

C H U R C H A N D C O M M U N I O N

GODALMING - AMMERDOWN DRAFT

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I INTRODUCTION

1. From the outset the purpose of ARCIC has been to seek the reunion of Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Following the Final Report of ARCIC-I and the publication of ARCIC-II's statement on Salvation and the Church, it has become clear that we have made significant progress in growth towards that ecclesial communion. We believe it is time now to reflect upon the nature of communion and to evaluate the degree of communion we already experience. This perspective of communion helps us not only to see clearly the scandal of our divisions but also ways towards healing them. Moreover, we believe the outstanding difficulties between us are most likely to be resolved within this perspective.
2. In the New Testament the general idea of communion is conveyed in many ways. Several words, expressions and images point to its reality. More than any other concept, communion illuminates the reality to which this variety of images and language refer: the people of God (1 Peter 2:9-10, flock (John 10:14; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:3,4), body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), vine (John 15:5), temple (1 Corinthians 3: 16-17), bride (Revelation 21:2). Some of these, such as flock and body, imply a relationship between the members of the community. All of them imply relationship with Christ or with God. Although the Greek word koinonia, together with its cognates, is not always used in the New Testament with precisely the same meaning and usually signifies participation^(e.g. 1 Cor.10:16), yet it becomes the most expressive term to describe our relationship with God and with one another in Christ. This usage is explicitly clear in the Johannine writing: "We proclaim to you what we have seen and

heard, so that you also may have fellowship^(koinonia) with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Communion is the profound all-embracing reality of a shared life in Christ (John 17; 1 Corinthians 10:16-21) of which no one model or image is an exhaustive description.

3. Every account of the Church as communion necessarily implies a fundamental relationship to Christ. He is the leader of God's people, the shepherd of the flock, the head of the body, the stem of the vine, the corner-stone of the temple, the heavenly bridegroom. Similarly, it is characteristic of the apostle Paul to speak of the relationship of believers to their Lord as being 'in Christ' (Romans 8:1; Colossians 1:28; 2 Corinthians 5:17). He also speaks of Christ being in the believer (Romans 8:10; Galatians 2:20 ; Colossians 1:27).

4. It is clear, therefore, that communion includes far more than institutional relationship between Christian communities. It expresses an existing profound unity that stems from their relationship with God in Christ and which will reach its fulfilment finally when God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). This is the will of God for the whole of his creation, that all things should be brought to ultimate unity in Christ (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:19-20). The Church is sign, instrument and foretaste of that profound communion and oneness. Consequently, communion most aptly defines the fundamental nature of the Church. This is manifested in common faith, ministry, sacramental life, shared service and mission.

II - COMMUNION - UNFOLDED IN SCRIPTURE

5. The drama of humanity, as unfolded in scripture, is of the breakdown and renewal of relationships. Thus Adam and Eve are created to find fulfilment in communion with each other and with God. Their disobedience undermines their mutual relationship, causes them to hide from God and distorts their relationship with the natural order. The unfolding account in Genesis indicates that this is the way of all humanity.
6. Nevertheless, in faithfulness to his eternal purpose, God continues to will the salvation of all creation. The divine purpose is re-affirmed in covenant with his people. Through Abraham God gave the promise of a blessing to all the nations. Through Moses God established his people as his own possession, a community in a special relationship with him (Exodus 19:5ff). The prophets constantly denounced the community's faithlessness because it threatened this relationship. Nevertheless, God's fidelity remains constant and he promises through the prophets that his purpose will be accomplished. Though the failures of the chosen people led to division and exile, reconciliation of the scattered people of God will spring from a radical transformation within a new covenant (Jer. 31:31). God will raise up a servant to fulfil his purpose of communion and peace for all the nations (Isaiah 49:6; cp also Micah 4:1-4; Zechariah 2:10-13).

7. In the fullness of time, God sent his Son, born of Mary, to redeem his people and bring them into a new relationship as his adopted sons and daughters. When Jesus began his ministry he called together a band of disciples with whom he shared his apostolic mission. They were to be witnesses to his life and teaching, death and resurrection. In the light of Pentecost the apostolic community proclaimed that God's promises had been fulfilled in Christ. By a baptism of repentance and faith believers were drawn into communion with God and one another (cp Acts 2 esp. vv 41, 42). In this New Covenant salvation is more than the restoration of a broken relationship. By the Spirit we enter Christ's own communion with the Father (Cp Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6). Through the victory of the Cross all differences of culture, class, sex and privilege are being transcended and need no longer be divisive (Galatians 3:27-29); Colossians 3:11). Moreover, because Christ is the one in and through whom all things are created and reconciled, the proper relationships within the whole created order are re-affirmed and renewed (Colossians 2:15-20).

8. From New Testament times to the present era the people of the New Covenant have embodied this gift of communion. This is the mystery of the Church, 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God' (1 Peter 2: 9,10). However this life of communion is constantly threatened by human sin. The failure of Christians to respond to the evangelical demands of love and justice, righteousness and holiness, obscures the Church's witness. Divisions within and

between Christian communities have impaired the experience of communion. It will be perfectly realized only in the fullness of the kingdom of God when all things will be subjected to Christ, and in him to his Father, so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

9. Nevertheless the Scriptures speak of a real experience of the Kingdom here and now (Cp Mark 1:15, Luke 11:20).

Its culmination is described as a feast, 'the wedding supper of the Lamb', a potent image of communion profoundly rooted in human experience (Is. 25:6, Luke 22:30, Rev. 19:9). This feast is spoken of by Jesus in the parables and foreshadowed in the feeding of the multitudes. In the life of the Church throughout the ages the celebration of the Eucharist has prefigured and provided a true foretaste of the messianic banquet. In the world to come, such signs will cease because the sacramental order will no longer be needed for God will be immediately present to his servants; they will see him face to face (Revelation 22:4). This will be the perfection of communion.

10. Thus the gift of communion of human beings with God, with one another, and with the whole creation has an eschatological character. From the beginning it is grounded and orientated towards Christ in his relation with the Father. Already given in Christ, through the Spirit, it has yet to be realized in all its fullness.

