

A Commentary on Growing Together in Unity and Mission: An Agreed Statement by the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (2007)

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Introductory Observations

Growing Together in Unity and Mission (GTUM), an Agreed Statement by the Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM), is an ecumenical statement which needs to be situated within the context of relations between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church over the past 40 years, and more particularly, over the past six years during which it was drafted. On the one hand, as we shall see, it is a new genre of ecumenical document; on the other hand, very little of its content is new, and it should be seen as a step in a larger ecumenical process. Understanding its origins, development and goal is essential to identifying its potential contribution and assessing its strengths and weaknesses.

Less than two years after the signing of the March 1966 Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey which initiated the search for full visible unity between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church, a preparatory commission issued *The Malta Report*, which to some degree served as a road map for fostering Anglican–Roman Catholic relations. In addition to setting the agenda for the body soon to be called the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), *The Malta Report* called for the preparation of “an official and explicit affirmation of mutual recognition from the highest authorities of each Communion” which would set forth the essential aspects of Christian faith which Anglicans and Catholics hold in common (§7). *Malta* also identified numerous practical proposals which it argued would give ecclesial expression to those aspects of shared faith.

Thirty-two years later, in May 2000, a group of Anglican Primates and Presidents of Catholic Episcopal Conferences (or their representatives) were summoned together by Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey and President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), Cardinal Edward Cassidy. They met in Mississauga, Canada, to reflect on what had been accomplished in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations and by ARCIC in the intervening years, and to ask what additional steps could be taken to further relations between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church. In a statement which echoed *Malta*, they called for the establishment of a commission mandated to prepare a joint declaration of agreement which, it was hoped, would be signed by Anglican and Catholic authorities, setting out “our shared goal of visible unity; an acknowledgment of the consensus in faith that we have reached, and a fresh commitment to share together in

common life and witness”.¹ The IARCCUM commission was established with this as its principal task.

The years since the Mississauga meeting, however, have brought their own complications in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations. Internal tensions within the Anglican Communion on questions of human sexuality have led to prolonged debate about moral teaching and practice, but also about the nature of the Anglican Communion and the bonds which hold the Anglican provinces together. These tensions bring to the surface what has always been a challenge for the Catholic Church in its dialogue with the Anglican Communion, namely that Anglican provinces differ considerably in their ecclesiology and in their polity (internal governance), both of which significantly shape ecumenical relations. Given that the Anglican Communion is in the midst of a major discernment process which is addressing some of those differences in ecclesiology and polity, and which may eventually give more precise definition to the nature of the Anglican Communion, it does not seem a propitious moment to take major ecumenical steps until greater clarity has emerged. The current context within the Anglican Communion will be addressed at greater length in the first section of this commentary.

In this introduction, it may prove helpful to address the relationship between ARCIC and IARCCUM. ARCIC began its work in 1970, and is a theological commission mandated to address and determine to what extent communion-dividing issues between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church can be resolved. IARCCUM, by contrast, is largely a commission of bishops. The Mississauga statement *Communion in Mission*, which called for its establishment, identified its task as follows: “This Commission will oversee the preparation of the Joint Declaration of Agreement, and promote and monitor the reception of ARCIC agreements, as well as facilitate the development of strategies for translating the degree of spiritual communion that has been achieved into visible and practical outcomes” (§12). The authoritative reception of an ecumenical statement by the Catholic Church necessarily involves the consent of the Holy See, and for Anglicans, involves decision-making bodies in each Anglican province as well as their collective action as a communion. But the process of reception also involves the life of the churches: it requires that ecumenical statements be studied and understood; that the convergences or consensus recorded in a statement be recognised in the dialogue partner; that the implications of agreements reached be reflected in the churches.

IARCCUM understands itself as fostering that larger reception process, which both waits on and accompanies the authoritative responses of Anglican and Catholic Churches. But its principal task has been to work towards the preparation of a declaration of agreement which would be authoritatively received by the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church, and *GTUM* is understood as a step in the process towards such a declaration. In §9, *GTUM*

¹ The hopes and intentions of the bishops assembled at Mississauga are expressed in the Mississauga statement *Communion in Mission* (here citing §10) and detailed suggestions were offered in the Mississauga *Action Plan*, both published in Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City, *Information Service* 119 (2005/III) pp.136-142. The Mississauga texts reflect a concern frequently expressed in ecumenical relations in the present day: our dialogues have produced many good results, but there is now a need to harvest those results and allow them to shape our ecclesial lives in whatever ways are appropriate. This task is often mentioned in relation to a certain discouragement about the ecumenical enterprise and as a response to scepticism about what ecumenical dialogues have achieved.

speaks of its work as “discerning those doctrinal elements over which there is a readiness in both our Communion to see in ARCIC’s work a faithful expression of what the Church of Christ teaches,” and in §93, states that it has “attempted to harvest the fruits of forty years of dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.” But in this there is potentially some ambiguity about the relationship between ARCIC and IARCCUM. *GTUM* identifies its work as an Agreed Statement – the same phrase used to describe ARCIC texts. Like ARCIC’s work, the text is published under the authority of the commission members. Again like ARCIC, it states clearly (in the Co-Chairmen’s Preface) that the text “is not an authoritative declaration by the Roman Catholic Church or by the Anglican Communion. What is offered by IARCCUM here is a statement which is intended to foster discussion and reflection.”

In sum, IARCCUM’s text is of a different genre to the documents of ARCIC – it is a review and synthesis of the work of ARCIC directed towards identifying those results of the dialogue which Anglican and Catholic authorities might affirm as areas of shared faith; yet it is put forward as a text with the same authority status as the documents of ARCIC. IARCCUM was asked to initiate a process leading towards an authoritative joint declaration, and what it offers here is not a final product, but a step towards an authoritative reception of ARCIC’s work. As we shall see, and as the text clearly states, what it has offered is what is possible in the present context. While *GTUM* has sought to be transparent in this regard, it would have been helpful for the relationship between ARCIC and IARCCUM to be more clearly articulated, and for the status of statements of convergences and consensus to be more clearly noted throughout the document.

The present Commentary is offered, in the same spirit of *GTUM*, as a candid reflection on the text – what it strives for and how effective it is – mindful of a well-established tradition of our relations being advanced by honest and rigorous reflection offered in a spirit of ecumenical friendship. The first section of this Commentary will consider in further detail the context, methodology and structure of *GTUM*. A second section seeks to offer an overview and assessment of the main body of *GTUM* – its synthesis of ARCIC and presentation of the degree of communion enjoyed by Anglicans and Catholics. The third section will evaluate and offer reflections on the practical proposals and initiatives offered by *GTUM*, proposals which the Commission presents as grounded in the theological agreement set forth in the text. Lastly, the Commentary’s attention will turn to four recurrent themes which complement and illuminate the document’s principle theme, and to some concluding observations. In all this the Commentary seeks to offer an assessment of the content and methodology of *GTUM* from a Roman Catholic doctrinal and pastoral perspective, which may be of some help to Catholics wishing to study the text, on their own or with their ecumenical partners.

I. Context and Method

(a) Context

Following the meeting of Anglican and Catholic bishops in Mississauga in 2000, the report *Communion in Mission* was confident in asserting “we have reached a very significant new

place on our journey. We feel compelled to affirm that our communion together is no longer to be viewed in minimal terms.”²

The aspirations and intentions of the Mississauga bishops at this particular point are reminiscent of the consensus which had been expressed in 1999 by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church in the Preamble to the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* about reaching the opportune time and place at which to make a new commitment to each other: “In their discussion of the doctrine of justification, all the dialogue reports as well as the responses show a high degree of agreement in their approaches and conclusions. The time has therefore come to take stock...”³ *Communion in Mission* echoes this where it judges that “now is the appropriate time for the authorities of our two Communion to recognise and endorse this new stage through the signing of a Joint Declaration of Agreement.”⁴ This positive assessment of the scope and timeliness of its work is reflected in the Communiqués following the first three plenary meetings of IARCCUM in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

A fourth plenary meeting had been planned for 2004, but in December 2003, the PCPCU and the Anglican Communion Office issued parallel press releases indicating that the IARCCUM plenary meeting and the Commission’s work towards the publication and reception of a common statement of faith would have to be put on hold in the light of ecclesiological concerns raised as a consequence of recent developments within the life of the Anglican Communion. As is well-documented, these developments pertained to the authorisation of a public rite of blessing for same-sex couples by the Diocese of New Westminster in the Anglican Church of Canada, and by the Episcopal Church (USA)’s General Convention of 2003’s approval of the nomination of a priest in a same-sex union as the next Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire.

