

## The Windsor Continuation Group

### Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury

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#### A. Context: the Tradition we have received

1. Anglicanism is a tradition of Christian faith which affirms the revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It acknowledges the unique revelation of God in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It affirms the primary authority of the Holy Scriptures; and - guided by the Holy Spirit - it acknowledges the interplay of scripture, tradition and reason in the continuing work of interpretation, understanding and discernment.

2. The Anglican Communion is a family of autonomous Churches. It finds its identity in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Churches of the Communion, which are self-governing, share something of a common history, and have traditionally set their faces against centralised government in favour of regional autonomy<sup>1</sup>. The Anglican tradition was fashioned in the turmoil of reformation in Western Europe in the sixteenth century. Its historic formularies acknowledge the circumstances in which it emerged as a distinctive church polity. The non-negotiable elements in any understanding of Anglicanism - the scriptures, the creeds, the gospel sacraments of baptism and eucharist, and the historic episcopate - are to be found in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral<sup>2</sup>; and the Instruments of Communion - the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates Meeting - provide an evolving framework within which discussion and discernment might take place. It remains to be seen if the circumstances in which the Communion finds itself today - externally and internally - might require over the years a shift of emphasis *from* “autonomy with communion” *to* “communion with autonomy and accountability”.

3. It is a primary concern of the Anglican Communion that its Churches and its congregations shall be “formed by scripture, shaped by worship, ordered for communion, and directed by God’s mission”<sup>3</sup>. It follows nonetheless that the Anglican way of being the Church, of doing theology, of exercising pastoral care, of engaging in evangelism, of voicing the prophetic priorities of God’s Kingdom of righteousness recognise the wide variety of circumstances in which Christian people find themselves and the different insights and emphases within the Anglican tradition of faith and prayer and practice. It represents a discreet balance between authority and freedom, between the universal and the local, and between traditions of inter-dependence, autonomy and accountability.

4. The Anglican tradition attempts to be sensitive to the opportunities and the challenges presented in different places and at different times by the context and the culture in which we live. These challenges are addressed - and can only be addressed

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<sup>1</sup> Cf the statements of the 1930 Lambeth Conference

<sup>2</sup> Originally fashioned as a basis for the reunion of Churches, the Quadrilateral has tended to become a statement of the irreducible minimum elements of the Anglican tradition.

<sup>3</sup> See Lambeth Indaba §100-103 on the elements of “the Anglican Way”, itself derived from the work of the Primates’ Theological Education in the Anglican Communion Working Group (TEAC).

- in the light of our understanding of Scripture, the perceived guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of shared experience and informed conscience.

5. It is an escapable consequence of living in the world that issues will arise from time to time where the conflict between continuity and change - *continuity* in doctrine and in pastoral practice and *change* in the discernment of new insights - raises urgent (and potentially divisive and destructive) questions concerning the received tradition, the *consensus fidelium*, and the limits of the diversity that can be sustained within the life of the Communion.

6. The Anglican Communion, which has evolved in recent generations, represents a model of reformed Catholicism which may yet make a distinctive and necessary contribution to the life of the wider church. It is unquestionably the case that the global context in which all institutions, all faith communities, are required to work demands appropriate structures, disciplines and traditions. It is necessary to recognise, however, that traditions of tolerance which are merely permissive, can so easily be abused; and yet a rediscovery of traditions of courtesy, patience and generosity, which are grounded in the scriptures and in the traditions of the church, will be required if the Communion in its entirety is to allow the Spirit of truth to lead us into a greater understanding of God's purposes for his church and for his world.

7. We believe that this tradition is now under threat to the grave disservice of our Communion and of the wider *oikumene*.

## B. The Seriousness of the present Situation

8. The reality of our current life is complex; the divisions and differences are not always explicit in the presenting issues: doctrine, theology, ecclesiology, ethics, anthropology, culture, history, post-colonialism, post-modernity, post-denominationalism, political and global realities are all dimensions. There are competing value systems at work and a lack of clarity about a shared understanding of the nature and obligations of Communion. There is also a lack of mutual understanding about what is meant by "authority".

9. Much has been undertaken in the Communion through and in response to the Windsor Process, but as a Communion, we appear to remain at an impasse. There is inconsistency between what has been agreed, and what has, in the end, actually been done. This appears to create a gap between promise and follow through. The resolutions at General Convention (June 2006), the mutual Covenant of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church (TEC) at Camp Allen (March 2005), and the Bishop's Statement at New Orleans (September 2007) all point in the direction of accepting the recommendations of the Windsor Report (TWR), and yet some dioceses still proceed with the development of Rites of Blessing for same sex unions. There were serious undertakings and affirmations by the primates at their meetings in Dromantine (January 2005) and Dar es Salaam (February 2007) concerning interventions in other provinces, the spirit of which have not been honoured. There have been generous resolutions and responses by the House of Bishops and General Synod in Canada (2004, 2006, 2007) to the requests of the wider Communion, but still some dioceses and bishops feel that they can move in a contrary direction.

10. The gap is manifested in inconsistency between the stated intent and the reality – including the use and abuse of language, e.g. moratorium, “initiating interventions”. The implications of requests and responses are either not fully thought through or they are disregarded. The consequences of actions have not always been adequately addressed, e.g. there appear to have been no consequences following the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire as envisaged by the Primates’ Statement of October 2003, or as a result of primatial interventions.

### *Breakdown of Trust*

11. There are real fears of a wider agenda – over credal issues (the authority of scripture, the application of doctrine in life and ethics and even Christology and soteriology) and polity (comprehensiveness, autonomy and synodical government); other issues, such as lay presidency and theological statements that go far beyond the doctrinal definitions of the historic creeds, lie just over the horizon. Indeed, in recent months, the Diocese of Sydney has raised the issue of diaconal presidency at the Eucharist. Positions and arguments are becoming more extreme: not moving towards one another, relationships in the Communion continue to deteriorate; there is little sense of mutual accountability and a fear that vital issues are not being addressed in the most timely and effective manner.

12. Through modern technology, there has been active fear-mongering, deliberate distortion and demonising. Politicisation has overtaken Christian discernment. There is distrust of the Instruments of Communion and uncertainty about their capacity to respond to the situation. Polarisation of attitudes in the Churches of the Communion, not just in North America, but throughout the Communion, has developed, and the complexity of situations and attitudes caricatured.

13. There are growing patterns of congregationalism throughout the communion at parochial, diocesan and provincial level: for example, parishes feel free to choose from whom they will accept episcopal ministry; bishops feel free to make decisions of great controversy without reference to existing collegial structures. Primates make provision for episcopal leadership in territories outside their own Province. The symptoms of this breakdown of trust are common to all parties in the current situation – felt and expressed by conservative and liberal alike.