III COMMUNION - SACRAMENTALITY AND THE CHURCH

11. Sacramentality

God's eternal purpose is to bring the whole of creation into communion with himself. For this reason the Eternal Word became incarnate. During his life and ministry Christ was in himself the manifestation of the restored humanity that God intends. At the same time, by what he taught and by what he accomplished through the cross and resurrection, he became the instrument for the realization of God's purpose for the whole of humanity. The risen Christ as the new Adam is the beginning and guarantor of this transformation.

By God's gift to the Church of the same Spirit who was at work in the earthly ministry of Jesus, the Church is called to share in attaining the goal of Christ's mission. Therefore the Church is both a sign of the new creation and an instrument for the achievement of that purpose. Through its communion with God and consequently the unity of all those who share in the grace of God, the Church as sign is a tangible manifestation of the mysterious presence of the Kingdom. At the same time, by the preaching of the word, through the celebration of the sacraments, the pastoral care of the ministry, the witnessing of all the faithful and involvement in missionary service, the Church is the instrument of God for his Kingdom.

12. The Church as Sign

The Church as communion of believers with God and with each other is a sign of the new humanity that God is re-creating and a pledge of the continuing work of the Holy Spirit till God's gracious purpose is fulfilled. It signifies God's free offer of forgiveness that is received through faith and is embodied in the new life in Christ. Those who are baptized devote themselves to "the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship (koinonia), to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42), and also to the diffusion of the gospel (cf. Acts 8:4). This communion is not solely between God and individual believers. It involves all human relationships in serving one another in love (Galatians 5:13). This is shown in the sharing of material resources, which is a communion with the life of Christ (2. Corinthians 8:8-9; cf. Acts 2: 44-45, 4:32; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 6:18). Because in Christ all the barriers of division created by human sin have been overcome, the Christian community has entered into the struggle to end those divisions (cf. Ephesians 2:14-18, 5:1,2). Thus the Church is far more than a voluntary coming together of justified individuals. It is that part of humanity in which the redemptive work of Jesus Christ has both been appropriated and is being revealed to the world. The Church is the sign of what God has done in Christ, is continuing to do for those who serve him, and longs to do for all humanity.

13. The Church as Instrument

When the gospel according to St. Matthew concludes with these words "go and make disciples of all the nations" (28:19), it

indicates that with the ascension of Christ the responsibility for the spread of the gospel lies with the Church in the power of his presence assured by the Spirit. Through the Church's ministry of word and sacraments, through its perception of the world's needs and through the commitment of its members, it continues and extends the ministry of Christ. What Paul says of himself is true for all: "I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24). The sufferings and anguish of the Church are not only an instrument of sanctification for its own members: they are also instruments of God for the evangelisation of the world. The very existence of the Church necessitates it being missionary. In Christ the Servant of the Lord, the Church is the servant of the gospel.

IV COMMUNION - APOSTOLIC TRADITION AND THE CHURCH

14. The Church of God is built up on the proclamation and practice of its faith. The content of this faith is the truth of Christ Jesus as it has been transmitted through the apostles. No-one may change this deposit of faith from which everything that the Church does and decides is to be continually judged. This God-given deposit of faith cannot be dissociated from the gift of the Holy Spirit. Central to the mission of the Spirit is the protection and the keeping alive of the memory of the teaching and work of Christ and of his exaltation of which the apostolic community was the first witness. This constitutes what is called the living Tradition, the living memory of the Church, which is the constant realization of the same faith through time and space in response to varying needs and circumstances. Thus the revealed faith, which is the foundation of Christian living, is also necessarily the foundation of that unity which spans time and space.

15. Since the Holy Spirit is given to the whole people of God, it is within the Church that the living memory of the faith is to be found. This memory is at work in the continuing confession of the apostolic faith by the Christian community. It is also operative in the insights and perceptions of faithful members of the Church with regard to that faith, especially in the face of needs, questions, frustrations and desires of their fellow human beings. These perceptions have to be integrated into the life of the Church so that the faith continues to be relevant.

16. Because this faith once for all entrusted to the saints

(Jude 1:3) is lived out in an ever-changing variety of time and place, culture and situation, tensions inevitably appear. The challenge of such tensions is a spur to growth. They are experienced in different forms - for instance, in the new situation of each generation, which requires a fresh way of confessing the same faith: in radical cultural diversity which calls for different expressions of the one faith: in differences of perception and practice in complex matters even within the same community, which call for a right discernment of obedience to the faith. Such tensions may be healthy. They may also cause a break with our inheritance from the past, estrangement from other parts of the Church, and disruption within the community. Because the faith and the unity that springs from it are both so fundamental to our salvation, inevitably the powers of evil focus their attack upon them. In spite of this vulnerability, the Church lives with Christ's promise of its perseverance (cf Matthew 16:18). The fundamental God-given safeguard for this assurance is the action of the Holy Spirit in preserving this living memory of the people of God.

17. By recognizing the canon of Scripture as the normative record of the revelation of God, the Church formally sealed its acceptance of the apostolic tradition and its authority. Through the Spirit of Christ the content of the apostolic tradition is continually being made a living reality. Word and sacrament together express this. That is why, in the eucharistic celebration of the memorial of salvation, the focus of the Church's life and worship, in which the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ

is re-enacted, the Scriptures have always been read.

18. The obligation to preach the apostolic faith, to explain and apply its message is therefore a primary function of the ordained ministry. The responsibility of this ministry is to keep the people of God always within the bounds of the apostolic faith. Such a function also involves discerning, heeding and sifting, in order to assist the sensus fidelium. A delicate balance has to be maintained between the requirements of the gospel and the freedom of the individual conscience. Since the living memory of the Church is fostered by the Holy Spirit within the whole people of God, the individual Christian conscience is also being moulded by the same Spirit. The task of the minister, therefore, is to be a servant of this work of God, not to stifle individual insights. The richness of the Church as a whole is made up of the communion of all its parts. Similarly, the richness of each part is not to be separated from that of the whole. The role of the ordained ministry involves both making the universal Church aware of the perceptions and situations of the local churches, and helping the local churches to maintain their place within the universal communion.