Through various means, the Holy See has expressed concern over both moral and ecclesiological aspects of these recent developments. During the visit to the Holy See of Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams in October, 2003, Pope John Paul II addressed the Archbishop about the “new and serious difficulties” that had arisen, and stated: “These difficulties are not all of a merely disciplinary nature; some extend to essential matters of faith and morals. In light of this, we must reaffirm our obligation to listen attentively and honestly to the voice of Christ as it comes to us through the Gospel and the Church’s Apostolic Tradition.”⁵ During the course of Dr Williams’ visit to the Holy See in November, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI added: “We believe that these matters, which are presently under discussion within the Anglican Communion, are of vital importance to the preaching of the Gospel in its integrity, and that your current discussions will shape the future of our relations.”⁶

² *Communion in Mission, op. cit.*, §5.

³ *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, Information Service* 103 (2000/I-II), §4.

⁴ *Communion in Mission, op. cit.*, §10.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, “Address to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams”, 4 October 2003, *Information Service* 114 (2003/IV), pp.173-74.

⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, “Address to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams”, 23 November 2006, *Information Service* 123 (2006/III-IV), p.84.

While work towards a common declaration was put on hold for just over a year, Archbishop Williams invited Cardinal Kasper to join him in setting up an IARCCUM sub-commission (of Anglican and Roman Catholic members) which would specifically reflect on what the work of ARCIC might be able to contribute to the discernment process within the Anglican Communion. A sub-commission was established and produced a report, entitled “Ecclesiological Reflections on the Current Situation in the Anglican Communion in the Light of ARCIC”, which proceeded to identify some of the ecclesiological implications of the moral decisions taken. Its conclusion (§44) noted:

We have tried to show how the decision of the Episcopal Church USA to proceed with the recent consecration despite sustained strong opposition from large segments of the Anglican Communion calls into question significant portions of our agreed statements on authority and ecclesiology: the nature of ecclesial communion; the mutual interdependence of churches; the role of episcopal and collegial authority in maintaining the unity of the communion; the process of discernment in the communion of the Church, and the decisive role of Scripture and Tradition therein. This decision also challenges our mutual claim that we uphold a shared vision of human nature and the same fundamental moral values.

The publication of *The Windsor Report* in October, 2004, strongly endorsed a *koinonia* ecclesiology which invited a strengthening of the interdependence of Anglican provinces; along with the Primates’ communiqué of 24 February, 2005, it reiterated the traditional understanding of marriage and human sexuality, as expressed in Resolution 1.10 of the Lambeth Conference, as the normative teaching of the Anglican Communion. In May 2005, the PCPCU issued a press release which stated that *Windsor* and the Primates’ communiqué “affirm the general thrust and conclusions of the understanding of the nature of the Church put forward in the ARCIC dialogue to this point, and that this provides a foundation for continued dialogue and ecumenical co-operation.”⁷ While uncertainty about the future will linger until the current tensions are resolved, the Anglican Communion’s way of addressing the New Hampshire and New Westminster developments has created a context wherein *GTUM* could be brought to completion, but not unchanged by the intervening events.

The genesis and stated purposes of *GTUM* make plain that the document is intrinsically linked with and reflects the developing relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church, which is governed by the life and decisions both *ad intra* and *ad extra* of our two Communion, and *GTUM* has rightly sought to reflect that dynamic in both its evolution and its content. It is a fruit of this relationship and has been shaped and refashioned as a consequence of the relationship. *GTUM* consciously seeks to reflect and in its own development effectively mirrors the ways in which this relationship has changed – both in ways it has been strengthened and in the emergence of new obstacles and challenges. It notes candidly that our relations “have become more complicated as proposals within the Church of England have focussed attention on the issue of the ordination of women to the episcopate which is an established part of ministry in some Anglican provinces” (§6). Especially concerning the tensions initiated by decisions in New Westminster and New Hampshire, *GTUM* aims to be realistic in its understanding of the ecumenical climate in which it has been written, commenting on the measure of ecclesial communion within the Anglican Communion, on moral behaviour, and offering suggestions regarding consultation. IARCCUM’s sober judgement is that “(t)his present

⁷ *Update on Relations with the Anglican Communion*, 27 April 2005, *Information Service* 118 (2005/I-II), p.37.

context, which adds to existing differences between our two Communion, is not the appropriate time to enter the new formal stage of relationship envisaged by the bishops at Mississauga” (§7).⁸

One of the challenges for those working on an international level in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations is that relations vary a great deal in different parts of the world, shaped by numerous factors, not least by the different stances in particular Anglican provinces towards the matters of human sexuality currently under discussion, and towards the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate. While IARCCUM as a commission is seeking to foster relations between our two Communion and thus needs to offer general comments about the current context for those relations, it must be stressed that there is not ‘one’ uniform context in which decisions about Anglican–Roman Catholic relations need to be made; relations, for instance, are very different in Papua–New Guinea, where a covenant has recently been signed by Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and in the United States, where tensions within the Episcopal Church are most acute. This important consideration will be expanded upon in commenting on the practical proposals set forward in Part Two of *GTUM*.

(b) Methodology and Structure

i) Building on Mississauga

When Pope John Paul II addressed the members of IARCCUM at their first plenary meeting in November 2001 he encouraged them to “consider the next practical steps which might be taken not only to consolidate the gains already made, but also to lead us to new depths of communion on the way to that fullness of unity which is the will of Christ.”⁹ In these words the Holy Father prefigured the way that IARCCUM was to work and pointed towards the structure which was to serve its purpose.

As mentioned above, IARCCUM’s mandate from Mississauga was to review and synthesise the work of ARCIC so as to identify and articulate the degree of faith shared by Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Mississauga’s *Action Plan* called on the new Commission to work towards the preparation, signing and celebration of a joint declaration which would “set out: our shared goal of visible unity, an acknowledgement of the consensus in faith that we have reached, and a fresh commitment to share together in common life and witness.”¹⁰

This clearly stated purpose is reiterated in the *Press/Media Release* issued by the Mississauga meeting where it refers to “a joint affirmation of faith. This would formally express the degree of agreement that already exists between Anglicans and Catholics. All at the Mississauga meeting believed that this extensive common faith needs to be officially acknowledged and celebrated. This itself should lead logically to consequences for the life of the two churches.” This description of intent is complemented and expanded by the

⁸ It is tempting to speculate about how a “new formal stage of relationship” might have found expression in *GTUM* had the context of the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church not been affected by recent developments within the Anglican Communion.

⁹ The Holy Father’s Address to members of IARCCUM, 24 November 2001, *Information Service* 108 (2001/IV), pp.154-55.

¹⁰ *Communion in Mission, op. cit.*, §10.

Communiqué following IARCCUM's first plenary meeting: "a joint declaration which would formally express the degree of agreement that exists between Anglicans and Catholics and consolidate the results of more than thirty years of dialogue."¹¹

ii) *Revised in light of the current context*

In its structure and self-understanding *GTUM* reflects the particular purpose outlined at Mississauga and has sought to be faithful to the methodology envisaged from the beginning; but it has also sought to be realistic about the changing climate in which this task is undertaken, and recognises that a longer road towards the goal of a Joint Declaration needs to be travelled. Underlying *GTUM*, one senses the Commission holding in a careful balance the Mississauga vision and the complexities of the current situation, and pondering what is possible in this new context. The shift in genre from a Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion to an Agreed Statement of the Commission only implies this longer road. The text is now submitted to the sponsoring bodies for study and reflection, and responses to it will assist the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion to discern whether, as it currently reads or with modifications and clarifications, a formal agreement could be received in the future.

iii) *Method in Part One of GTUM*

In *GTUM* the areas of convergence and consensus in faith are systematically outlined under nine doctrinal headings in Part One: *The Faith We Hold in Common* (§§11–92), drawing on the documents of both phases of the ARCIC dialogue. In the introductory section *A further step* (§§4–10) this method of presentation is expressed in carefully chosen terms. ARCIC's achievement in dialogue is discerned as "those doctrinal elements over which there is a readiness in both our Communion to see in ARCIC's work a faithful expression of what the Church of Christ teaches" (§9) and this assessment honours the continuing and still to be completed process of reception within the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church.