### *Turmoil in The Episcopal Church*

14. There has been development from individual members leaving congregations, to congregations leaving parishes and dioceses, to dioceses seeking to leave provinces. Parties within The Episcopal Church have sought allies within the wider Communion, who are seen as only too willing to respond. Litigation and interventions have become locked into a vicious spiral – each side seeing the actions of the other as provoking and requiring response. At this time, it would appear that the divisions in the United States are playing out in the wider Communion, and already impacting in Canada.

15. All this amounts to a diminishing sense of Communion and impoverishing our witness to Christ, placing huge strains on the functioning of the Instruments of Communion. Such turmoil affects our relations with our ecumenical partners, many of whom face similar tensions. Some partners are beginning to raise questions about

the identity of their Anglican partner. In the light of the ecumenical movement, there can no longer be tensions in one Communion that do not have wider repercussions across the whole Christian family.

### *The Lambeth Conference and Gafcon*

16. The bishops who attended the Lambeth Conference overwhelmingly experienced an increase in mutual understanding and mutual loyalty, as noted in the Lambeth Indaba Document issued at the conclusion of the Conference. Of the twelve topics included in the agenda, the Reflections Group was able to report that the bishops found strong agreement in nine of the areas - on mission, the concern for human and social justice, the environment, ecumenism and inter-faith relations, on Anglican identity, scripture and addressing situations of injustice.

17. Areas of ongoing concern and with less agreement include Human Sexuality, the Windsor Process, and the proposed Anglican Covenant. Adding to the seriousness and tensions of the present time was the timing of the Global Anglicanism Future Conference (Gafcon) in June. While some bishops who attended Gafcon also attended Lambeth, many others did not. In fact, approximately 190 bishops of the Communion did not attend Lambeth either because of reasons of conscience or synodical or primatial decision in their Provinces, a situation we regret both for their sakes and ours.

18. Anxieties have been expressed about the purpose, timing and outcomes of the Gafcon; there is some perplexity about the establishment of the Gafcon Primates' Council and of the Fellowship of Confessing Christians (FOCA) which, with withdrawal from participation at the Lambeth Conference, has further damaged trust.

19. For some time now therefore the issue of human sexuality has been the spark to the flame exposing tensions concerning the life of the Anglican Communion. The Instruments of Communion have sought to address these tensions through the Windsor Report and the process of reception of its ideas and recommendations. It has been the purpose of this group to assess where the Communion has arrived as a result of the Windsor Process, and to make recommendations about the next steps that could be taken to renew the Communion's life.

### C. The Windsor Process

20. The Windsor Report 2004 responded to the developing situation by setting out a number of initiatives to address the tensions. While they remained recommendations of the Windsor Report, they carried only the authority of the members of the Commission. But many of these recommendations were picked up and adopted by the Primates, either in the Communiqué of the Dromantine Meeting (January 2005), or at the Dar es Salaam Meeting (February 2007). This does not entirely answer the question of their continuing authority in the Communion (see further the section below on *Ecclesial Deficit*) but it does at least give them purchase in the life of the Communion: these recommendations carry the weight of being the unanimous advice of the primates of our Churches - at the very least, the recommendations carry the authority of our chief pastors carrying back these recommendations to their own Church or Province with the voice of authority which they carry in that Province.

## C(i). The Listening Process

21. The 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 remains fundamental as the standard of teaching on matters of sexuality in the life of the Communion; but the Windsor Report also offered an acknowledgement that while there are divergent views on this, the discussion has to go on (TWR §146). Indeed, Lambeth 1.10 recognised this in the very terms of the resolution<sup>4</sup>, echoing earlier resolutions at the 1978 and 1988 Conferences.

22. To enable this conversation to happen, space has to be created in which all sides can listen for the voice and leading of God; can listen to gay and lesbian Christians and learn of their experience; can listen to one another and the insights we bring to discernment on this issue. This was the end to which the *moratoria* recommended in the Windsor Report were shaped. They were conceived as a way of halting development in the situation while a conversation, together with an articulation of the purpose and ends of that conversation, could be undertaken.

23. The Listening Process has so far produced a significant amount of resources - an overview of the reflection on this issue taking place in each of the Provinces, which is set out on the Anglican Communion website<sup>5</sup>, and a book of resources to encourage and inform the discussion<sup>6</sup>. Yet the listening process has not been totally embraced consistently across the Communion.

### **Recommendation:**

24. Only if the dialogue is seen to continue, and if there is an all-round readiness to engage in conversation and discernment on this issue, is there a hope of persuading the advocates of revision in the teaching of the Anglican Churches on this matter to remain committed to the period of “gracious restraint”, in which mutual conversation can take place. On both sides, we need to move from intransigence and the conviction that “our” interpretation is the right one to a shared waiting upon God. There is something profoundly important about the Anglican way here - a readiness to acknowledge that Christian disciples discern God’s truth by learning to wait upon one another, and that it takes the whole Church to know the whole truth.

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<sup>4</sup> Lambeth 1.10.3: We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ. See also: Resolution 64 of the 1988 Conference: (1) Reaffirms the statement of the Lambeth Conference of 1978 on homosexuality, [Resolution 10] recognising the continuing need in the next decade for “deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research.” (2) Urges such study and reflection to take account of biological, genetic and psychological research being undertaken by other agencies, and the socio-cultural factors that lead to the different attitudes in the provinces of our Communion. (3) Calls each province to reassess, in the light of such study and because of our concern for human rights, its care for and attitude towards persons of homosexual orientation.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/reports/index.cfm>

<sup>6</sup> The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality – A resource to enable listening and dialogue (London, SPCK, 2008) Published June 2008

25. We request that the Instruments of Communion commit themselves to a renewal of the Listening Process, and a real seeking of a common mind upon the issues which threaten to divide us.

## C(ii). The Moratoria

26. The moratoria then arose from the necessity of gaining commitment to “gracious restraint” all round in which conversation and discernment could take place. Such a season was also envisaged as a period in which the Covenant process (see below) could come to fruition. The Windsor Report identified three areas in which “gracious restraint” would be necessary:

- Consecration of Bishops living in a same gender union
- Permission for Rites of Blessing for Same Sex unions
- Interventions in Provinces

27. One of the most difficult areas of the life in the Communion at the moment arise from the differing extent to which the requests for such moratoria, recommended in the Windsor Report, and reflected in the requests of the Primates to their Churches in the Dromantine Communiqué (2005), have been adopted and are in force in the life of the Communion.