V COMMUNION - CATHOLICITY AND THE CHURCH

19. The Church has always confessed its catholicity. The Gospel is to be proclaimed to all nations until the end of the world. In every age and in every place the Church is called to be the communion in Jesus Christ of all who come to him, with all the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them. Catholicity also implies that in the Church, by grace, there is to be room for all the diverse riches God offers to his people.
20. Throughout its history the Church has always experienced a diversity which has not fragmented its essential unity in Christ. This is evident in variety of liturgies and forms of spirituality, in variety of disciplines and ways of exercising authority, in variety of theological approaches, and even in variety of theological expressions of the same doctrine. Since these differences can complement one another, they demonstrate that, as the result of communion with God in Christ, diversity need not lead to division. It reflects the munificence of God the creator.
21. The particular gifts that each member receives are primarily for the building up of the whole body of Christ. Every Christian is called to contribute to the life and the service of the community (Acts 2:42; 1 Peter 4:10ff.; 1 Cor. 12:4ff). In a similar way the different Christian communities are called to share with one another their special gifts and resources, spiritual as well as material. Amid all the diversity of traditions and cultures the Church's unity and coherence are maintained by the common confession of the one apostolic faith, a shared

sacramental life, a ministry of oversight and joint ways of reaching decisions and giving authoritative teaching. Thus those who have the ministry of oversight are not only responsible for guarding, co-ordinating and promoting the diverse gifts in each local community; they have a similar responsibility with regard to the authentic distinctive traditions of the churches, while at the same time safeguarding the fundamental unity of the whole people of God.

22. Diversity will, and should, always be found within the Church.

For instance, decisions reached at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) affirmed the legitimacy of such diversity. It is intolerable when diversity becomes a cause of the kind of division that leads to schism. While the quest for unity must not issue in the imposition of uniformity, neither ought pluriformity be allowed to produce fragmentation in the Church. So, in the letters of Paul, without compromising the principle of diversity, great pastoral sensitivity is exercised in the nurture of communion.

23. The communion of the Church is threatened, in the first

place, when the truth of the faith is denied from within the community. The apostolic faith always remains normative. Where there is rejection of any of its essential elements or when its content is gravely distorted, such disharmony becomes divisive. It is crucial indeed to distinguish between what is necessary and sufficient in order to remain faithful to the truth of the gospel and what is not. It is also necessary to distinguish among the variety of theological expressions of doctrine those that are

legitimate. Much of the Church's difficulty lies in discerning where these lines of distinction are to be drawn.

24. Communion is also threatened wherever the faith is denied by the life and practice of the Church. Just as the Church has to distinguish between tolerable and intolerable diversity in the expression of the apostolic faith, so in the area of life and practice the Church has to discover what is disruptive of its own communion.

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly condemned injustice. Justice is fundamental to the pattern of God's creation and also in the new creation in Christ Jesus. According to the teaching of Jesus the failure to respond to the consequences of injustice will be a decisive factor in the final judgement (Matthew 25). The Church has the responsibility to be a sign and instrument of justice in its own life as well as in the world. Only in this way can it be a credible prophetic voice. The Church is called to be an authentic witness to the communion of the Kingdom by the way it responds to new challenges.

The life and practice of the Church are also threatened by other kinds of behaviour that contradict the life of Christ - 'fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party-spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like' (Gal. 5:19f). They undermine the reality of the Church as God's people drawn together by the Holy Spirit to live in communion.

25. The Gospel calls for mutual forbearance, submission, gentleness and love, the placing of interests of others

above the interests of self, making room for each other in the body of Christ (Phil. 2:1ff). The Church cannot fulfil its mission without every effort being made to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Here precisely the Church requires a ministry of unity, concerned to protect and promote communion, in order to discern when the limits of diversity have been over-reached, and to rectify what has become disruptive.

26. In the eucharist the Church manifests both its own communion and its solidarity with the whole of humanity. This is given expression in the liturgy, in the mutual forgiveness of sins, the sign of peace, intercession for all, the sharing in the eucharistic elements, the going out together to participate in the restoration of the world (BEM,E 20-21). But how can Christians properly meet at the same eucharist, around the same table, and partake the same bread when they are not in love and charity with one another? Divisions of faith and order and lack of love subvert the unity of the eucharist. The truth, justice and love of Christ may be obscured to such an extent that it becomes impossible for Christians to celebrate the eucharist together with integrity and honesty. Without a common eucharist the unity entered through baptism is impaired, ecclesial communion is broken and the sign of the unity of the Kingdom disfigured.

VI UNITY AND ECCLESIAL COMMUNION

27. Because it lives by the gift of the one Spirit, the Church, since apostolic times, has always included belief in its unity among its articles of faith (e.g. 1 Cor. 12:12f; Eph. 4:4f). Because there is only one Lord, with whom we are called to have communion, God has given his Church one gospel, one faith, one baptism, one eucharist, and one apostolic ministry through which Christ continues to feed and guide his flock. Christians, therefore, can never acquiesce with complacency in disunity without impairing their communion with God.
28. From the beginning the Church has been affected by geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity. Differences in interpretation of scripture and in praxis can lead to schism. The unity of the Church has therefore always needed to be defended as well as nurtured. This has been one reason for the role of the ordained ministry in the preservation of communion, exercised especially by the bishops who are "responsible for preserving and promoting the integrity of the koinonia to further the Church's response to the Lordship of Christ and its commitment to mission" (Final Report, Authority I,5, p.54). It is the task of such ministers to discern and express the Church's authoritative teaching of the apostolic faith and thus to maintain and deepen communion within and between the local churches.
29. Different means have been used to foster communion, especially when the Church has been faced with grave disagreement. Communication has been maintained by the exchange

of episcopal letters. Even when ecclesial communion has been broken the desire for such communion has never been wholly lost. Local churches recognized the necessity of maintaining communion with the principal Sees, especially with the Bishop of Rome. The practice of holding synods or councils (first local, later ecumenical) comes from the need for mutual consultation and common decision-making. Life in self-sufficient isolation is for the local church the denial of its very being. Whether in times of dispute or not, this is the reason why bishops of other local churches participate in episcopal ordinations. Communion of the local church with neighbouring churches and with the universal Church is thus an essential part of the integrity of the Church's self-understanding.