More than ARCIC texts, *GTUM* also highlights areas of divergence, unresolved questions which still need to be addressed. The text "offers an honest appraisal of what has been achieved in the dialogue...candidly pointing to remaining difficulties, thus identifying where further theological work is necessary" (§9). *GTUM* is novel as an Agreed Statement in presenting these areas of remaining difficulties in "clearly identifiable boxes" as a way of facilitating or encouraging the further exploration for which it calls. This is consonant with the way IARCCUM encourages a wide study of the document so that Anglicans and Catholics may "engage in a searching exploration of new possibilities for co-operation and mission" (§126). The particular way in which *GTUM* highlights the areas in need of further study is perhaps a reflection of the context in which the pace of IARCCUM's work was modified, if not interrupted. However, it also serves to emphasise the importance of further dialogue, and is likely to be of help in determining the questions and issues to which a third phase of ARCIC might eventually turn its attention. During the course of the visit of Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams to the Holy See in November, 2006, it was agreed to set up a Preparatory Commission which would meet in 2007 to prepare proposals

¹¹ *Communiqué*, First Plenary Meeting of IARCCUM, 24 November 2001, *Information Service* 108 (2001/IV), pp.155-56.

for the PCPCU and for Anglican authorities on the content and mandate for a third phase of the ARCIC dialogue.

While *GTUM* reflects a careful reading of ARCIC's Agreed Statements, it is less thorough in attending to official or authoritative responses to ARCIC's work. From a Catholic perspective, the reception of *GTUM* would have been assisted had the text more rigorously addressed the concerns raised by the Catholic Church in its 1991 Response to ARCIC I's *Final Report*. The 1993 "Clarifications", produced by an ARCIC sub-commission to respond to these concerns in so far as they addressed the Agreed Statements on Eucharist (1971) and Ministry (1973), was seen to have greatly strengthened the agreements reached. Yet *GTUM* does not explicitly appeal to these "Clarifications": it makes reference to them but does not extensively draw upon them. Nor does it directly address the request for greater precision in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 1988 "Observations" on ARCIC's *Salvation and the Church*. If the reception process is understood to include a refining of a text in the light of responses from the churches, IARCCUM could have been more deliberate in addressing concerns raised there.

iv) *Method in Part Two of GTUM*

As already noted, *GTUM*'s Introduction states that the text stops short of the goal set in the year 2000: it "is not the appropriate time to enter the new formal stage of relationship envisaged by the bishops at Mississauga" (§7). But this statement, reiterated in various ways in paragraphs 7–10, is inevitably followed by a summons to engage in common mission to whatever degree is possible and responsible. "Even in a time of uncertainty, the mission given us by Christ obliges and compels us to seek to engage more deeply and widely in a partnership in mission, coupled with common witness and joint prayer" (§7). Following Mississauga, *GTUM* posits a gap between the theological convergence or substantial agreement articulated in the ARCIC statements and the practical ecclesial steps which would reflect those theological gains. "(I)t must be acknowledged that the progress towards agreement in faith achieved through the theological dialogue has been substantial, but that in the past four decades we have only just begun to give tangible expression to the incontrovertible elements of shared faith" (§7). This gap points to the principal unifying theme of *GTUM*: the relationship between the bonds of communion and engagement in common life and mission. While the principal body of *GTUM* investigates the bonds of communion between Anglicans and Catholics, the last sentences of its Introduction set the stage for Part Two of the text:

While this may not be the moment to initiate a formal new stage in our relations, we believe that it is the time to bridge the gap between the elements of faith we hold in common and the tangible expression of that shared belief in our ecclesial lives. The final section of this document therefore proposes some specific steps to deepen our fellowship in life and mission which we believe are responsibly open for us and would be appropriate for us to take in the present context. (§10)

Part Two of *GTUM* sets out to explore the real though limited possibilities for common life and mission that are open to our two Communion on the basis of the extent to which we share a common faith. It proposes ways of acknowledging and celebrating where we are at present in our search for full communion, and suggests ways of expressing, deepening and extending it through co-operation in witness, formation, social outreach and mission. As the Preface (§5) states: "it is a call for action, based upon 'an honest appraisal of what has been achieved in our dialogue'."

Yet there is an inherent tension built into *GTUM* precisely in the text's central link between unity and mission. As the text acknowledges, like the work of ARCIC upon which it builds, the agreements and convergences set forth in Part One of *GTUM* are being put forward for evaluation. The practical initiatives based on those convergences are in various ways contingent on a positive reception of Part One. Since the first part of *GTUM* is lacking authoritative approval, it is clear that the practical suggestions of the second part will need to be examined in the light of present Catholic teaching and policy. Recent developments, especially in the Episcopal Church (USA) and the potentially transforming nature of the decisions being faced there, have made it difficult to make general statements about what is possible at present. These are factors which will shape this commentary's reading of the specific proposals set forward in Part Two of *GTUM*.

v) *Ecumenical precedents*

It has been noted elsewhere that there are some similarities between the methodology and structure of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and *GTUM*. While the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Declaration focussed on a particular doctrine (justification), what is presented in *GTUM* encompasses a range of doctrines, reflecting the theological breadth which forty years of dialogue have given to the Anglican–Roman Catholic dialogue. The method, however, envisages a similar harvesting of the fruits of dialogue so as to lead towards a deepening of communion. In the relationship between the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church there is a precisely focussed reason for synthesising the dialogue to date: “to show that on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran Churches and the Roman Catholic Church are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ.”¹² In this it differs from *GTUM* where the recognition and expression of our common faith have the broader purpose of moving Anglicans and Catholics “to live and witness together more fully here and now” (§96), hence the wide range of suggestions and invitations set out in Part Two of the text. In all of this it should be emphasised again that the major difference between the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and *GTUM* is that the Joint Declaration has come through a formal reception process and is an authoritative statement of the signatory partners, while *GTUM* has not yet reached that stage and consequently lacks that authority.

In one other particular – its treatment of the areas of outstanding difference – *GTUM* reflects the theological method and presentational pattern of both the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Declaration and the recent Agreed Statements of ARCIC, although the conclusions drawn in each case are different. The Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Declaration is able to set out the areas of “consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification”, acknowledging that these do “not cover all that either church teaches about justification”, and affirming “that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations”.¹³

¹² *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, op. cit.*, §5.

¹³ *Ibid.*

ARCIC has followed a similar pattern of presentation in its Agreed Statement *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ (MGHC)* where it “proposes a fuller statement of our shared belief in the Blessed Virgin Mary” but can “also take up differences of practice, including the explicit invocation of Mary.”¹⁴ Although it does not claim to have fully achieved this, *MGHC* nevertheless “points to the possibility of further reconciliation, in which issues concerning doctrine and devotion to Mary need no longer be seen as communion-dividing, or an obstacle in a new stage of our growth into visible *koinonia*.”¹⁵

II. Communion and Mission: The Principal Theme of *GTUM*

The experience of sharing in prayer, theological reflection and common life that characterised the meeting of the bishops at Mississauga brought them insights into the nature and state of the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church which were to influence and give shape to the work of IARCCUM and ultimately to the vision offered by *GTUM*. There is a consistent conviction, common to the statements of Mississauga and IARCCUM, and articulated in its own distinctive way by *GTUM*, that ecclesial communion in Christ has characteristic and interrelated dimensions (in *GTUM* §36 these are consonant with though not identical to the bonds of communion familiar in Catholic ecclesiology as communion in faith, sacramental life and pastoral oversight) and that communion in faith, being one of these dimensions, once acknowledged and articulated together, can and should move both the individual Christian and the Churches towards a fuller expression of that communion in its other dimensions.

At Mississauga *koinonia* is recognised as both a gift to be enjoyed and an instrument to be employed: “The communion constituted by what we already share has within it an inner dynamic which, animated by the Holy Spirit, impels us forward”. It is understood furthermore as “a communion of joint commitment to our common mission in the world.”¹⁶ As Pope John Paul II has stated, “(w)e need to live and practise that communion which, though not yet full, already exists between us.”¹⁷ In its earliest deliberations IARCCUM had considered a variety of ways that this communion in mission might be expressed and lived out: “one possible avenue for greater co-operation is in the field of inter-faith relations...the members [of IARCCUM] affirmed the importance of deepening our commitment to work together in social and cultural spheres for the defence of human dignity and the promotion of justice and peace.”¹⁸

The title of the Agreed Statement, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, reflects the conviction expressed at Mississauga that there is a logical, theological and intrinsic relationship between the developing experience of ecclesial communion and the imperative to engage step by step in forms of shared life and mission. This conviction is set out in the introductory section of *GTUM* (§§1–3) as a *Commitment to unity and mission* which has been a constant feature of Anglican–Roman Catholic relations over a period of forty years,

¹⁴ *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, published in *Information Service* 118 (2005/I-II), §3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, §80.