28. Nor do these moratoria rest on the authority of the Windsor Report or the requests of the Primates alone: it has been the unanimous advice of all four Instruments of Communion<sup>7</sup> that the consecration of a bishop in a same gender union or permission or authorisation of Rites of Blessing for same sex unions are moves beyond what the Communion can, as a whole, approve or accept. They are therefore actions which “tear the fabric of our Communion”<sup>8</sup>.

29. It was the judgement of the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates and Moderators of the Anglican Communion (JSC)<sup>9</sup> that the first moratorium (*On the Consecration of Bishops*) is effectively in place in the communion. Although there continues to be some debate whether the wording of the resolution B033 of the 75th General Convention and its subsequent interpretation by the TEC House of Bishops at New Orleans in 2007 exactly meets the wording of the recommendation in the Windsor Report, such a moratorium does, in fact, exist; an interpretation agreed by both the strongest supporters and opponents of B033.

30. It is the judgement of WCG (Windsor Continuation Group) that the same is significantly, but not universally, true of the second moratorium on the authorisation

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. “... the Lambeth resolution of 1998 declares clearly what is the mind of the overwhelming majority in the Communion, and what the Communion will and will not approve or authorise. I accept that any individual diocese or even province that officially overturns or repudiates this resolution poses a substantial problem for the sacramental unity of the Communion.”, Letter to the Primates, Archbishop Rowan Williams, 23 July 2002, and subsequently; the statements of the Primates in May and October 2003; the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 and Resolution 10 of ACC-13 (2005).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Statement of the Primates’ Meeting at Lambeth, October 2003.

<sup>9</sup> The Report of the Joint Standing Committee to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Response of The Episcopal Church to the Questions of the Primates articulated at their meeting in Dar es Salaam and related Pastoral Concerns, published October 2007.

of public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions. In The Episcopal Church up to a dozen dioceses out of the 110 dioceses of the Church are actively pursuing the exploration of such Rites within the life of the Church (10%). They do this with only the passive consent of General Convention<sup>10</sup>, which has until now refused to take positive steps towards the recognition of such Rites. The remainder of the dioceses of TEC either explicitly or implicitly are living by the Windsor recommendation. While this situation cannot be characterised as a wholehearted embrace of the Windsor recommendation by TEC, neither should it be characterised as a determined movement by the whole Church to carry forward the agenda to see such Rites firmly established in the life of the Church. It remains a pattern of isolated instances.

31. Of course, the situation could change with a Resolution of a future Convention - as indeed General Convention could decide to revoke B033 - but for the present WCG believe that TEC should receive some credit for substantially holding back from the development of such Rites. We note however that the structures of TEC have not shown any inclination to discipline those dioceses in which further steps have been taken.

32. This would seem to indicate that a differentiated approach towards the dioceses of TEC is necessary. Not all are acting contrary to the expressed wishes of the Instruments of Communion; action which penalises the whole Church would therefore appear to be inappropriate.

33. It is in respect to the third moratorium (on interventions) that there has been the least discernable response. As noted in the JSC Report of October 2007, there has apparently been an increase in interventions since the adoption of the Windsor/Dromantine recommendations by the unanimous voice of the primates. The adoption of dioceses into the Province of the Southern Cone, inconsistent with the Constitutions both of TEC and the Southern Cone; the consecration of bishops for ministry in various forms by different Provinces and the vocal support of such initiatives by the Primates associated with the Gafcon have all taken place, apparently in contradiction of the 2005 Dromantine Statement, although in each case, the primates involved would cite a conviction that their actions were provisional, born of necessity, and reactive rather than taking the initiative. From their perspective, some of the intervening primates have indicated that they will hand back those within their care as soon as the underlying causes have been resolved.

34. One of the aggravating factors in these circumstances has been the fact that a fourth moratorium requested by the unanimous voice of the Primates at Dar es Salaam in 2007 - to see the end of litigation<sup>11</sup> - has also been ignored.

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<sup>10</sup> Resolution C051 of the 74th General Convention, sub-section 4: "we recognize that local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions."

<sup>11</sup> "The Primates urge the representatives of The Episcopal Church and of those congregations in property disputes with it to suspend all actions in law arising in this situation. We also urge both parties to give assurances that no steps will be taken to alienate property from The Episcopal Church without its consent or to deny the use of that property to those congregations." - from the Key Principles set out in the Appendix to the Dar es Salaam Statement.

35. It has to be noted as well that the epicentre of the tensions arising out of the moratoria is located within North America, and largely within TEC. It is here that bishops and dioceses has shown themselves ready to set aside the entreaties of the Instruments of Communion with respect to Rites of Blessing. It is here that actions have been taken that exacerbate the sense of hostility and persecution perceived by some conservatives, including the recent action of the TEC House of Bishops to depose Bishop Bob Duncan of Pittsburgh. It is here that advocates of intervention have invited primates to initiate new forms of intervention.

36. In the Anglican Church of Canada the moratorium on the authorization of same sex blessings is being observed in the majority of the twenty-nine dioceses. While the Diocese of New Westminster has permitted the blessing of same sex unions using a rite authorized at the diocesan level since 2002, in six of its parishes, although the bishop has indicated that he would not authorise any further parishes to use the Rite. Three other diocesan bishops, following their attendance at Lambeth Conference 2008, have indicated their decision to proceed with the blessings of civilly married same sex couples in a small number of parishes. In the Diocese of Ottawa one parish only will be permitted to proceed with blessings of married same gender couples. In 2007, at the last General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the House of Bishops presented new guidelines, which did not include the Blessing of Unions, for the pastoral care of gays and lesbians, and the reception by parishes of same gendered married couples. This continues to be upheld by the bishops as a whole in 2008.

37. The moratorium on the consecration of non-celibate gay and lesbian bishops is being observed.

38. Twenty-three parishes under the episcopal leadership of two formerly retired Canadian Anglican bishops have sought and received membership in the Province of the Southern Cone and are now claiming membership in the newly proposed, but not recognized North American Anglican Province.

39. The recent advent of the “Anglican Church of North America” (ACNA) changes the context and the balance of any discussion about interventions. Those caught up in the various patterns of intervention are beginning to look to resource their protest and their identity from within an American ecclesial body. This development could bring to an end formal cases of intervention, but give rise to a new and equally intractable problem - parallel jurisdictions based on theological difference<sup>12</sup>.

40. Faced with the fact that despite several calls for observance of the moratoria requested by Windsor/Dromantine, rearticulated by the primates in Dar es Salaam in 2007, and winning a high degree of support at the Lambeth Conference<sup>13</sup>, the moratoria have not received comprehensive support, WCG has to ask how to achieve genuine progress. Has the time come when it has to be recognised that the moratoria cannot be enforced absolutely in the life of the Communion? Does it therefore follow that the focus will have to be on holding the degree of restraint that can be achieved,

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<sup>12</sup> There are instances of parallel jurisdictions in the life of the Anglican Communion - ministry to armed forces or ethnic minorities being the most obvious examples. What is distinctive in this new development is the theological and ideological difference with the geographical province in which they are situated.