30. The Church confesses itself to be 'apostolic' because it knows that it is founded upon the faith of the apostles and because it proclaims that faith in apostolic mission. Bishops, whether in their dioceses or gathered in councils, thus have a particular responsibility to maintain and express the communion and unity of the churches. They fulfil this task primarily by keeping the churches faithful to the authentic interpretation of the apostolic teaching. In the early Church this apostolic continuity was not only expressed by the careful transmission of the Holy Scripture but also by keeping lists of episcopal succession. Such lists expressed the apostolic succession in faith of particular local churches. For instance, already in the late second century Irenaeus makes clear that amongst such lists that of the Bishop of Rome has special significance.

Fundamental to the Church's self-understanding is this sense of communion through time. This is also expressed through faith in the "Communion of Saints", whereby the Church declares its conviction that the eucharistic community on earth is itself a participation in a larger communion which includes the martyrs and confessors and all who have fallen asleep in Christ throughout the ages.

31. Elements of Ecclesial Communion

It is impossible to speak only of an invisible spiritual unit as the fulfilment of Christ's will for his Church. Shared discipleship needs to be manifested in a discernible manner. The profound communion which is the fruit of the Spirit must be embodied in a visible community. The purpose of the ecclesial community is to promote this spiritual communion with the Father and to proclaim the apostolic witness that in the Son God has reconciled the world to himself and has entrusted to the Church the ministry of reconciliation.

32. To the life of grace belong certain constitutive elements, not all of which are mutually recognized between separated churches. These elements are derived from and are subordinate to the common confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. Although the possession of such elements cannot guarantee the constant fidelity of Christians, neither can the Church dispense with them. Thus to speak of the requirements of full ecclesial communion is not to judge the quality of Christian life but is to refer to these constitutive elements of the Church. From apostolic times these elements have been acknowledged and described:

'So those who received (Peter's) words were baptizedAnd they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:41-42).

33. Thus the necessary constitutive elements of full ecclesial communion include:

The common acceptance and practice of one baptism with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The mutual acknowledgement by churches of each other as professing and teaching the one apostolic faith, revealed in the Scriptures, set forth in the Creeds, and attested by the ancient common traditions. In particular they confess a common faith in the Holy Trinity. They believe in Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour, truly divine and truly human. They trust in the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God. They also acknowledge one another as sharing the same basic moral values, derived from the belief that humanity is created in the image of God.

In the one eucharistic fellowship they acknowledge each other's ministers as true ministers of Christ, not only in terms of the spiritual fruitfulness of such ministry but also of its authentic apostolic continuity. For the sake of the unity of the one fellowship they also acknowledge common organs of authority, given by the Spirit and able to speak for all and to all in matters of faith and practice. These organs include a common ministry of oversight exercised collegially and primatially, locally, regionally and universally, and so grounded in the life of the community as to be open to its participation in the discovery of God's will.

This full ecclesial communion in faith and life is sacramentally expressed in the common celebration of the eucharist. It is manifested in the world by shared commitment to the mission which Jesus entrusted to his Church. Churches in communion share together in their concern for the poor and the powerless, and for justice and peace on earth. They support and assist one another, bearing each other's burdens, both material and spiritual (Cp. Acts 2:44).

34. These inter-related elements belong to full visible communion

They need to be present in order for one church to be able to recognize another as a sister church. This does not mean that a community in which these elements are present actually lives fully by them. Strictly speaking, communion within and between local churches will only reach its perfection in the fullness of the kingdom of heaven. It has to deepen and grow until the last day. Within the pilgrim Church on earth, even when it enjoys full ecclesial communion, Christians will be obliged to seek ever deeper communion with God and with one another, as well as the healing of breaches of communion.

35. As churches grow towards ecclesial communion it is essential to recognize the large degree of fundamental accord that already exists between them. A profound measure of communion is already experienced by separated Christians as the fruit of the spiritual communion shared with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. The walls of ecclesial separation do not reach as high as heaven. The present challenge to Anglicans and Roman Catholics, indeed to all Christians, is to heal the divisions in faith and life that make it impossible to celebrate the eucharist together.

VII COMMUNION BETWEEN ANGLICANS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS

36. The communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, although imperfect, has never been completely destroyed. This fact must be given its full significance as we come to address those matters that continue to be at issue as we move towards full ecclesial communion.

37. We have already described certain necessary constituent elements of full ecclesial communion (no.33). Between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, many of these elements have always been shared, though not always recognised. The Second Vatican Council specifically spoke of 'Catholic traditions and structures' (traditiones et structurae catholicae) as in part continuing within communions separated from the Roman See at the time of the Reformation, among which 'the Anglican Communion holds a special place' (De Oecumenismo, 13).

38. In spite of past estrangements this long-standing common inheritance, now better understood, enables Anglicans and Roman Catholics gladly to recognize in each other's churches a true familiarity. It provided a firm foundation for the courageous initiative of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966 in committing the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion to the quest for that 'unity in truth for which Christ prayed' and the 'restoration of full communion of faith and sacramental life.' (Common Declaration, Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey, 1966).

Roman

39. The common roots from which Anglicans and Catholics have continued to draw life were acknowledged jointly in the Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Donald Coggan in 1977. In it they noted some of the elements of full ecclesial communion already shared:

'A common faith in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit; our common baptism into Christ; our sharing of the Holy Scriptures, of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, the Chalcedonian definition, and the teaching of the Fathers; our common Christian inheritance for many centuries with its living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality and mission.'

40. Thus we already share a common membership in the community centred upon the once-for-all work of Christ and his continuing presence through the Holy Spirit. We have continued to build on this basis over the years and our communion has grown steadily at many levels. Moreover, with the recognition of what we already share, is a corresponding realization of the richness of diversity which exists in both our Communion.