¹⁶ *Communion in Mission*, *op. cit.*, §8.

¹⁷ Homily at Vespers marking the conclusion of the Week of Prayer, Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, Rome, 25 January 2001, *Information Service* 106 (2001/I), pp.15-17.

¹⁸ *Communiqué*, First Plenary Meeting of IARCCUM, 24 November 2001, *op. cit.*

and Appendix I: *Unity and Mission* is helpful in expanding on this commitment as it draws on the official documents of each of the two Communion before emphasising our shared commitment.¹⁹

This theme of the relationship between communion and mission runs through and pervades the nine doctrinal areas outlined in Part One (§§11–92), but it is considered at length in what might be viewed as the theological core of *GTUM* in its sections on *Belief in God as Trinity* (§§11–14), *Church as Communion in Mission* (§§15–25), and *Discipleship and Holiness* (§§77–87). A preliminary consideration of these sections will help in assessing the theme of communion and mission as it features in the other sections of Part One.

The theology of communion and mission which IARCCUM was mandated to draw from the ARCIC dialogue and which provides *GTUM* with its purpose and dynamic is shown to have its roots in our shared faith in the communion between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Belief in God as Trinity* reflects the Catholic teaching that our experience of ecclesial communion – in its two dimensions of relationship with God and relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ – is always understood as a sharing through Christ in the eternal communion which characterises the revealed inner life of God, into which we are continually being drawn and from which we are drawn together by “God’s holy gifts of word and sacrament” (*GTUM* §14).

If this is true of the fullness of ecclesial communion then it is also true, not commensurately but absolutely, of the communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics and it is the first compelling motive for moving from the experience of communion towards its fuller expression in life and mission. “We are called to live out that real but imperfect communion visibly, while striving ultimately for full visible unity” (*GTUM* §14).

In the teaching of the Second Vatican Council the Church is “the universal sacrament of salvation”²⁰ whose mission is to bring all people into communion with God and with one another in Christ. In *Church as Communion in Mission* *GTUM* highlights the intrinsic link which ARCIC emphasises between ecclesial communion and mission and draws out its consequences: “The Church is intended to be the ‘sacrament’ of God’s saving work, i.e. ‘both sign and instrument’ [ARCIC, *The Final Report*, Introduction, n.7] of God’s purpose in Christ, ‘to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth’ (Ephesians 1.10)” (*GTUM* §16). This can be seen as a judgement on our condition of imperfect communion and a compelling motive to strive more effectively for fullness of communion: “The Church’s living of communion is therefore a vital part of its mission, and mission is harmed when communion is lacking” (*GTUM* §17).

At the same time the experience and recognition of communion between ecumenical partners are shown to depend on the fruits of ecumenical dialogue and in particular its capacity to foster recognition of those elements of goodness and truth which are the properties of ecclesial identity: “The degree of visible communion depends on the extent of our mutual recognition of the holy gifts and the essential constitutive elements of the

¹⁹ This shared commitment is endorsed and supported in Appendix I by ample reference to the *Common Declarations* signed by successive Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury.

²⁰ *Lumen Gentium* §48.

Church in one another” (*GTUM* §20). IARCCUM’s underlying assumption here, which could have been more clearly articulated, is that the exchange of gifts, as called for in Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical *Ut unum sint* (§28), is precisely geared towards helping us to give visible expression to our unity based on sharing constitutive elements of the Church.

GTUM’s treatment of the Church as *koinonia* notes that unity “is of the essence of the Church”, and that “its unity also must be visible” (§18), but the text would have been strengthened had it affirmed more directly that visible unity is an essential characteristic or ‘mark’ of the Church given by Christ from the beginning. It could then have considered the fundamental ecclesiological question of the foundation of the Church’s unity before identifying visible ‘structures of communion’ as among the issues calling for further exploration. Since *GTUM* does this in the context of its treatment of authority the reader should be mindful that the two sections need to be read in relation to each other.

Two issues in the section on *Church as Communion in Mission* identified as requiring further theological work will be addressed in the final section of this commentary: international structures of communion within the Anglican Communion (*GTUM* §21), and the ministry of universal primacy within the Catholic Church (§23).

In *Discipleship and Holiness* the text makes some of its most forceful assertions about the relationship between communion and the Christian life, indicating that the personal and communal moral decisions we make have a direct bearing on the degree of communion we enjoy. The text of *GTUM* uses the strongest terms (“integral”, “constitutive” and “essential”) to explain the binding force of the relationship, only falling short of a reflection on the disruptive effect of sin on our relationship with God and one another.²¹ So “moral behaviour is integral to the maintenance of communion with the Holy Trinity, as well as to communion with the community of believers in the Church” and “our common acceptance of the same fundamental moral values, and the sharing of the same vision of humanity...are constitutive elements of ecclesial communion and are essential for the visible communion of the Church” (*GTUM* §77).

In a beautiful reflection on human nature *GTUM* develops a theme intrinsic to our understanding of the *imago Dei* in the creation of human beings, that in some sense our human nature, fashioned in the image and likeness of God, must reflect the inner life of the Trinity and therefore at its deepest level bears the imprint of the divine, eternal communion. This is understood to be the basis of our human dignity and offers us an insight into the link between Christian anthropology and the theology of communion. “We affirm the dignity of the human person, male and female, created by God for communion with God....Human persons are created for communion, and communion involves responsibility, in relation to society and creation as well as to God” (§79). In this way *GTUM* develops its presentation of the link between communion and mission, harvested from the ARCIC dialogue, and leads us towards consideration of the concrete expressions of common mission which it sets out in Part Two.

²¹ The relationship between communion and holiness in which Christ as *diakonos* mediates and gathers together can be sharply contrasted with that between division and sinfulness where the *diabolos* interrupts and scatters.

Despite the encouraging measure of consensus on moral questions which the ARCIC II Agreed Statement *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church* found between our two Communion when it was presented in 1994, the changed context of our ecumenical relations has resulted in an extensive list of “serious disagreements on specific issues” which are itemised in *GTUM* 86, at the end of the section on *Discipleship and Holiness*. There can be no doubt that *GTUM* regards these issues as a pressing priority for our future dialogue and co-operation: “It is a matter of urgency that we take counsel, decide together, and act together in moral teaching, in order to guide and assist Christ’s disciples in the way of holiness and to witness credibly and effectively to God’s love and justice to the world” (§87).²²

Of particular concern in this regard is §86e, concerning marriage and human sexuality and the specific moral issues threatening to undermine the coherence of the Anglican Communion. As mentioned above, from the perspective of the Catholic Church, the current decisions facing the Anglican Communion concern not only discipline but also doctrine, and have vital consequences for Anglican–Roman Catholic relations. *GTUM* concisely states that there are also underlying questions of anthropology and of biblical hermeneutics which need to be addressed – a brief sentence inviting lengthy discussion and having important implications. In this same vein, in his reflections on the *Windsor Report*, Cardinal Kasper has noted the importance of jointly addressing “a question which is becoming increasingly acute, namely, the tension between the Gospel, as reflected in the apostolic witness, and the approaches and trends of our post-modern societies.”²³ The text recommends that consultative structures be developed within both Communion so as to obviate any expansion in the areas of disagreement (§87).

The section on *Discipleship and Holiness* also addresses the sacrament of marriage, and in that context, states with confidence that “(i)n both Communion, the husband and wife are the celebrants of the sacrament” (§85); a statement that is at once striking and challenging. While it acknowledges that marriage “has a naturally sacramental dimension” (§85) the precise meaning of this “natural sacramentality” is unclear and it has not been established by *GTUM* that the term “celebrants of the sacrament” would carry the same meaning for the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church.²⁴

In the light of these three sections it is helpful to follow the theme of communion and mission as it runs through the remaining six doctrinal sections of Part One before reflecting on the ways it is given concrete expression through the suggestions and invitations of Part Two.