<sup>13</sup> Lambeth Indaba Document, §145

while acknowledging that reversing some of the recent developments may not be possible?

41. The inability of the Communion in recent years to be able to respond appropriately and effectively in a timely manner to a blatant disregard of the moratoria which had been called for gives rise to a degree of sadness, irritation, frustration and even anger which are unhelpful in the life of the Communion. Such feelings and responses are probably responsible for the way in which more extreme reactions and measures have been generated. The disillusion has almost arrived at the point of cynicism about the effectiveness of the Instruments of Communion.

42. If there is to be a situation where not all the moratoria are respected universally, the question arises as to how those bishops and provinces should be handled where there is a positive decision to live by another standard than that commended by the Communion as a whole. The Windsor Report had recommended that:

“pending such expression of regret, those who took part as consecrators of Gene Robinson should be invited to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican Communion. We urge this in order to create the space necessary to enable the healing of the Communion. We advise that in the formation of their consciences, those involved consider the common good of the Anglican Communion, and seek advice through their primate and the Archbishop of Canterbury. We urge all members of the Communion to accord appropriate respect to such conscientious decisions” (TWR §134)

43. Does this provide a way forward? It seems to the WCG that where a bishop elects to live in a way contrary to the morally authoritative discernment of the Communion, his or her actions damage Communion, and put a distance between the life of his or her see and the rest of the Communion. What, however, should be the relational consequences of such a decision?

44. Considering this question, the Covenant Design Group in their Lambeth Commentary offered these observations:

The language of “teeth” and “police” and even “sanction” risks distorting the Covenant’s overall purpose. A better way of approaching this matter is through the language of “consequences” that devolve from assumed “responsibilities”, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled: covenantal responsibilities fulfilled lead to a deeper common life in Christ - an intensification; responsibilities left unfulfilled have as a consequence a thinning out of such common life, perhaps even a dissolving of it. But in either case, it is a matter of organic outcome, rather than juridical impositions, however these results are formally embodied or stated.

Within the scriptures, the divine covenants are always linked to consequences in their fulfilment or breaking (cf. Deut. 27-28). Even the covenant of baptism, though a gift from God, can be broken, and with it comes a radical loss (Heb. 6:4-8). In the service of the Gospel, Peter’s renegeing of the agreement made at Jerusalem with Paul results in a public confrontation and shaming (Gal. 2:11), while the Corinthians’ fulfilment of their pledge will result in an overflowing gift of grace (2 Cor. 8-9). It is simply the case that those who choose to keep the promises they have made in love for one another in Christ take hold of the gifts of that deeper love,

while those who choose to let go of these promises take hold of its lack or diminution, and live with its stunted fruit. Even this result is one that stands open to the hope for transformation and renewal of relationship (1 Cor. 5:4-5).

The language of “sanction” does not adequately describe this reality of covenantal consequence, making it appear as an external law imposed upon us. Still, we should not mitigate the substance of this language: commitments are valued because of their fruit, and the declaration of such an outcome represents not only an honest appraisal of what is at stake in a commitment to another, but also points to the promise of its fulfilment. A covenant without consequences is, by definition, not a covenant at all, but an empty word. It is because our words matter, however, that we can testify to the power of God’s faithfulness before the world (Mt. 5:37; 23:22)<sup>14</sup>.

45. We agree with this model. A deliberate decision to act in a way which damages Communion of necessity carries consequences. This is quite distinct from the language of sanction or punishment, but acknowledges that the expression and experience of our Communion in Christ cannot be sustained so fully in such circumstances. A formal expression of the distance experienced would therefore seem to be appropriate.

46. The WCG spent some time discerning whether any such formal expression of impairment of communion should apply at the diocesan or provincial level. On one level, it is the local Church and its bishop who have acted to damage Communion; on another, it is the Province that bears responsibility if it does not act to restrain or discipline the bishop in question.

### **Recommendation:**

47. We recommend that the request for the moratoria expressed in Windsor/Dromantine be maintained in the life of the Communion, and that urgent conversations are facilitated with those Provinces where the application of the moratoria gives rise for concern.

48. In cases where a see has, by its actions, impaired Communion, it has now become appropriate to explore what relational consequences should be formally expressed or put in place by the Instruments of Communion. The possible nature of such consequences are explored in relation to the Covenant in the Lambeth Commentary on pages 24 and 25. Further work remains to be done on who should take action to formalise any such consequences and whether they should be applied at the level of diocese or Province.

49. Although breaches of the three moratoria may not have moral or doctrinal equivalence, as acknowledged by the Primates at Dar es Salaam<sup>15</sup>, yet the WCG agrees with the assessment of TWR that breaches of the moratoria are equal threats to our life in Communion, and that therefore there must be seen to be an equal and commensurate response in addressing breaches of all three moratoria.

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<sup>14</sup> The Lambeth Commentary, Answer to Question 13, page 12

<sup>15</sup> Dar es Salaam 2007 Communiqué, §10

## D. Addressing the Ecclesial Deficit

### *D(i). An Ecclesial Deficit*

50. The way in which the moratoria have been challenged or ignored in the life of the Communion raises a painful and sharp question: how can any decisions or recommendations be given authority or force in the life of the Communion?

51. Indeed, for some commentators, a central deficit in the life of the Communion is its inability to uphold structures which can make decisions which carry force in the life of the Churches of the Communion, or even give any definitive guidance to them. Other commentators will argue that such mechanisms are entirely unnecessary, but this touches upon the heart of what it is to live as a Communion of Churches.

52. To be a communion, as opposed to a federation or association, is fundamentally to acknowledge that the fellowship of Churches is not a human construct; it is the gracious gift of God. Churches are enabled to live in communion because they recognise one another as truly an expression of the One Church of Jesus Christ. If mutual recognition of faithful discipleship, the preaching of the Word of God or the ordered administration of the Sacraments is threatened, then the entire foundation of the Communion is undermined. This is why although Anglicans remain committed to a generous accommodation of diversity, there must ultimately be some limit to the extent of the diversity which can be embraced. This limit is the point where the fellowship of Churches can no longer recognise in one of its members the faithfulness to Christ which flows from communion with the Father, in the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit. If the recognition of one another as Churches is to be sustained, it implies a level of mutual accountability in the handling of the life of each Church.

