model in the exhortation to married Christians found in the letter to the Ephesians, 5:21-33. In particular, husbands are urged to love their wives in the manner in which Christ gave himself for his bride, the church (Eph. 5:25).

57. *Holy orders*. The distinctive witness of all ministry in the church, that of the baptized as well as that of the ordained, that of the married as well as that of the single, is "to represent Christ and his church" (BCP, pp. 855-856). Holy orders images Christ in keeping with the functions and charisms of the bishop (pastor), the priest (presbyter, or elder), the deacon (servant).

58. In the New Testament, Christ's ministry is identified as that of *episkope*; he is "the shepherd and bishop (*episkopos*) of your souls" (1 Pt. 2:25). Subsequently the office of bishop in both our communions has been identified as the normative pastoral office, with emphasis on responsible guidance and care. (Cf. Canterbury Statement, paras. 6, 9, 16)

59. As the mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 9:15), Christ is called archpriest (9:11). He presents God to us and us to God. As holy orders developed in the church, those who presided over the eucharist also came to be called priests, since they were perceived to officiate at the offering which participated in (and therefore was) Christ's priestly offering. They image to the church in many contexts Christ's mediatorial work.

60. We are reminded that both our churches see the whole church as called to participate in Christ's priestly offering and, as stated by Canterbury (no. 13), "Christian ministers are... particularly in presiding at the eucharist — representatives of the whole church in the fulfillment of its priestly vocation of self-offering to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). Nevertheless their (ordained) ministry is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit."

61. Christ's ministry is also identified in the New Testament as that of

servant or deacon: He "came not to be served, but to serve" (Mk. 10:45). The ministry of deacon was subsequently identified with Christ's servant role, an identification made as early as Ignatius of Antioch. (Trallians 3.1) The function of the deacon is primarily to exercise a helping ministry, both in the liturgy and in the world.

62. Our churches differ over the admission of women to holy orders. In particular, we are divided on the question of their admission to the priesthood and episcopacy. (It appears that Roman Catholics have not formally ruled out for women the possibility of ordination to the diaconate.) Together we subscribe to the Canterbury Statement in its assertion: "Because the eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, the action of the presiding minister in reciting again the words of Christ at the last supper and distributing to the assembly the holy gifts is seen to stand in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in offering his own sacrifice. (no. 13)

Furthermore, we accept the elucidation on this passage which explains that "it is only the ordained minister who presides at the eucharist, in which, in the name of Christ and on behalf of his church, he recites the narrative of the institution of the last supper and invokes the Holy Spirit upon the gifts." (Final Report, p. 41) Our churches disagree, however, on whether a woman may be ordained to "stand in sacramental relation to Christ himself" in the special case of eucharistic presidency.

63. Recently, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the authorization of Pope Paul VI, reviewed this question and reaffirmed what the congregation sees as the unbroken tradition of the church, namely, that "the church, in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination." (Declaration on the Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood, p. 4) The church's constant tradition is taken to be based on the example of the Lord and the apostles; this tradition is supported by an appeal (considered a "theological reflection," not demonstrative proof) to the "profound fittingness" of reserving priestly ordination to men.

64. In the eucharistic liturgy, the declaration states, the priest acts *in persona Christi*, that is, he takes the role of Christ in the eucharist "to the point of being his very image when he pronounces the words of consecration." (p. 12) Sacramental signification, according to the Vatican declaration, requires that there be a "natural resemblance" between the sign (priest) and the one signified (Christ). The declaration draws the conclusion that only a man may take the role of Christ in the eucharist, for



in this capacity the priest is the image of Christ who was and remains a man.

65. The declaration considers the fact that the incarnation took place "according to the male sex" (p. 12) to be harmonious with the whole economy of salvation and especially with the nuptial imagery surrounding the mystery of the covenant. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph. 5:25), sealing the new covenant in his blood. The priest, who acts *in persona Christi* in the sacramental celebration of this mystery, is a sign, therefore, of Christ as author of the new covenant, bridegroom and head of the church. On such grounds, the maleness of the celebrating priest seems appropriate.