41. The Agreed Statements of ARCIC-I and ARCIC-II have contributed to a significant advance in our mutual understanding and relationships. While some of the recommendations of the Malta Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission (1968) still await implementation, in many places a number of them have been put into practice. It is a growing custom for Roman Catholics and Anglicans to worship together on more than an

occasional basis. Frequently, church buildings and furnishings are now shared. Our patterns of liturgy have notably converged. The same eucharistic lectionary is used in some countries. Our two traditions no longer disagree on the normal use of the vernacular language in public worship, nor do we any longer disagree that communion in both kinds is the appropriate mode of administration of Holy Communion. In some areas laity share in Christian education and in service to local communities; there is closer co-operation in ministerial formation and between parochial clergy; and meetings of Roman Catholic and Anglican episcopates have become customary, engendering mutual understanding and confidence. These moves lead to an awareness of the need for effective shared mission increasingly expressed in joint practical action and statements on social and moral issues.

This developing shared life leads many Christians in both our churches to acknowledge a desire for fuller sacramental sharing and for finding ways of taking counsel and making decisions together. While there is no mutual eucharistic hospitality, restricted provisions in certain circumstances are a sign of a degree of communion already shared between our two churches. This is also witnessed in the growing practice of receiving blessings in regular eucharistic celebrations; in the recognition that Anglicans, separated from the ministrations of their own Church, may with episcopal permission receive at a Roman Catholic eucharist. The degree of existing communion is experienced particularly deeply, albeit painfully, in marriages between Roman Catholics and Anglicans sharing as they

do not only a common baptism in Christ but also in the sacramental bond of marriage.

42. It is, paradoxically, precisely because there is growth in communion that some of the remaining differences between us are more acutely felt and expressed. It is because we share a real but imperfect communion that we have a mutual responsibility to comment upon matters which might in the past have been regarded as solely of internal concern as well as a responsibility to face them together.

43. The unresolved matters we must face together centre upon ministry and ordination:

- the first is the relation between the ordained ministry - especially the primatial ministry - and the whole people of God in the exercise of authority.

- secondly there is the negation of the validity of Anglican orders in Apostolicae Curae.

- thirdly there is the new problem created by the decision of some Anglican provinces to ordain women to the priesthood and episcopate.

A further area is that of our respective responses to certain major ethical issues which affect our living in communion and our common life and witness. These concern not only the whole people of God in their daily conduct, but also the ministry in its special pastoral and teaching responsibility.

VIII MAKING COMMUNION VISIBLE: AUTHORITY AND PRIMACY

44. The Final Report of ARCIC-I made a number of fundamental affirmations about authority in the Church. All authority, even that of Christ himself, is for the sake of communion with God in the Spirit and the communion of men and women with each other (Introduction 5). A proper understanding of all forms of authority in the life of God's people must be grounded in this communion which constitutes the very life of the Church and of which the Church is the visible expression (Cf. Introduction, Authority I.1). The primary authority in the Church is that of the Lordship of Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit (Authority I, 1 and 3). This Lordship of Christ is exercised in the Church by the authority of his Word living in the whole Church, illuminated and applied through the action of the Holy Spirit. The recognition of what the Lordship of Christ requires is therefore shared by all members of the believing community (Authority I, 6). The authority belonging to episcopo - a gift of the Spirit for the maintenance of apostolic faith and right order in the Church's life and visible communion - belongs primarily to the bishop. In ordination the bishop is commissioned to discern the insights which emerge within the believing community and give them authoritative expression (Authority I, 5, 6). The bishop can act with that authority necessary to maintain faith and charity in the daily life of the community (Authority 2, 5, Elucidation 5). The oversight of the bishop is, however, exercised in a collegial manner among the whole episcopate (Authority I, 8 and 10). It belongs to the bishop of principal

sees to foster this collegial action and from time to time to speak and act in the name of their fellow bishops and the whole Church (Authority I, 11, 12). While complete agreement could not be found in ARCIC-I concerning the range and scope of a universal primacy exercised by the bishop of Rome, there was consensus that the bishop of the Church of Rome is called to exercise an oversight in the service of the visible communion of all the churches (Authority 2, 23).

45. Universal primacy is correctly understood in terms of a theology of the Church as communion, espoused by ARCIC-I and now expounded more fully in this Statement of ARCIC-II. In such an understanding episcopacy is the visible sign of the apostolicity of the Church as communion through the ages and the instrument of the catholicity of the Church as communion in all its diversity throughout the world. Thus the universal primacy of the bishop of Rome is a particular manifestation of the visibility of the Church as communion.

Because it is of the nature of communion to be visible, we are all able to agree that God's will for the maintenance of visible unity at the universal level includes the oversight of a universal primate found in the office of the bishop of the Church of Rome (Cf. Authority I, Elucidation 8).

Responses to ARCIC-I

46. Since the publication of the Final Report of ARCIC-I in 1982 there has been a process of response involving the synods of the churches of the Anglican Communion and Roman Catholic episcopal conferences. This process has so far resulted in

Resolution 8 of the Lambeth Conference of 1988 and in a series of published responses from Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences. The requirement to ^{respond to} ecumenical texts such as the Final Report of ARCIC-I has posed new questions to the structures and processes of decision making of both the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

47. The Roman Catholic responses particularly highlight the rich and dynamic understanding of authority in the Christian Church, especially the positive fruits of a theology of communion and the recognition of the place of the ordained ministry as a service for the visible unity of the Church intrinsic to its structure. The responses also recognize that ARCIC affirms the place of a universal primate in a future united Church and that it is the Bishop of Rome who most appropriately fulfils that role. That role is and must always be to preserve the unity of the communion. ARCIC is also seen to agree that the universal primate must exercise oversight so that all the churches of the universal communion live the authentic apostolic faith. The Final Report is thus seen to be compatible with catholic faith about the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, although it never claims complete agreement and does not articulate the whole of catholic faith about the primacy.

48. A number of issues are cited in the Roman Catholic responses as requiring further study. One such is the character of the universal primacy as a 'gift of divine providence' (Authority II, 13). We believe that a further working out of the principles of a theology of communion will provide Anglicans and Roman Catholics with a

proper perspective in which to see a universal primacy as more than merely developing in history under a permissive providence. Because God wills the visible unity of the universal communion of local churches, so the means of the visible expression of this unity may also properly be seen as being willed by God.