53. The question of the limits of diversity becomes acute when major differences arise in the life of the communion of the Churches which concern the faith, order or moral life of the Communion. It is then that Anglicans need a common understanding of how together, in communion, they can, guided by the Spirit, discern and decide together. What are the sources that need to be brought to bear on any issue? What are the structures through which discernment takes place? What is the nature of their authority to guide discernment, to speak the mind of the Communion and even to request restraint while open reception takes place and the Churches of the Communion come to discover the mind of Christ for them?

54. Maintaining and nurturing communion between Churches, at whatever level, requires more than instruments of consultation. Guidance is at times required, and also decisions have to be made for the sake of unity. Organs of authority must be present and recognised as able to speak for and to the Churches of the Communion. In good times things will be easy - but when there is severe dispute within or between churches, the test of an authority's acceptance as an instrument of communion is whether its judgements are heeded, even when unwelcome; whether restraint is accepted while the matter is put to reception in the life of the Communion of churches.

55. The principle of autonomy-in-communion described in the *Windsor Report* makes clear that the principle of subsidiarity has always to be borne in mind. If the

concern is with communion in a diocese, only diocesan authority is involved; if communion at a provincial level then only provincial decision. But if the matter concerns recognising one another as sharing one communion of faith and life, then some joint organs of discernment and decision, which are recognised by all, are required. It is this necessity which led the WCG to articulate the move to “communion with autonomy and accountability” as being a better articulation of the ecclesiology which is necessary to sustain Communion.

56. These are matters that have engaged Anglicans in their internal conversations and with their ecumenical partners particularly in the last 30 years. The discussions of the 1988 Lambeth Conference led to the *Virginia Report* with its sharp questions about the instruments of communion. The events following the 1998 Lambeth Conference led to the *Windsor Report* which raised many of the same issues.

57. The Commentary of the Covenant Design Group on the discussions on the Covenant at the Lambeth Conference 2008 reflects again on the ways in which the Instruments of Communion articulate and sustain the Communion: “enabling the Churches to take counsel together, and to discern the responsibilities and obligations of interdependence.”<sup>16</sup>

58. The challenge remains for Anglicans to come to a common stance and acceptance of the authority which we will give to the instruments, structures and processes of the Communion which can lead to decisions that carry force in the life of the Churches of the Communion, regardless of circumstances.

59. To a certain extent, the Covenant is designed to address the expectations that one Province in the Communion can appropriately and legitimately expect in terms of mutual accountability and responsibility one for the other. But below this, there is a fundamental ecclesiological question: do the Churches of the Communion wish to live as a Communion?

#### *D(ii). The Instruments of Communion and the life of the Church*

60. In order to make sense of the instruments of communion at the world level it is perhaps most instructive to consider first the role of the episcopate in an episcopally ordered church. Anglicans agree that bishops are a fundamental bond of unity linking the local to the universal and *vice versa*<sup>17</sup>. Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, are the ones who are charged with a special responsibility for the unity, mission, faithful teaching and governance of the Church.

61. But the ministry of bishops is never to be exercised apart from, but in, with and among the faithful. ARCIC<sup>18</sup> documents talk about episcopal ministry as enabling the symphony of the whole church, always helping to draw out and discover the *sensus fidelium*. Many ecumenical and Anglican texts talk of the ministry of oversight as having personal, collegial and communal dimensions. All of this has implications for understanding Anglican Instruments of Communion at the world level and as we

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<sup>16</sup> The Lambeth Commentary, Question 13, page 12

<sup>17</sup> Cf The Virginia Report, “one who represents the part to the whole and the whole to the part, the particularity of each diocese to the whole Communion and the Communion to each diocese.”

<sup>18</sup> Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission

consider how the present instruments can be developed to give authoritative leadership.

### *The Archbishop of Canterbury*

62. The fact that resolution crafting was not part of the processes of the Lambeth Conference 2008 put massive weight upon the role of Archbishop of Canterbury as *primus inter pares* to articulate what was happening within the Conference, as marked by his three presidential addresses. His ministry to the Communion through these words have highlighted the extent to which there is scope for the ministry of a personal primacy at the level of the worldwide Communion.

63. The WCG understands this primacy as being exercised in personal, collegial, communal ways<sup>19</sup>. While ministry at the global level needs to be personal, it must also have collegial and communal dimensions. The collegial and communal dimensions of primatial ministry locate it firmly within the life of the whole Church and firmly within a specific community. The collegiality of a bishop is exercised from among his or her clergy, and in conjunction with the whole *laos* or people of God in that place. Primatial ministry is also collegial, in that the Archbishop's primacy should be exercised in conjunction with the college of bishops, a collegiality which is focused in the Lambeth Conference and also with other primates of the Anglican Communion. All primates are the first amongst the bishops of their churches; together they can articulate the common counsel of the Churches of the Communion, informing and guiding discernment. It is communal, in that each bishop exercises the ministry of oversight in, with and among the faithful and so enables the *sensus fidelium* to be discerned. The communal dimension is reflected in synods and councils of the Church and is symbolised for Anglicans at the world level in the Anglican Consultative Council presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

64. We believe that ways of strengthening the collegial aspects of the Archbishop's ministry in a way that increases the links with the wider Communion. We believe that the Archbishop of Canterbury must have the freedom to draw round himself from time to time, as occasion requires, persons, sometimes on *ad hoc* basis, who can respond and act quickly. (This relates to the concept of Pastoral Visitors explored below).

### **Recommendation:**

65. We recommend that a number of possibilities could be explored: the Archbishop might revisit the idea of a bishop, appointed from the wider Communion, to work closely with him and act on his behalf in Communion affairs. It may even be that a number of regional appointments from the local episcopate to represent the interests of the Communion along the lines of the *apokrisarioi* would be helpful. Exploration could be given to the idea of refocusing the position of Secretary General of the Anglican Communion as the executive officer of the communion who works alongside the Archbishop in carrying through the recommendations of the Instruments of Communion efficiently and rapidly; and to the formation of a small Executive

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<sup>19</sup> see Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry (The "Lima Text") Faith and Order Paper 111 of the WCC.

Committee which could work with the Archbishop in responding to emerging situations.

### *The Lambeth Conference*

66. The Lambeth Conference expresses the collegiality of bishops. The bishops at Lambeth cannot make legally binding decisions. Nevertheless, the fact that it is a body composed of those who by their ordination to the episcopate have been given apostolic responsibility to govern means that the resolutions of a Lambeth Conference may be considered to have an intrinsic authority which is inherent in their members gathered together. It may be time for Anglicans to articulate the teaching role of the bishops gathered around the Archbishop of Canterbury. Such recognition would still mean that decisions of a Conference would require the response and reception in the local Churches. It would mean that restraint might be required in a process of open reception. Some Lambeth Conference resolutions have been received by synodical action of individual member Churches other resolutions have not found such resonance and have been reversed by later conferences.