²² While the Catholic Church would regard this as highly desirable if not essential to the furtherance of our dialogue, the strengthening of our relations and the effectiveness of our mission, for the Anglican Communion this could prove one of *GTUM*’s most challenging recommendations, since it calls upon the Communion to achieve in an ecumenical context what is already proving so elusive among and between the Anglican Provinces themselves.

²³ Letter of Cardinal Walter Kasper to Dr Rowan Williams, 17 December 2004, *Information Service* 118 (2005/I-II), pp.38-39.

²⁴ The theological understanding of matrimony within the Catholic Church is itself complex, covering as it does both sacramental and non-sacramental marriage. This too might prove a fruitful field of theological research in any future Anglican–Roman Catholic dialogue.

In *The Living Word of God* (§§26–32) we are made aware of ARCIC’s conviction that tradition²⁵ must be viewed as a servant of the temporal dimension of communion: “Properly understood, tradition is itself an act of communion whereby the Spirit unites the local churches of our day with those that preceded them in the one apostolic faith” (*GTUM* §27).

It has been noted earlier that *GTUM* presents issues for further theological exploration in a series of boxes within the relevant sections of the document. However, there is one occasion when a theological issue is identified in the text as a remaining difficulty or in need of further study but not adequately represented within the adjacent box, and it is found in this section on *The Living Word of God*, where it is stated: “We agree that the Church’s teaching, preaching and action must constantly be measured against the Scriptures; however the manner in which we each understand the Scriptures as ‘test and norm’ needs still more clarification” (§29). This too deserves to be highlighted in a boxed section since it is of fundamental importance in all other areas of Anglican–Roman Catholic dialogue.

The section on *Baptism* (§§33–38) focuses on the shared faith of Anglicans and Catholics that through baptism we are sacramentally incorporated into the Church as the Body of Christ. Our incorporation is regarded as something interior and hidden, a “spiritual communion”²⁶ which needs to be made manifest: “This spiritual communion of the baptised receives necessary expression in a visible community” (§36). More than this, the gift of ecclesial communion through baptism carries within it an imperative to engage in joint Christian life and evangelical action: “Our fundamental baptismal communion gives us the shared responsibility to witness as fully as possible to the Gospel of Christ before the world” (§38).

Where *GTUM* considers the *Eucharist* (§§39–49) it reiterates the shared faith of Anglicans and Catholics that “the visible communion of Christ’s body, entered through baptism, is nourished, deepened and expressed” when we receive the eucharist (§39). It is unusual for *GTUM* to quote from ecumenical documents other than ARCIC, but it seems appropriate for this section to draw upon the World Council of Churches’ Faith and Order Paper, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* given the participation of Anglican and Catholic representatives in its production. The issue concerning the scope of communion in time and space – “The communion established in the body of Christ is a communion with all Christians of all times and places” (*GTUM* §44) – has implications for our understanding of partial ecclesial communion which might also benefit from further theological reflection.

Despite the stated agreement on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (cf. §§39–44), Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist is more specific than what we find expressed in this section of *GTUM*. Here it would have been helpful had the document drawn upon the 1993 “Clarifications” noted above, and thus eliminated any possible interpretations which would fall outside of the parameters of Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist.

²⁵ *GTUM* Footnote 57 identifies tradition as “‘the traditionary process’, the handing on of the revealed truth” and thus distinguishes it from the corpus of revealed truth itself.

²⁶ The term “spiritual communion” which *GTUM* employs can be understood and is used by IARCCUM in more than one sense: this receives further consideration in the Commentary.

It is fitting that an episcopally led Commission should give serious consideration to the way that *episkope* serves the Church's communion. In the section on *Ministry* (§§50–61) ARCIC's view of the bishop as a minister of unity is expressed in sacramental terms: "The communion of the churches in mission, faith and holiness through time and space is thus symbolised and maintained in the bishop" (§54). Given the principal theological thrust of *GTUM* this can also be seen as relating to episcopal responsibility towards other bonds of communion: "In their dioceses, when they come together regionally, and at a world level, bishops have a special role in keeping the Church true to apostolic teaching and mission in conformity to the mind of Christ" (§55).

This section could have been strengthened in two ways. Firstly, *GTUM* speaks of ordination as being a "sacramental act" and as having a "sacramental nature" (§53), and adds that in the Eucharist the ordained ministry has "a particular sacramental configuration with Christ as High Priest" (§57), yet the term 'sacrament' is nowhere defined in the text. Such a definition would have brought greater clarity. Secondly, the boxed material treating the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate (§§60–61) might have stated more clearly that this is a church-dividing issue which is not merely disciplinary but doctrinal in nature.

Following upon the section on ministry and closely related to it is the text's treatment of the exercise of *Authority in the Church* (§62–76) which has, in *GTUM*'s quotation from ARCIC's *The Gift of Authority* (§32), "a radical missionary dimension". Again, *GTUM* emphasises the bishop's responsibility to exercise authority in appropriate interaction with the people of God at the service of ecclesial communion: "Bishops have...a special responsibility for promoting truth and discerning error and for preserving and promoting communion" (§66). The reflection in §70 on the need for "a ministry of primacy at every level of the Church's life as a visible link and focus of its communion" is clearly related by *GTUM* to ARCIC's sense of the value of a ministry of universal primacy "exercised by the Bishop of Rome, as a sign and focus of unity within a re-united Church" (§71).

In relation to this section I would offer two critiques. The first of these is the choice of the two examples cited in §74 to illustrate the recommendation in §73 "to reflect upon the relationship between local and universal in the life of the Church". The openness of the Anglican Communion to establish more robust "instruments of oversight" is paired with the readiness of the Catholic Church to "ensure consultation between the Bishop of Rome and the local churches prior to making important decisions". While there is a theological balance in asking our two Communion to address these issues, they cannot be equally weighted in terms of their immediate importance for ecclesial integrity and coherence. There is an urgency, both pragmatic and ecclesiological, about the question facing the Anglican Communion which is not reflected in the question before the Catholic Church, even though both questions are of long-term significance.

The second comment pertains to the text's consideration of the Catholic understanding of "infallibility". In §76 *GTUM* explains how infallibility serves the gift of ecclesial indefectibility, "whereby the Holy Spirit leads the Church into all truth." However, in reference to the exercise of an infallible teaching office, "in specific circumstances and under certain precise conditions" and by "those with a ministry of oversight, assisted by the

Holy Spirit” it could have been more plainly stated that the Catholic Church teaches that the magisterium represents under identifiable conditions a particular participation in the gift of infallibility which Christ has given to the Church.²⁷

In the last of the nine doctrinal sections in Part One IARCCUM is principally concerned with ARCIC’s most recent Agreed Statement *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, concluded in 2004 and presented in 2005, some four years after IARCCUM was itself established. *GTUM* acknowledges that “Christian understanding of Mary is inseparably linked with the doctrines of Christ and of the Church” (§89). Mary can be seen by Anglicans and Catholics as “paramount in the Communion of Saints” (§90) so that the Scriptures’ reflection on her life may be studied for what it reveals of the activity of the Holy Spirit translating her own experience of communion with God and within the Body of Christ into the Church’s earliest missionary and evangelical activity and so offering us a model of discipleship.

The import given by IARCCUM to the theology of communion and mission central to *GTUM* is summarised in the conclusion to Part One, *The Faith that Sets us Free* (§§93–95) and provides a graceful transition to the practical expression of this theology in Part Two. “The Commission has become more profoundly aware of how intimately connected are understanding and co-operation, faith and mission. It is our conviction that, as we grow towards full, ecclesial communion and respond afresh to the common mission entrusted to his Church by our Lord, the remaining Church-dividing issues will be resolved more effectively” (§94). This is a hope-filled but prudent assessment of the value of what is to be proposed in Part Two. *GTUM* does not claim that witnessing and engaging together in mission will lead to more speedy resolution of differences but emphasises the effectiveness and by implication the thoroughness of what is envisaged.

III. Part Two: *GTUM*’s Proposals for Common Mission

Towards Unity and Common Mission (§§96–126) offers suggestions and invitations to engage in joint work and common mission. It is divided into four sections which address the areas of worship, study, ministry and witness. The theological rationale for what follows is here set out as something compelling and, by implication, inviting the two Communion to take seriously the intrinsic link between theological convergence or agreement and practical steps flowing from the results of our dialogue. “Discerning a common faith challenges our churches to recognise that elements of sanctification and truth exist in each other’s ecclesial lives, and to develop those channels and practical expressions of co-operation by which a common life and mission may be generated and sustained” (§96).