66. Not all Episcopalians support the ordination of women to the priesthood. Even those who do would not wish to deny that there are allusions to the nuptial mystery in the celebration of the eucharist. But, they would argue, such an allusion is not explicit in the New Testament; and it does not seem to them that it should apply to the celebrant of the eucharist, at least in such a way as to necessitate the restriction of holy orders to men. These Episcopalians, in other words, do not maintain as the declaration does, the necessity of a natural resemblance between the maleness of the priest and maleness of Jesus. The church as a whole, including all its members, lay and ordained, male and female, is the bride of Christ; Christ, the risen and exalted Lord, is the bridegroom. The priest, these Episcopalians hold, is an image of Christ by virtue of what he or she is and does as a person baptized and ordained with power of the Spirit, not by virtue of male sexuality. Ordination to priesthood confers the power to represent Christ in all aspects of his mediatorial function, as Christ represented the church to God and God to the church. Ordination includes power to celebrate the sacraments. Episcopalians who defend the ordination of women therefore find no solid theological reasons to exclude women from the priesthood.

67. Furthermore, they believe that the priesthood should be able to claim all human gifts in its service, and thus stands to gain from the admission of women. Moreover, they believe that the ordination of women serves to protect the doctrine of God and Christology from an imbalance which diminishes Christian revelation and keeps women essentially unequal as members of the church. Male and female images of both Christ and God are found in the Christian tradition, holding out rich possibilities for our contemporary understanding of the human as encompassing both male and female characteristics.

68. For both our churches, we believe that further studies are needed

in the nature of representational imagery, especially as it applies to the eucharist and the ordained ministry. Moreover it is debated whether issues related to the eucharist and the ordained ministry are doctrinal or disciplinary. Increasing numbers in both our churches feel that our teachings are in fact compatible and that our differences need not separate us. (Cf. Final Report, pp. 1-45; ARC-DOC IV, "ARC Response to the Vatican Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood"; Decree on Ecumenism, nos. 11 and 4 "on the hierarchy of truths.")

#### D. The Communion of Saints

69. Holiness is the transparent radiance of the image of God. But what does it mean to say that the church is holy? The church is holy because the Holy Spirit dwells within it and the church has been endowed with the sacramental means of grace. Through these means, the Holy Spirit enables the church fittingly to worship the triune God and to express in praise, blessing and thanksgiving its homage for the gift of creation and God's wondrous compassion of salvation. Christ, as head of the body which is his church, unceasingly intercedes with the Father for the whole human family, while the church and its members offer in the spirit their intercessions for their brothers and sisters through Christ, that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Both our traditions profess their belief in this communion of saints, the Spirit-led movement of perpetual prayer offered to the Father through Christ by his body which is the church. Moreover, the church is a proper home of the human imaging present in the culture of each period of history.

70. The Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos*, was perceived during the patristic era and by the theological tradition common to our two communions to be so unique a realization of holiness that she is considered to be the prototype of redeemed humanity. The doctrine of the immaculate conception reflects the faith that all of God's gifts are given "in the beginning," that is, that the divine initiative of grace does not come about because of our disposition to receive it but purely out of God's free and loving gift. God's grace, poured out on believers at baptism, is required for the Christian to respond to God's call. Mary responded fully: "Behold the servant of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word." (Lk. 1:38) Yet, as far as we know, Mary was not baptized. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary, like us, needed God's grace to respond, but, unlike us, always possessed that grace. It is this reality to which the dogma of the immaculate conception refers. Mary is described in Luke's Gospel as "highly

favored one" (commonly translated as "full of grace") because she is to be, as Jesus' mother, the Mother of God. The doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity signifies that she has been chosen by God to give herself totally to God. The doctrine of the assumption signifies that it is the totality of her being which is taken up into God by grace and that she is "a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim people of God." (LG 68)

71. Mary has played a far less prominent role in Anglican piety and theology than in Roman Catholic. To be sure, Episcopalians recognize in her not only one who is "blessed among women" (Lk. 1:42), the "highly favored one" (Lk. 1:28), but also one who has been exalted in heaven above angels and archangels. "O, higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim... Thou, bearer of the eternal Word, most gracious, magnify the Lord," runs one of the most popular hymns in the Episcopal hymnal. As noted, Episcopalians, with the Council of Ephesus, acknowledge her as *Theotokos*.