67. For collegiality to function most effectively in the Lambeth Conference then there are matters that require consideration such as the frequency of Conferences; the relationship of Lambeth Conferences to the Primates' meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council, how matters are dealt with in a conference, the preparation for a conference, the accountability from one conference to another for decisions taken, the mode of conference procedures following on the discovery of the immense value of indaba, the relation of indaba to formal decision making when required and other matters.

#### **Recommendation:**

68. For a conference of bishops to provide the mutuality of counsel required of them, there is a need to ensure a high level of fellowship and sense of mutual responsibility. Quite simply, the bishops need to know one another. New patterns of Lambeth Conferences must therefore be considered: a shorter cycle of meetings, perhaps smaller meetings between plenary conferences, perhaps involving diocesan bishops only, or a system of regional or representative meetings.

### **The Primates' Meeting**

69. Collegiality is also expressed in meetings of primates gathered together with the Archbishop of Canterbury where the primates offer support and advice to one another and in the life of the Communion. They have the potential to give some means of ongoing oversight between Conferences. The Primates' Meeting may be the most appropriate body to monitor the progress of resolutions and recommendations of Lambeth Conferences and to take note of and to guide the reception process. However, it has to be recognised that more than one model of primacy exists in the Anglican Communion and the diverse expressions of primatial authority can lead to some having concerns about the primates' meeting. The authority of the Primates arises from the fact that they are in conversation with their own House of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures. They are, therefore, able to reflect the breadth and depth of the conversations and opinions of their episcopates and

provinces. Because of this intrinsic relation with their episcopates and the faithful of their provinces, the Primates' Meeting may be thought to have a 'weight' - not from the individual primates but from their representative role.

**Recommendation:**

70. The Primates' Meeting has sometimes been accused of overreaching its authority, and it is important to note the principle articulated in the Lambeth Indaba Document that the primates collectively should not exercise more authority than properly belongs to them in their own Provinces. However, the primates also have a high degree of responsibility as the chief pastors of their respective Provinces to articulate the concerns of that Church in the counsels of the Communion. When they speak collectively, or in a united or unanimous manner, then their advice - while it is no more than advice - nevertheless needs to be received with a readiness to undertake reflection and accommodation.

*The Anglican Consultative Council*

71. The great value of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, is that it brings together at a world level bishops, clergy and laity thereby symbolising the communal dimension of the life of the Church. It is not understood as a synodical body, as its name indicates. It is consultative. The ACC tends to be accorded particular significance by those provinces whose liturgies emphasize the baptismal covenant and who therefore desire to find the contribution of the whole people of God in the life, mission and also governance of the Church at every level of the Church's life expressed in a conciliar gathering at the world level. However, there are questions about whether a body meeting every three years, with rapidly changing membership can fulfil adequately the tasks presently given to it. There may be other ways in which the involvement of the laity should be made effective in the discernment and guidance of the Communion and not only at the world level.

72. Related to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting is the work of the Joint Standing Committee, which is the meeting together of the Standing Committee of the ACC with the Standing Committee of the Primates. It is not a separate Instrument of Communion, but it does contain representatives of all four Instruments - presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with representatives of the Primates, of the bishops, and of the clergy and lay members of the Council. The crux is how the committee works and the various parts dovetail. In many senses, it is still in an early stage of development. As it develops, it will be important to stress the links to all four instruments so that it is not just seen as a branch of the ACC. It will also be important to ensure that the membership reflects the breadth of opinion in the Communion. If the membership becomes polarised, it will lose its ability to act effectively on behalf of the whole Communion. It would be strengthened by the Archbishop of Canterbury being present throughout the meeting.

**Recommendation:**

73. A review should be commissioned of how the Anglican Consultative Council's effectiveness and confidence in its work can be enhanced. In particular, the WCG

would like to see work done on exploring the effectiveness and role of the Joint Standing Committee in the life of the Communion. In order for it to be able to do this, questions need to be addressed about its membership and the extent to which Provinces are prepared to invest in its work. The JSC needs to be constituted in a way which is seen as fully representative; at which the primatial members are fully participating, and at which the Archbishop of Canterbury is fully present throughout its meetings.

### *The Instruments as a Whole*

74. One of the great insights of the Anglican Communion may prove to be the way it holds to the Episcopal ordering of the Church and therefore an understanding of the distinctive role of bishops but within the context of the value it places on the *symphonia* of bishops, clergy and laity working together as the whole people of God. Anglicans struggle to express this in the instruments of Communion at a world level. What is needed now is a clear definition of the role of each instrument of the Communion. This should take into account the specific gifts and responsibilities for governance as well as the representative functions entrusted to bishops and the how these might best work together with the whole body of the faithful. An important component of our present needs is also an articulation of the best ways in which the instruments can work together, each with its own specific tasks for the good of the Communion.

75. A deeper understanding of the Instruments of Communion at world level, their relationship to one another and to the other levels of the churches life should lead to a more coherent and inclusive functioning of oversight and authority in the service of the communion of the Church. The global nature of the Communion also needs to be grasped. The functioning of the Instruments must be adapted to accommodate global perspectives and participation.

### **Recommendation:**

76. IASCUFO (The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith and Order - for which, see below), as a priority, should be invited to produce a concise statement on the Instruments of Communion, their several roles and the authority inherent in them and to offer recommendations for developing the effectiveness of the instruments. This statement should be discussed by the Primates' Meeting and the ACC and sent jointly by them to the provinces for study and response. Although provincial responses could be collated by IASCUFO and brought to the next Lambeth Conference for expressing the mind of the Communion, it will be important to move to a common articulation of the role of the Instruments as swiftly as possible, and consideration should be given to whether these reflections could be incorporated into an ongoing development or revision of the text of the Covenant.

### **E. The Covenant**

77. The Windsor Report made another recommendation: the production of an Anglican Covenant. If the "bonds of affection" were not clearly articulated; if there was no clear and shared sense of the extent of true inheritance of common faith to be discerned in one another and what could be described as essential Anglicanism; of the

rights and responsibilities of “autonomy-on-communion”, then TWR argued that the development of an agreed text to which the Anglican Churches explicitly bound themselves would go a long way to addressing this ecclesial deficit.

78. The covenant has been recognised as a development by which the Communion could be given a long term articulation of its identity and of the mutual responsibilities that arose from being a Communion of Churches: the Communion can only continue if we can continue to recognise the Church of Jesus Christ in one another. The Covenant has its value in seeking to articulate the essential elements of inheritance, mission and interdependence which can sustain our life in communion.