That being said, *GTUM* is not a text which has been authoritatively received. As mentioned above, it will be important for those who read the document – most especially for bishops, to whom it is principally addressed – to evaluate very carefully the text’s specific proposals in the light of Catholic discipline and practice. In this brief section, I will offer some initial

²⁷ The First Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, *Pastor Aeternus* (18 July 1870) understands infallibility itself to be a gift to the Church when it makes the following solemn definition of papal infallibility: “when the Roman pontiff speaks ex cathedra...he possesses...that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals” (Chapter IV §9).

reflections on the proposals of Part Two in view of the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* and to a lesser degree, in light of other sources which inform Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement.²⁸

Before doing so, it should be reiterated that the local particularities of this relationship will colour the ways in which *GTUM* is received and the extent to which its suggestions can be acted upon. The text clearly acknowledges this: “There may be compelling reasons why some of the suggestions and invitations...are neither appropriate nor feasible in some local contexts” (*GTUM* §99). They are also likely to influence the reception of and the response to the text by bishops. This will be particularly significant where Anglican and Catholic bishops have an opportunity to reflect together on *GTUM* in pairs or groups within a region.²⁹ Anglican–Roman Catholic relations are internationally uneven, insofar as they move at variable speeds as appropriate in different places and in a way which may reflect regional and national variations in the priorities facing both our Communion.

As mentioned in the introduction, relations are uneven in the present context above all because of diverse stances on the moral and ecclesiological questions at the heart of current tensions in the Anglican Communion. For this reason in particular, what is recommended will need to be nationally and locally received as well as locally adjusted for its effective implementation. Where stances have been adopted which move an Anglican diocese or province further from Catholic teaching on doctrinal matters, and where there is significant internal conflict within a diocese or province, there is likely to be a very limited scope for joint practical initiatives. So it may well be the case that some of *GTUM*'s invitations and suggestions will present a considerable challenge in one context and yet be an already existing feature of ecumenical co-operation in another. The *Ecumenical Directory* anticipates the need for such local discernment: “The nature of the ecumenical activity undertaken in a particular region will always be influenced by the particular character of the local ecumenical situation. The choice of appropriate ecumenical involvement pertains especially to the Bishop who must take account of the specific responsibilities and challenges that are characteristic for his diocese” (§31).

As will be evident, most of the proposals put forward by IARCCUM – though not all – are either authorised by the *Ecumenical Directory* or consistent with its principles. This is not to say every initiative proposed would be equally appropriate for Anglicans and Catholics in all places and at all times, but it follows that it would fall within the proper competence of bishops to make decisions in this regard. *GTUM*'s Part Two would have been more functional had the Commission referenced authoritative sources relating to each particular suggestion; this would have provided a useful resource for the local and regional discernment which inevitably must take place.

²⁸ For ease of expression this Commentary will henceforth refer to the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* published by the PCPCU in 1993 as the *Ecumenical Directory*.

²⁹ So, for example, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales met in November 2006 with members of the Church of England House of Bishops and episcopal representatives of the (Anglican) Church in Wales and reflected *inter alia* on the IARCCUM process, its implications for ecumenical episcopal co-operation and on some disputed issues needing further theological reflection. This meeting was in response to the Mississauga *Action Plan* of 2000 which mandated IARCCUM to “encourage a joint meeting of bishops at the level of Provinces and Episcopal Conferences”.

1. *Worship*

Visible expressions of our shared faith (§§100–103) considers opportunities in the context of public worship to express our common faith together, principally though not exclusively in connection with baptism and the eucharist. The suggestions of *GTUM* generally respect the limits governing sacramental as well as non-sacramental liturgical worship required of Roman Catholics by the *Ecumenical Directory*. However, it could be convincingly argued that the encouragement to prepare common catechetical resources for use in baptismal and confirmation preparation and in Sunday Schools (§100) stretches beyond the parameters of the *Ecumenical Directory*. Pastoral initiatives involving catechesis and sacramental life presuppose doctrinal agreement, and while Anglicans and Catholics recognise each other's baptism, *GTUM* touches only briefly on the sacrament of confirmation (§37) and further theological dialogue in this regard may be deemed necessary. Likewise, common catechetical materials for Sunday Schools could be beneficial, but that would depend on the subjects being addressed.

The suggestions in *GTUM* for common prayer, and those which build on a common baptism or the renewal of baptism, are particularly encouraging and practicable. By their nature, these suggestions are manageable within the setting of the local church and it would be possible to envisage an arrangement in which an Anglican diocese and a Roman Catholic diocese might offer to pilot one or more of the proposals so that they might ultimately be considered by a Province and a Bishops' Conference working together.

It should be obvious to Catholics that the prayer enjoined upon the two Communions for “the local bishop of the other church as well as for their own bishop” (§103) envisages inclusion in the intercessory or bidding prayers during the liturgy rather than in the course of the Eucharistic Prayer, but *GTUM*'s phrasing could lead to misinterpretation if not read with due care and with reference to the principles governing Roman Catholic ecumenical engagement.³⁰

In its reflection on the ecumenical experience of *koinonia* and the ways in which this is to become visible in our joint life and mission *GTUM* uses the term “spiritual communion” on a number of occasions. The ways in which the term is used could cause for some Catholics a degree of ambiguity. They also suggest that the particular dimension of communion which *GTUM* is seeking to describe might itself benefit from further theological reflection in the context of our growing common understanding of *koinonia*.

The bishops of IARCCUM used the term themselves in describing a part of the task that they had undertaken: “The Commission began intensive work on...the development of strategies to translate the degree of spiritual communion that has been achieved into visible and practical outcomes.”³¹ Here the Commission seems to be indicating by “spiritual communion” the inner reality of that real though imperfect relationship (between Anglicans

³⁰ “Public prayer for other Christians, living or dead, and for the needs and intentions of other Churches or ecclesial Communities and their spiritual heads may be offered during the litanies and other invocations of a liturgical service, but not during the Eucharistic Anaphora. Ancient Christian liturgical and ecclesiological tradition permits the specific mention in the Eucharistic Anaphora only of the names of persons who are in full communion with the Church celebrating the Eucharist” (*Ecumenical Directory* §121).

³¹ *Communiqué*, First Plenary Meeting of IARCCUM, 24 November 2001, *op. cit.*

and Catholics) which is brought about through baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit, has the capacity to grow and deepen, and shows itself in the visible communion of the Body of Christ. *GTUM* echoes this understanding in its section on *Baptism* where it asserts: “This spiritual communion of the baptised receives necessary visible expression in a visible community...” (§36).

However, in Part Two’s account of some strategies to foster the visible expression of shared faith *GTUM* employs the term in a subtly changed way. Where it encourages Anglicans and Roman Catholics to attend one another’s Eucharists (always “respecting the different disciplines of our churches”) *GTUM* explains: “While this would take the form of non-communicating attendance in each other’s churches, it would nonetheless initiate a renewed awareness of spiritual communion” (§101).³² The text implies that this “spiritual communion” may find visible expression in the giving and receiving of “a blessing which has become a regular practice in some places for those who may not receive holy communion” (§101). Although *GTUM* does not call for this explicitly, further ecumenical study of the relationship between “spiritual communion”, the sacraments of initiation and ecclesial identity could help us come to a deeper common understanding of the dimensions of *koinonia* and of its visible expressions.

2. Study

GTUM reflects the mandate given to IARCCUM where it encourages *Joint study of our faith* (§§104–107) so that we may live out our real though imperfect communion more effectively. Such study, especially of the Agreed Statements of ARCIC “can help Anglicans and Roman Catholics to identify the constitutive elements of the Church in each other’s life and witness and, as they discern elements in common, can assist them to consider how they may come together in the living of them” (§105). When studying ARCIC’s Agreed Statements, it would be important to indicate that most of these texts have not been responded to authoritatively by the Catholic Church or by the Anglican Communion, and at this point are published as the work of the Commission.

This section draws attention to the 1997 text of the PCPCU on *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those Engaged in Pastoral Work*,³³ and draws various suggestions from it (as well as from the *Ecumenical Directory*), in particular pertaining to the joint study of the Scriptures. The encouragement to develop common hermeneutical principles (§104) is helpful, as reaching a deeper common understanding of the Scriptures would be greatly beneficial to our relations. *GTUM* does not make any suggestions as to who would be well suited to carry out such a project; perhaps this is a project which could be undertaken by ARCIC.