49. Agreement upon the infallibility of the universal primate and General Councils is acknowledged by the Roman Catholic responses to be real though to be more restricted in extent. The heart of the difference is seen to be the question of how and by whom a statement by primate or council is judged to be a binding interpretation of biblical faith and orthodox tradition. Moreover, although ARCIC is recognized as affirming that Anglicans and Roman Catholics can agree in much that the two Marian Dogmas are designed to affirm, they remain a particular instance of this problem.

of

50. The Lambeth Conference (1988, while welcoming the understanding of the Church as communion found in the Final Report, was also reassured that ARCIC-II would continue to discuss questions of authority. The Conference declared the work of ARCIC-I on authority was a firm basis for the direction and continuing dialogue on authority. It asked for a continued exploration of the basis in Scripture and Tradition of the concept of a universal primacy - in conjunction with episcopal collegiality - as an instrument of unity. The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed this in his address to the Lambeth Conference when he asked: 'Could not all Christians come to reconsider the kind of primacy exercised within the Early Church, a "presiding in love" for the sake of the unity of the Churches'. The Lambeth Conference went on to ask

for an exploration of the practice of such a primacy, drawing upon the experience of other churches in exercising primacy, collegiality and conciliarity. Particular stress was also laid upon the need for further exploration of the role of the laity in decision making within the Church.

51. It is at once evident that, though from different perspectives, both the Lambeth Conference and the Roman Catholic responses ultimately focus upon the basic issue of the Church as the bearer of the apostolic tradition of faith and its competence to teach that faith decisively. Thus both responses speak in similar terms, of 'the living tradition', and 'the Church's developing Tradition'. It is here that questions of the Church's reception of authoritative teaching, whether of the universal primate or his fellow bishops, and the place of the laity within the processes of decision making within the Church find their proper theological place. And we believe that an understanding of the Church as communion will make an important contribution to their resolution.

Discerning the Mind of the Church

52. In now expounding a more profound understanding of the Church as communion we are able to meet concerns which have often seemed opposed and even contradictory. All agree that there ought to be a proper balance between the participation of all believers in discerning the mind of the Church and the role of those who by ordination are given oversight within the Church - especially those exercising episcopal and primatial authority. The difficulty is to reach agreement as to where the proper balance is found, some emphasizing the role of the laity to the neglect of the oversight entrusted to the ordained ministry, others emphasizing hierarchical authority at the expense of the gifts whereby the whole people of God share in the Church's mission.

53. An explanation of the Church in the language of communion was already anticipated in the Second Vatican Council, pointing the way towards the perspective which has proved so fruitful in our continuing dialogue. This was reaffirmed and related specifically to the ecumenical responsibility of the Roman Catholic Church at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985 (II C.1 and II C.7.). In this perspective, the role of those in authority will not be properly understood - or exercised - unless it is set within the whole spiritual reality of the reciprocity of gifts constituting the communion of the Church. The bishop's ^{ministry} _↳ - whether it is exercised individually, collegially or primatially - makes him a special instrument of Christ in dispensing the means of salvation as steward of the Household of God. ^{This} _↳ ministry is nevertheless part of a communion of gifts belonging to all those whom the Spirit through baptism

has made full members of the Church and sharers in its saving mission (LG 8).

54. The responsiveness to the Word of God among all Christ's people is a Spirit given intuition or instinct (sensus fidei) which makes it possible for the Christian Church to fulfil its prophetic mission in each new age. It belongs to the whole of Christ's body. And for that very reason it must be received^{by each member} as a gift which is only fully authentic when it is shared with other members of the body and is open to other forms of the Spirit's action within the^{one} body of Christ. The interpretation of this response of faith within the whole ecclesial community calls for spiritual discernment, itself the work of the Spirit. This discernment, far from being the acceptance of the opinion of a majority seeks to identify that response of faith which is the fruit of a Christian life lived in evangelical authenticity. It is especially through the gift of the oversight of the ordained ministry that the Christian community's response of faith is discerned and articulated. The ordained ministry, exercised at the heart of the ecclesial communion, has as its special responsibility the Church's living memory of the faith (Cp paras. 15 and 16).¹

¹ The Second Vatican Council adopted the same perspective. The Word of God, the Council declared, is entrusted, not to the hierarchy alone but to 'the Church': 'by adhering to it the entire holy people, united to their pastors, remaining always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the communion, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Cf. Acts. 2.42). So, in maintaining, practising and professing the faith that has been handed on there is realized a remarkable collaboration (conspiratio) between the bishops and faithful' (Dei Verbum 10).

55. On the basis of such an understanding the unique place of the Scriptures within the life of the Church and their relationship to the Church's living tradition becomes clear. The normative words of the Scriptures do not yield their full meaning until they have been set within the context of the whole believing communion's intuitive responsiveness to that Word of God to which the Scriptures give expression. This responsiveness remains true to the living memory of the faith given once for all in the apostolic witness, and within it the gift of oversight plays its special role.

56. Light is also shed upon the role of the laity within the Church's procedures of discernment and decision through reflection on the theology of communion. This reflection provides insights and challenges both for the relationship between bishops, clergy and laity in the Anglican synodical process and for the post conciliar structures within the Roman Catholic Church, which make it possible for the laity to become involved in the processes of discernment and decision.

Reception

57. The question of how the Church receives authoritative teaching has long been a matter of discussion within both our churches. The key issue of the debates of the First Vatican Council was whether a definitive Primatial statement also required the consent of the wider Church through the college of bishops. A similar theological issue arises in the context of General Councils when Article 21 declares that Councils may err, unless it is declared that their content be taken out of Holy Scripture. Issues relating to the interpretation of Scripture and to the role of the laity in decision making within the Church are in part symptoms

of this basic theological issue of 'reception' which has already been profitably reflected upon in the Final Report (A.I. E.3).