#### **Recommendation:**

79. The WCG would like to affirm strongly that the covenant process is an essential element in rebuilding the confidence in our common life. We also recognise that ACC-14 will be a critical point in the process, since Provinces are being asked to give their “in principle” response at this stage.

#### **F. Other Initiatives**

80. The WCG wishes to commend the ongoing work of other projects or bodies within the life of the Communion which can help to repair or strengthen our common life:

- *The Bible in the Church Project*, which is being commended to ACC-14 next May.
- *The Principles of Canon Law Project*, the first fruits of which were published at the Lambeth Conference. A process of study, education and reflection is now needed on this project so that its nature may be properly understood and its applicability to the life of the Communion correctly discerned.
- The recent establishment of the *Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order* (IASCUFO) by the JSC as a body in succession to IASCER and IATDC to advise on ecumenical engagement and on key issues of faith and order within the life of the Communion. The agenda for such a body is already extensive and pressing.

#### **G. Timely Processes of Response: Pastoral Forum and Pastoral Visitors**

81. It is one of the realities of the current life of the communion that situations or matters are arising in the life of one or more of the provinces that affect the quality of the communion experienced between all the Churches of the Communion. In order to address the mechanisms which might be developed to assist the Churches to respond to such matters, several proposals or ideas have been raised or implemented in the recent past. The Windsor Report 2004 recommended the appointment of a *Council of Advice* to assist and support to the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Primates Meeting in Dromantine (2005) advocated the establishment of a *Panel of Reference*; the Dar es Salaam Communiqué (2007) called for the establishment of a *Pastoral Council*. The TEC House of Bishops acknowledged the need for a mechanism of *informal consultation* with the other Provinces of the Communion, and indeed, the Presiding Bishop has recently moved forward with the appointment of a

Deputy for Anglican Communion Affairs. We believe that this move closely parallels what we are proposing in terms of pastoral visitors.

82. Some of these ideas have found favour, some have not; those which have been established that have experienced varying degrees of success. The WCG wish to commend their proposal for a Pastoral Forum has some similarities with all of the foregoing, and yet it is distinct from them. Before describing what the Pastoral Forum could be therefore, it may be helpful to begin by saying what it is *not*:

- the Pastoral Forum is not envisaged as a juridical or quasi-judicial body in the life of the Anglican Communion with a constitutional or quasi-constitutional nature or authority;
- the Pastoral Forum would not have any jurisdiction;
- the Pastoral Forum would not act as a “court of appeal”;
- the Pastoral Forum could not override or supersede the Canons and Constitutions of any Province or the role of any of the Instruments of Communion.

83. The Pastoral Forum *is* conceived as an agency, which could be established with the co-operation of the lawful authorities of the Churches of the Communion to work with them in a pastoral, relational and advisory capacity in the addressing particular issues of tension between them. As the Observations Document of the Windsor Continuation Group puts it, its aim would be “to engage theologically and practically with situations of controversy as they arise or divisive actions that may be taken around the Communion”. There was a broad welcome to such an idea at the Lambeth Conference 2008.

84. The Forum would have a pastoral, relational and advisory role, working consultatively and collaboratively with the parties involved in situations of tension or disagreement around the Communion. It would aim to move parties “towards reconciliation” through careful consultation and responsible accountability (cf. The Lambeth Indaba Document, §146) It could, however, with the co-operation of the parties, suggest, advance and, with their consent, develop models or mechanisms of pastoral care and relationship to assist in any situation.

85. There was a broad measure of support at the Lambeth Conference for this proposal.

“There is clear majority support for a Pastoral Forum along the lines advocated by the Windsor Group, and a desire to see it in place speedily. There is agreement that it should be pastoral and not legal and should be able to respond quickly. It was also clearly stated that this process should always be moving towards reconciliation. There is concern about mandate, membership, appointment process and authority. Some wondered whether the Pastoral Forum should have members from outside the Communion. Many felt strongly that the forum could operate in a Province only with the consent of that Province and in particular with the consent of the Primate or the appropriate body. It is essential that this should be properly funded and resourced if it has any chance of being productive. There was some support for an alternative suggestion: to appoint in any dispute a Pastoral Visitor, working with a professional arbitrator and to create in the Communion a “pool” of such visitors.” (LI §146)

86. Since the establishment of such a Pastoral Forum would need authorisation and legitimacy within the Communion, and questions of “mandate, membership, appointment process and authority” will have to be addressed, it would seem appropriate that the proposal is given time for development by the Archbishop of Canterbury in consultation with the Joint Standing Committee and the Primates in preparation in advance of the fourteenth Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in May 2009.

87. However, the need for such a ministry of reconciliation is urgent in the life of the Communion. The WCG welcomes the fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury intends to move ahead with the appointment of a small number of “Pastoral Visitors” as proposed by the bishops at the Lambeth Conference (see above), and who could be called upon “in any dispute” or situation of tension between now and next May, as the proposal for a full Pastoral Forum is taken forward.

88. These Pastoral Visitors could be be:

- Appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the limited period of twelve months in the first instance.
- Drawn from senior leaders of the Communion, present or retired, or other notable individuals with specific skills in mediation and arbitration.
- Available to the Archbishop to be commissioned as his emissary for specific work to assist in maintaining the highest degree of Communion possible in situations of disagreement or tension.
- Available as well to the Primates of the Anglican Communion to act on their behalf in situations of disagreement or tension as go-betweens, arbitrators or conciliators, as deemed appropriate by those primates.
- Available for appointment to particular positions or roles within the Anglican Communion which would be consistent with their work and the constitutional requirements or conventions of the body for which they are nominated.
- Required to act in a manner consistent with the Constitutions and Canons of those Provinces with which they relate in the pursuance of any matter referred to them.

89. The WCG affirms the decision of the Archbishop that it is an integral element in their ministry that Pastoral Visitors would **not** have any authority to make dispositions or proposals for structural solutions to any situation, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Primate or other lawful authority of the particular Provinces with which they have been asked to work.

90. The scope of the activity that the Pastoral Visitors will be able to undertake will depend on the availability of funding. In all matters referred to the Pastoral Visitors, it will be helpful if the Provinces concerned would be willing to nominate a colleague who would be committed to working alongside them.

### **Recommendation:**

91. The WCG wish to commend the proposals for a Pastoral Forum, and for Pastoral Visitors as an interim measure, in the form discussed above, and urges their adoption without further delay.