³² Many (perhaps mainly older) Roman Catholics would be familiar with the once very common practice of “making a Spiritual Communion” at the moment during Mass when the Body and Blood of the Lord are being administered and, for a variety of reasons, they chose or were required to be non-communicant. This “Spiritual Communion” was understood as a moment of personal, non-sacramental union with Christ and its communal dimension would have been largely disregarded.

³³ Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1997.

3. *Ministry*

One particular invitation of *Co-operation in ministry* (§§108–117) is made specifically to Anglican and Roman Catholic primates and hierarchies in an appeal relating as much to the maintenance and safe-guarding of the present degree of communion as to its potential for deepening. “We also encourage Anglican and Roman Catholic leaders, on both the international and national levels, to consult one another as fully as possible before crucial decisions touching the unity of the Church are taken in matters of faith, order or moral life” (§109). The value which the members of IARCCUM place on the influence of this consultation has already borne fruit in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations and provides a complementary theme taken up later within this Commentary.

It is heartening that *GTUM* singles out interchurch families as especially deserving recipients of shared pastoral and spiritual care. Interchurch families have a particular ecclesial significance, in part because they experience continuously and most intimately both the reality and the imperfections of the communion which Anglicans and Roman Catholics share. So the text is careful to recommend a specific approach: “Of particular concern in the area of ministry is the need to develop programmes of joint pastoral care for interchurch families (including marriage preparation) and to find ways to minister to their concerns” (§116). Such pastoral care and marriage preparation would need to be attentive to the principles set forth in the *Ecumenical Directory* (§§143–160). It would help to highlight both the needs of interchurch families, and that much may be learnt from their experience and insights, if the ecclesial significance of interchurch families could be further explored within our two Communion.

One proposal from this section invites consideration of the “possible association of Anglican bishops with Roman Catholic bishops in their *ad limina* visits to Rome” (§111). This echoes the proposal made in ARCIC’s 1999 statement *The Gift of Authority* (§59). I would argue that this suggestion requires a great deal more reflection. When a national or regional group of bishops come together with Peter’s successor, there is a strong experience and expression of communion, which is qualitatively different from the experience of an ecumenical gathering of bishops whose churches share a partial communion. *GTUM*’s suggestion comes in the context of significant ecumenical work and interest in the Petrine ministry, which is most encouraging. Even so, the proposal to associate Anglican bishops with *ad limina* visits has not been formally encouraged by the Holy See, and I would suggest that the proposal should not be encouraged until it has received an authoritative response from the sponsoring bodies. There may be a time in our relations when this would be appropriate, but perhaps that time has yet to come.

Several proposals in this section – for regional meetings of Anglican and Catholic bishops, for joint pastoral statements on matters of common concern, for the invitation to attend each other’s synodical and collegial gatherings as observers – are common practice in many regions, and have done a great deal to strengthen relations and to foster common witness. The proposals in §112 calling for aspects of joint formation and theological education could also prove fruitful, but such initiatives should be careful to work within the parameters set in the *Ecumenical Directory* and *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those Engaged in Pastoral Work*.

4. *Witness*

A compelling ecclesiological argument underlining the need for the joint life and mission which should flow from the state of our present communion is affirmed in the final section of Part Two, *Shared witness in the world* (§§118–125). As the universal sacrament of salvation the Church both prefigures and serves to bring about the perfect unity of the Kingdom of God which God wills for all men and women. “We recognise the intimate relationship between the unity of the Church, the peace and well-being of the human community, and the integrity of all creation” (§118). It follows that, although this truth is manifest in its fullness within the Catholic Church, our experience of imperfect communion with the baptised of other Churches and ecclesial communities continues to impede the complete effectiveness of our witness and service and spurs us on to resolve our differences. We are offered a powerful motive of the Church’s ability to change the world – as yet not fully realised – for committing our two Communion to a greater expression of common life and mission.

While it is helpful that these invitations and suggestions are thematically arranged it seems a pity that *GTUM* has not suggested a general approach towards prioritising them. At the same time, in this document IARCCUM exhibits a respect for the process of reception, appropriate adaptation and adoption which *GTUM* encourages, implying that it would be the task of Anglican and Catholic bishops together (or of Anglican Provinces and Catholic Episcopal Conferences) to seek to prioritise and customise the recommendations made.

IV. **Four Complementary Themes**

Alongside the principal theological assertion of *GTUM* there are four related and recurrent themes which are present either explicitly or implicitly in the document. These lend weight to and illustrate the significance of the central theme. Three of them focus in the main on the Anglican–Roman Catholic relationship, as it is and as it might develop, while the fourth reflects on the nature of the Anglican Communion and our developing understanding together of its role as a partner in dialogue.

The first of these themes, already alluded to, is the necessity and value of consultation. This had been itemised in the *Mississauga Action Plan* as an instrument that might be used by partners in dialogue to influence one another’s decision-making bodies in defence of the current degree of communion. The bishops then envisaged IARCCUM “examining ways of ensuring formal consultation prior to one Church making decisions on matters of faith and morals which would affect the other Church, keeping in view the Agreed Statements of ARCIC” (*Mississauga Action Plan*).

In its reflection on *Discipleship and Holiness* *GTUM* is aware that the process of convergence to which our two Communion are committed could be halted and even gradually reversed by the pressure of divergence. “We agree that there is a danger that areas of disagreement between us could expand as new issues and new contexts rapidly emerge. We need to study together and develop common structures for decision making” (§87).

Part Two reiterates the need for consultation and, by way of concrete proposal, suggests that: “Wherever possible, ordained and lay observers can be invited to attend each other’s synodical and collegial gatherings and conferences” (§109). The difficulties associated with implementing this recommendation would vary according to the nature of the decision-making bodies themselves within each of the two Communion. Another opportunity for consultation relates to the need for consistency in dialogue where more than one dialogue partner is engaged and it becomes important both for bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations to ensure that what is agreed with one ecumenical partner is at least consonant with what is agreed with another. So as to achieve this and “to extend the parameters of agreement in faith which we have reached, we strongly encourage close consultation when one of us engages in a new ecumenical partnership with another church, whether locally, regionally or at world level” (§123).³⁴

In the context of Anglican–Roman Catholic relations the most significant example of such consultation, already referred to above, is the invitation issued by Dr Rowan Williams to Cardinal Kasper “to join him in setting up a joint ad-hoc sub-commission made up of IARCCUM and ARCIC members to reflect...on the ecclesiological issues facing Anglicans”³⁵ following the decisions taken by the Episcopal Church of the United States of America and within the Anglican Church of Canada. As a consequence of this invitation the Ecclesiology Sub-Commission presented its *Reflections* (8 June 2004) to the Lambeth Commission whose mandate was fulfilled on completion of the *Windsor Report* in October 2004.

Two elements complete this process of consultation. Cardinal Kasper was asked by Archbishop Williams to write a letter on the *Windsor Report* and, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, travelled to London for conversations with him and staff of the Anglican Communion Office.³⁶ In his letter to Dr Williams Cardinal Kasper re-affirms the Catholic Church’s willingness to engage in this consultation: “In a spirit of ecumenical partnership and friendship, we are ready to support this process in whatever ways are appropriate and requested.”³⁷ Formal consultation at this level is unprecedented in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations and offers a good, working example of the context within which and out of which *GTUM* seeks to encourage such formal co-operation.³⁸

³⁴ This observation could also be significant for the maintenance of communion within the Anglican Communion, especially where there are existing ecumenical agreements between an ecumenical partner and one or more Anglican Provinces not formally involving other Anglican Provinces. An important example of this is the *Porvoo Common Statement* of 1996 between the British and Irish Anglican Provinces and most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches. At question here is the possibility of Anglicans and Catholics moving beyond the descriptions offered in *GTUM* §§21 and 22 towards an agreed understanding of what it means for churches to be in full communion.

³⁵ *Update on Relations with the Anglican Communion*, 27 April 2005, *op. cit.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Letter of Cardinal Walter Kasper to Dr Rowan Williams, 17 December 2004, *op. cit.*

³⁸ At a national level this important formal consultation is mirrored by the invitation of the Church of England to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales to send a Roman Catholic observer to participate in the House of Bishops’ Working Party on Women in the Episcopate. The Working Party was chaired by the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Rev Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, a member of IARCCUM, and the Report, entitled *Women Bishops in the Church of England?* – though widely referred to as the *Rochester Report* – was published in 2004.