72. Nevertheless, the English Reformation largely eliminated Marian piety, and it is unfamiliar to and thought to be unnecessary by many Episcopalians. In particular, the Marian doctrines of immaculate conception and assumption mentioned in the foregoing discussion, which received dogmatic definition during the time of separation of our two churches, could not easily be accepted as requirements necessary to faith. "One consequence of our separation has been a tendency for Anglicans and Roman Catholics alike to exaggerate the importance of Marian dogmas in themselves at the expense of other truths more closely related to the foundation of the Christian faith." (Final Report, p. 96)

73. Although the language would be unfamiliar, some Episcopalians could, without contradicting their accepted formularies, speak of the immaculate conception as Mary's vocation and election by God to be the mother of the Messiah, citing Jeremiah's account of God's calling to him to be a prophet, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jer. 1:5). Similarly they could entertain as a possible teaching that Mary has been taken up totally into God's presence by grace, witness the typology of Enoch (Gn. 5:24) or Elijah (II Kgs. 2:11), although the biblical basis for such a claim seems lacking in Mary's case, and its necessity therefore questionable.

74. It is plain that further discussion of these points is required before full understanding is achieved, but we think that a significant beginning has been made possible by the anthropological considerations made in this paper.

75. Both our churches have come



to revere the Lord's mother and the other saints who form one ecclesial communion with us, and who give us examples of how we are to witness to Christ. We are grateful to the triune God who gives them to us as heroes and heroines of our faith. "He speaks to us in them and offers us a sign of the kingdom, to which we are powerfully attracted, so great a cloud of witnesses is there given (Cf. Heb. 12:1) and such a witness to the truth of the Gospel." (LG 50) Through the anointing of the Spirit, they have realized to the fullest degree what it means to be human by their transformation in Christ, and help confirm our hope of reaching full maturity in eternal life. Veneration (*dulia*) of them is essentially different from the worship (*latria*) due to God alone. Devotion to the saints is always for the sake of God's glory. "Every authentic witness of love, indeed, offered by us to those who are in heaven tends to and terminates in Christ, 'the crown of all the saints,' and through him in God who is wonderful in his saints and is glorified in them." (LG 50)

76. The intercessory role of the saints, especially that of Mary, need not obscure or diminish the unique mediatorship of our risen Lord, but may show its power. It should not interfere with the immediate union of the faithful with Christ, but foster it, since even intercessory prayers, whose form is always "pray *for* us," are directed to the Father. And all Christian prayer is directed to the Father through Christ, the one true mediator, in the Holy Spirit.

77. Veneration is a broader concept in the Roman Catholic Church than it is in the Anglican Communion. Anglicans may be found occasionally to use the language of veneration; but it is much more usual for them to speak of praising and thanking God *for* his saints and *with* his saints. It is more customary for them to speak of remembering his saints with honor and respect than of venerating them. The Roman Catholic Church does not worship the saints but directs prayers to the Father in the Spirit, with Christ, surrounded by his saints, who reflect his image in

themselves. As we have said, holiness is the transparent radiance of the image of God.

We conclude by suggesting that in the foregoing treatment of theological anthropology we have offered a context in which to approach many of the difficult questions that confront our two churches. We hope that our studies and this report offer a reasonable approach within which each church can better understand the different teachings and practice of the other as regards human sexuality, Christian marriage, the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood, Marian doctrines and devotions, and the communion of saints, and by which further studies of our teachings on these questions can be conducted in more profitable and less polemical ways.

*(The co-chairmen of the U.S. Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue are Bishop Arthur Vogel of the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri, and Bishop Raymond Lessard of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Savannah.)*