## H. Parallel Jurisdictions

92. The advent of the ACNA is a serious and unprecedented development in the life of the Communion. It is proposed that eight different organisations - and different types of organisations - shall come together to create “a network based Province” encompassing a variety of geographical and non-geographical associations. Its existence is predicated on the assumption that the current Anglican presences in North America - The Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada - are no longer adequate to represent their understanding of faithful biblical Anglicanism, and this new association is intended to make such provision. Within ACNA are entities not formally part of the Anglican Communion or whose status within the Communion is disputed - the Reformed Episcopal Church, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, the Anglican Mission in America and the Anglican Coalition in Canada - together with associations such as Forward in Faith in America and the American Anglican Council.

93. It is unclear to what extent this new body is seeking recognition within the Anglican Communion. On one level, the leaders of ACNA state that they seek a place within the Communion, but at the same time say that the approval of the Instruments of Communion or recognition by the Archbishop of Canterbury are unnecessary for them to proceed with the formation of the Province. They have sought recognition, however, from the Primates’ Council of Gafcon. On the other hand, they include participants who clearly hold to their identity as Anglicans, and indeed, have only taken the steps they have because they believe that this is the only way to be faithful to the Anglicanism which they inherited.

94. There will undoubtedly be Primates and Provinces, such as those involved with Gafcon, which will wish to give recognition to the new body. Equally, there will be primates and Provinces for whom even consideration of the request would be untoward, and involve the accommodation of schism.

95. If indeed it is the desire of the “province-in-formation” to seek formal membership of the Anglican Communion, the WCG foresees formidable problems in the way ahead. They believe that such a proposal should only be entertained through the official channels which exist, namely according to the principles which were established and set out by ACC-9. Any move to recognise the new Province outside of these formal channels would further undermine our common life in Communion.

96. For such an approach to be successful, there would be very significant obstacles to be overcome. In the first place, the Communion would have to decide whether it could live with a parallel non-geographical Province based on theological ideology. This would be a significant change in the Catholic ecclesiological tradition upheld by the Communion throughout its history.

97. In the second place, the new Province-in-formation would have to reassure the Instruments of Communion that it does have the “ecclesial density” appropriate to the life of a Province: that is, a Province is more than a loose confederation. Does the new Province-in-formation have a unified jurisdiction, a common canon law, and shared norms of worship and liturgy?

98. Thirdly, if it can be successfully argued that a new Province can be formed on doctrinal and ideological lines, what reassurances can be given about its relationship to the existing jurisdictions in North America, particularly in the life of those dioceses where bishops and synods have expressed their solidarity with the standards commended in the Windsor Report. TWR set its face against the concept of parallel jurisdictions<sup>20</sup>; it would be especially tragic if a generous accommodation of the new entity were to be seen as *carte blanche* for the new Province to establish a presence in localities where no cogent theological basis for differentiation could be advanced.

99. In reflecting upon the emerging situation, WCG is mindful of three of the principles articulated by the Primates at their Dar es Salaam Meeting in 2007:

- to encourage healing and reconciliation within The Episcopal Church, between The Episcopal Church and congregations alienated from it, and between The Episcopal Church and the rest of the Anglican Communion;
- to respect the proper constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding the interdependent life and mutual responsibility of the Churches, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole;
- to respond pastorally and provide for those groups alienated by recent developments in the Episcopal Church.

and believe that these principles should continue to guide the thinking of the Instruments.

100. One way forward - although initially dismissed by some of the parties concerned - would be for ACNA to seek for some clear provisional recognition which seeks to keep it in relation to the Communion, but which acknowledges its provisional and anomalous nature. WCG has explored on previous occasions the idea of “escrow” - the creation of a body which could take on the oversight of these groups on behalf of the Communion, but which recognises the provisionality of such bodies. The group wonders whether there is any mileage in the model of extra-Provincial jurisdictions? In at least one case, such jurisdictions have been recognised as provisional - e.g. in Sri Lanka. Such a provision is fraught with difficulties. Such a scheme could not guarantee any particular outcome, the nature of which would be dependent on many factors, including the progress of the Covenant process. The provision would have to be hedged around with all sorts of restrictions, to avoid such a scheme becoming a haven for discontented groups, and institutionalising schism in the life of the Communion. Who would be the metropolitan authority? If all other obstacles were overcome, the WCG would favour a Metropolitan Council similar to that which operates for Cuba rather than linking the new entity to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

**Recommendation:**

101. The WCG therefore recommends that the Archbishop of Canterbury, in consultation with the Primates, establish at the earliest opportunity a professionally mediated conversation at which all the significant parties could be gathered. The aim would be to find a provisional holding arrangement which will enable dialogue to take place and which will be revisited on the conclusion of the Covenant Process, or the

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<sup>20</sup> TWR §154

achievement of long term reconciliation in the Communion. Such a conversation would have to proceed on the basis of a number of principles:

- There must be an ordered approach to the new proposal within, or part of a natural development of, current rules.
- It is not for individual groups to claim the terms on which they will relate to the Communion.
- The leadership of the Communion needs to stand together, and find an approach to which they are all committed.
- Any scheme developed would rely on an undertaking from the present partners to ACNA that they would not seek to recruit and expand their membership by means of proselytisation. WCG believes that the advent of schemes such as the Communion Partners Fellowship and the Episcopal Visitors scheme instituted by the Presiding Bishop in the United States should be sufficient to provide for the care of those alienated within the Episcopal Church from recent developments.

## I. The Life of the Communion

102. Throughout its work, the WCG were undergirded by a deep sense of the value of the Anglican Communion as a particular expression of the providence of God's grace, and of its value to the proclamation of the Gospel and the life of the *oikumene*. We believe that the life of the Anglican Communion must not be allowed to falter. We call upon all Anglicans to look again to the value of the existing fellowship into which God has called us all; to embrace again the charity and forgiveness to which Our Lord entreats us in our dealings with one another; to be joined in working together for the healing of the Communion and the service of God's mission. We do not believe that the moment for division or excommunication has come, although we recognise that a critical point in the life of the Communion has been reached. We urge the Archbishop of Canterbury to be bold in gathering the leaders of the Communion for prayer and common discernment. We urge all those, from the Primates to the bishops, clergy and faithful of the Communion, to be ready to think afresh, and to seek in Christ to be One so that the world might believe.

Bishop Clive Handford, former Primate, Jerusalem & the Middle East, *Chair*  
Archbishop John Chew, Primate of South East Asia  
Bishop Gary Lillibridge, Bishop of West Texas  
Bishop Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Christchurch  
Dean Emeritus John Moses, former Dean of St. Paul's, London  
Bishop Donald Mtetemela, Bishop of Ruaha, former Primate of Tanzania

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Canon Andrew Norman  
Dame Mary Tanner

*Mustang Island, 17th December 2008*