Without an ecclesiology of communion it is impossible to resolve this debate. If its full implications are understood, however, the problem is seen in a new light. The point at issue is how all members of the Church can make their contribution to its rule of faith. The contribution of those not exercising oversight belongs primarily, not to the moment following the promulgation of authoritative teaching but to the time prior to this. Indeed, in the continuing process of discernment and response that must lead to authoritative teaching, the Church's authorities - episcopal, conciliar, and primatial - are called to receive the response of faith which lives in the whole communion of the Church. Within such a view it is the authorities of the Church who in the first instance receive the insights of the believing community. If those to whom the gift of oversight is given fulfil this responsibility of communion in hearing and discerning effectively, their authoritative teaching will be the authentic expression of the Church's response of faith and will be acknowledged as such by the faithful.

IX. MAKING COMMUNION VISIBLE: RECONCILIATION OF MINISTRIES

58. Central to the process of reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion is the question of reconciliation of ministries. Such reconciliation is crucial since this alone would make possible a shared sacramental life which is an integral feature of the visibility of koinonia.

59. It is important that the Final Report of ARCIC-I was able to identify the elements of ordination which the two churches in common regard as necessary for it to be recognized as valid. Ordination must be conferred by a bishop within the apostolic succession by the laying on of hands with prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, within the context of the Eucharist; by an unrepeatable act, it confers a ministry of oversight of word and sacrament in service of the local community (ARCIC-I, Min., esp. 14-16). In addition, it is clear from the Final Report that agreement on the essentials of faith with regard to the sacramental presence of Christ and the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist is indispensable.

60. It is against this background that we must set the actual problem of reconciliation of ministries that confronts the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion in their relations with one another. The situation is that whereas the Anglican Communion has never doubted the ordinations of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIII in the encyclical Apostolicae Curae of 1896 judged Anglican ordinations to be 'absolutely null and utterly void'. the issue that has to be addressed therefore is that of Roman Catholic recognition of Anglican orders.

61. The context in which we address this issue today is very different from that which obtained at the time of Apostolicae Curae. The Final Report of ARCIC-I claimed to have made a significant step in the direction of overcoming the problems relating to Catholic recognition of Anglican ordinations through its Agreed Statements on Eucharist and on Ministry and Ordination. It is important to note the changed situation in which these statements are formulated vis-a-vis earlier times. Especially significant in terms of preparing the context of discussion was the fact that at Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged that 'elements of sanctification and truth' and 'significant elements' of the Church exist in other churches and that the Holy Spirit has used these churches as 'means of salvation' (LG 8 UR 3). These affirmations cannot but have their implications for the Roman Catholic understanding of the ordained ministry in those churches. They enable Catholics, on their own ecclesiological grounds, to recognize the fruitfulness of the ministry in other churches. In particular it has become ever clearer to Catholics, as to all Christians engaged in the contemporary ecumenical movement, that reconciliation of ministries and reconciliation of churches are not two separate issues. They are inextricably related aspects of a single process, and developments in relation to one aspect have repercussions for the other.

62. The above affirmations of Vatican II have particular force when applied to the Anglican Communion which was recognized by that Council as having a special place among those communities of the Reformation which have in some degree preserved Catholic traditions and institutions. Of great importance was the expressed

intention of the Church of England at the time of the Reformation to continue the three historic orders of bishop, priest and deacon, which have been found in the Church since apostolic times.

63. In the Final Report of ARCIC-I, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion claimed to have reached agreement in faith on eucharist and ministry and argued that their agreement has significance for the question of recognition of ministries since of itself it 'places the question in a new context'. This point was taken up and explained by Cardinal Willebrands in a letter to the Co-Chairmen of ARCIC-II. The Cardinal affirmed that the ratification of these agreements by the authorities of the two churches would indeed change the context of the debate about Anglican orders. This is because at the heart of Leo XIII's negative verdict on Anglican Orders lay the judgment that at the time of the Reformation Anglican faith on these matters was in conflict with Catholic faith and this conflict was reflected in the Anglican ordinal of 1552. Thus, ordinations carried out using this ordinal must be defective both in form and in intention. Cardinal Willebrands' point was that if it can be established that Catholics and Anglicans have agreement in faith on eucharist and ministry today, then the situation addressed by Leo XIII would have changed. A central element in the whole problem would be removed.

64. The Lambeth Conference recognised 'the Agreed Statements of ARCIC-I on Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination and their Elucidations as consonant in substance with the faith of

Anglicans.' Supposing the Roman Catholic reponse to be similarly positive, we would then be in a position to address the outstanding issues of liturgical expression of faith and of apostolic succession. This would be necessary if all the criteria mentioned in 2 were to be met.

65. In regard to the first matter, it would have to be established that the agreement of faith was reflected in the living liturgical tradition of both Communions. This is important for Anglicans as well as Roman Catholics since both can make their own the statement of the Catholic-Orthodox Commission in Bari:

'The liturgical tradition is an authentic interpreter of revelation and hence the criterion for the expression of the true faith.'

66. It is within the context of:

1. - our commitment to one another as well as our developing shared life,
2. - the degree of faith we already share concerning the mystery of the Church and the need for it to be manifested in the inter-related elements of visible communion,
3. - agreement on eucharist, ministry and ordination as stated in the Final Report, and expressed in the Ordinals of our churches,

that we would seek to take steps towards realising a shared ministry. The final reconciliation of our ministries will only take place on the basis of fuller expressed agreement in faith and within the context of the reconciliation of our churches. The above

three-fold context could however prepare the ground for a liturgical celebration which would include:

- repentance of past division
- recognition of the fruitfulness of the ministry of the other church
- openness to the gifts of the other church
- commitment to seek together for full reconciliation of ministries and churches.

This celebration would be the proper context for supplying such things as were lacking to the ministry of either church in view of four centuries of broken communion. Such a celebration would be intended to effect the recognition by the Catholic Church of Anglican ordinations and to put the ministries of both churches at the service of a growing communion. It would provide a significant moment within the wider and deeper process of reconciliation in Christ. This special moment would bring to fruition the agreements already expressed and complete that aspect of the agenda on reconciliation of ministries put forward in the letter of Cardinal Willebrands to the Co-Chairmen of ARCIC-II.

X MAKING COMMUNION VISIBLE:- THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

67. The Canterbury Statement on Ministry and Ordination did not deal with the question of the ordination of women. This was not an issue in 1973. Rapid developments in some provinces in the Anglican Communion led to the Commission stating in its Elucidations that 'the principles upon which its doctrinal agreement rests are not affected by such ordinations; for it was concerned with the origin of the ordained ministry and not with the question of who can or cannot be ordained'.

68. Pope Paul VI in a letter to Archbishop Donald Coggan spoke of the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion as 'a new and grave obstacle to the reconciliation of our communions'. It was in the context of affirming 'the degree of communion which has already been brought about between us by the grace of God' that Pope John Paul II, recalled these earlier words of Paul VI concerning the ordination of women and reconciliation and unity. The recognition that Anglicans and Roman Catholics already share real but imperfect communion involves a mutual responsibility to reflect and comment upon issues which affect the deepening of that communion and the move towards full ecclesial communion.

69. Our communion is imperfect precisely because we lack some of the essential elements for full ecclesial communion, among them being common structures of decision making. As a consequence we are, as yet, unable to form a common mind on matters concerning the faith and order of the universal Church. And yet, in the absence of such structures urgent questions do have to be faced, new problems addressed and the mission of the Church exercised even in our separation. In facing new issues attention

must always be given to the effect of any decision or developments upon the communion the churches already share.

The Anglican Situation

70. The Anglican Communion has no central juridical organs by which it may decide, for the whole communion on such a matter as the ordination of women. Those on either side of the debate have expressed the need for stronger organs of communion. However, at the present time decisions can be made only by a process of discernment which gives weight both to the autonomy of Provinces and to their interdependence, an openness to ecumenical counsel, and by surrendering decisions and actions to an 'open process of reception' in which the fruits of a particular decision are tested.

71. The resolution of the 1988 Lambeth Conference on women and the episcopate sought to be faithful to this way of discerning the mind of the Church. At the same time it stated that, as yet, there was not within the Anglican Communion agreement on the principles involved in the ordination of women.

72. Anglican provinces which have ordained women to the presbyterate (and episcopate) believe this to be an authentic development of that tradition and actually required by the mission of the Church for a proper understanding of the relation between salvation and creation. For them it is in fact an issue of communion: the communion of women and men in the Church, called to be a sign of the communion of the Kingdom in a divided world.

73. The Lambeth Conference decided that 'each Province should respect the decision and attitudes of other Provinces regarding the ordination and consecration of women to the episcopate'. It resolved to maintain 'the highest possible degree of communion' in spite of different practices. The period of testing and open reception already involves some restrictions upon communion for there is no longer full interchangeability of ministers. But communion does not depend solely on the interchange of ministers and when one bond of communion is weakened there remains the possibility of strengthening other bonds. Faced with the possibility of accepting restraint for the sake of internal and ecumenical unity, it was, in the judgement of the Lambeth Conference, a more acceptable solution to support the right of Provinces to ordain women than perhaps to force a schism within the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is urgently examining the relations between Provinces which differ on the matter of women and the episcopate. The understanding of the effects which the ordination of women has upon the internal communion of the Anglican Communion has implications for understanding the communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

The Roman Catholic Position

74. The official Roman Catholic position on the ordination of women remains as stated in Inter Insigniores that the Church does not consider itself authorised to change an unbroken tradition of the Church, universal in the East and in the West. Pope John Paul II re-iterated this in his most recent letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in December, 1988:

'The Catholic Church, like the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Churches, is firmly opposed to this

development, viewing it as a break with Tradition of a kind we have no competence to authorise. It would seem that the discussion of women's ordination in the Anglican Communion has not taken sufficiently into account the ecumenical and ecclesiological dimensions of the question. Since the Anglican Communion is in dialogue with the Catholic Church - as it is with the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Churches - it is urgent that this aspect be given much greater attention in order to prevent a serious erosion of the degree of communion between us.'

Such a clear statement of the position is witness to the value the Pope places upon the communion which already exists. It also exemplifies that ministry in the service of the unity of all Christian people which is inherent in the particular office of the Bishop of Rome.

Interpretation

75. The statements and decision of either of our Communions on the ordination of women, and their practical consequences, should not be allowed to destroy the degree of communion which we have learnt to acknowledge. However, the differing position will preclude the full reconciliation and interchangeability of ministers if other obstacles can be overcome through the ratification of agreement in faith on eucharist, ministry and ordination, together with the resolution of the question of apostolic succession. Nevertheless, these positions do not preclude a growing together of our two churches.

76. For Anglicans, the fact of the ordination of women is to be seen in the context of a continuing open process of reception by both the Anglican Communion and by the universal Church. For Roman Catholics, the fact of the ordination of women in some parts of the Anglican Communion has already stimulated continued reflection on this issue; results of such reflection are evident in Inter Insigniores and in the letters of the Pope and Cardinal Willebrands to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The need, expressed by the Pope, for continuing discussion, especially of the ecumenical and ecclesiological issues, was also addressed by Metropolitan John of Pergamos, Co-Chairman of the Anglican-Orthodox International Commission. In his address to the Lambeth Conference he called for an exhaustive theological debate. Issues for such a debate are becoming clearer.¹

77. Continuing theological dialogue as well as the exchange of letters between those who have the special task of guarding the unity and communion of the Church are signs of our intention to protect the degree of communion that already exists and to nurture, as far as is possible, further growth in communion.

¹ The role of women and the theological basis of that role is a vital issue requiring urgent study both within and between our two communions. So also is existing practice and the relation of that practice to the fact of ordination or non-ordination. Anglicans and Roman Catholics are both committed to this study. Any Anglican-Roman Catholic discussion of the ordination of women must consider how the relationship of gender to the ordained ministry touches the belief and the tradition of the Church. Also to be weighed are the differing implications for communion of our two Churches posed by the ordination (or non-ordination) of women to the diaconate, presbyterate and especially episcopate. Further, discussion must also take account of the wider context of ecumenical experience and dialogue - Orthodox and Protestant - in relation to ordained ministry understood as sign and focus of communion.