Another important theme that is closely related to *GTUM*'s advice about consultation and that is crucial to the process that produced the Agreed Statement is the influence of periodic personal encounters between the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury. In both of our Communion these encounters are viewed as more than symbolic and they have frequently led to the dialogue taking a fresh direction or being given fresh impetus.

When Pope John Paul II addressed the members of IARCCUM in 2001 he chronicled the sequence of meetings which he and his predecessor Pope Paul VI had had with successive Archbishops of Canterbury and indicated the advances in dialogue to follow each encounter. So the establishment of ARCIC, the "new impetus" in Anglican–Roman Catholic relations leading to the second phase of ARCIC and the inauguration of IARCCUM each succeeded a meeting in which the personal commitment of Pope and Archbishop and their ecumenical convictions as Church leaders were to bear fruit in the development of formal structures to serve dialogue and communion.³⁹

Pope Benedict XVI emphasised the significance of these encounters at his meeting with Dr Rowan Williams in November 2006 forty years after the visit of Dr Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in 1966. "The visits of Archbishops of Canterbury to the Holy See have served to strengthen those [Anglican–Roman Catholic] relations and have played an important role in addressing the obstacles which keep us apart."⁴⁰ It is a mark of the frankness and trust which these meetings have fostered that Pope Benedict was able to refer in this context to Dr Williams' public utterances "about the strains and difficulties besetting the Anglican Communion and consequently about the uncertainty of the future of the Communion itself" and to the vital importance of these issues for Anglican–Roman Catholic relations.⁴¹

A commitment to consultative procedures and the opportunities for personal meetings between the leaders of our two Communion represent two ways in which our real though imperfect communion can find expression in joint witness and mission. A third expression, episcopal collaboration between Anglican and Catholic bishops, is both encouraged and, because of IARCCUM's *modus operandi*, is also modelled by *GTUM*.

IARCCUM was established as "an episcopally led body aimed at fostering practical initiatives that would give expression to the degree of faith shared by Anglicans and Catholics."⁴² It came into being because of the meeting of the bishops at Mississauga who reflected in prayer and study on their experience as bishops together and consequently wished to share the benefits of this experience through the existence and work of IARCCUM. In their Preface to *GTUM* the Co-Chairmen of IARCCUM have emphasised that "this text has been prepared by bishops and is addressed primarily to bishops" (even though they hope that bishops will consult widely about its implications). The latter point is reiterated in *GTUM*'s concluding exhortation: "We the bishops of IARCCUM strongly commend these suggestions to members of the episcopate around the world" (§126).

³⁹ Address of Pope John Paul II to the members of IARCCUM, 24 November 2001, *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ Address of Pope Benedict XVI to Dr Rowan Williams, 23 November 2006, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Update on Relations with the Anglican Communion*, 27 April 2005, *op. cit.*

In *GTUM*'s section on *Ministry* we are reminded that the bishop is a sign and instrument of communion in its temporal and spatial dimensions, holding the churches together in mission, faith and holiness, and that episcopal collegiality is a servant and guarantor of apostolicity (§§54 and 55). Since this is true of bishops who exercise their ministry together and in full communion with one another within a Church it ought also to be a characteristic, *mutatis mutandis*, of bishops working and witnessing together ecumenically so as to manifest, preserve and assist in deepening our real though partial communion. IARCCUM offers a model of real though imperfect ecumenical episcopal collegiality at an international level, complementing and always consonant with the occasional personal meetings between Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury. In the Mississauga *Action Plan* the Commission was mandated to encourage national and regional meetings of bishops wherever possible, and discussion of *GTUM* would provide the obvious starting point for such gatherings. Such meetings may have less common ground to build on where relationships have been complicated by recent developments. However, decades of fostering deeper relations may have created a local climate in which frank exchange about the ecumenical implications of possible decisions would be appropriate and welcomed.

The fourth complementary theme differs from the others in that it concerns the ecclesiology of the Anglican Communion and so touches on what is internal to its life and mission. At the Plenary Meeting of the PCPCU in 2003 this issue was touched upon in the Introductory Report of the President: "Our collaboration with the Anglican Communion highlights the current problem and aporia of ecumenism: namely the emergence of new ethical problems and the internal fragmentation of an Ecclesial Communion...While not intending to interfere, it should be borne in mind that as ecumenical partners we are not simply observers, but active participants".⁴³

As was noted earlier the Anglican Communion consulted the Catholic Church about the issues threatening the Communion's own integrity and Cardinal Kasper's letter to Dr Rowan Williams (17 December 2004) commends the practical steps envisaged by the *Windsor Report* to place the autonomy of the Anglican Provinces more securely within the interdependence of the Anglican Communion. Among the ways of strengthening the bonds of communion proposed by the *Windsor Report* three are highlighted in Cardinal Kasper's letter: "especially the interpretation of provincial autonomy in terms of interdependence, thus 'subject to limits generated by the commitments of communion' (n. 79). Related to this is the Report's thrust towards strengthening the supra-provincial authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury (nn. 109–110) and the proposal of an Anglican Covenant which would 'make explicit and forceful the loyalty and bonds of affection which govern the relationships between the churches of the Communion' (n. 118)."⁴⁴

The Catholic Church is concerned to see the maintenance of the Anglican Communion's ecclesial identity and coherence insofar as these reflect the ecclesiology of the Second

⁴³ Introductory Report of the President, Cardinal Walter Kasper, to PCPCU 2003 Plenary Meeting, *Information Service* 115 (2004/I-II), p.28. Earlier in his report Cardinal Kasper listed some of the new ethical problems ("issues such as abortion, divorce, euthanasia, homosexuality...") and added: "Disputes among the autocephalous Orthodox Churches, within the Anglican Communion, within the Reformed ecclesial communities and, at times, within the Catholic Church itself, are destructive for ecumenical dialogue" (II §2).

⁴⁴ Letter of Cardinal Walter Kasper to Dr Rowan Williams, 17 December 2004, *op. cit.*

Vatican Council and are therefore a sure basis for our ecumenical relations. Forty years of dialogue and the invitation to proffer its view both equip and permit the Catholic Church to reflect on the ecclesial identity of the Anglican Communion in a way that would once have been considered impossible. It is an indication that the coherence of the Anglican Communion matters to the Catholic Church as an important dimension of the real though imperfect communion that holds us together in Christ: “allowing an enhancement of our understanding of the Anglican Communion precisely as a communion. For the continuation of our ecumenical dialogue, it is important for us to have a clear understanding of who our partner is.”⁴⁵

In the light of these concerns it is clear that the communion ecclesiology summarised in *GTUM* has implications for the Anglican Communion in terms of its own mission (“mission is harmed when communion is lacking” §17) and regarding the role, purpose and style of primatial ministry (“The communion of the Church requires a ministry of primacy at every level of the Church’s life...” §70). The Agreed Statement sees that a fundamental area for further theological reflection is “the relationship between local and universal in the life of the Church, and in particular: on the place and authority of regional and national structures” (§73). It goes on to detail the particular issue germane in this context: “The question of whether the Anglican Communion is open to instruments of oversight that would allow decisions to be reached which in certain circumstances would bind the members of every province is an important and topical one” (§74). Since this question can only be answered by and within the Anglican Communion (even if in consultation with the Catholic Church) *GTUM* is wise to remain non-committal. However, the Anglican response will no doubt have a significant impact on Anglican–Roman Catholic relations in the future.

Concluding Comments

The author of this Commentary was recently able to discuss *GTUM* with two of the members of IARCCUM, one Anglican, and the other Roman Catholic. Each emphasised an issue which would be of significance not only at the level of the relationship between our two Communion but just as significantly at the national and local levels where Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops live and work together. Such consideration of the implications of the Agreed Statement at local level, by bishops, clergy and laity, is what the document envisages and encourages. At the same time it is important to recall that *GTUM* requires some formal recognition by the ecclesial authorities to whom it is presented so that it may be used fruitfully and with confidence by Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

The first of these issues is that for some Anglicans there will be concerns that the Anglican Communion, in moving towards greater conciliarity and the proposed Covenant, may need some kind of jurisdictional framework and that this might fall within the pastoral care of a re-received ministry of universal primacy. In such circumstances how might the legitimate patrimony of Anglicans be honoured, preserved and promoted? The other issue is that for

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* As noted earlier in this Commentary, “the continuation of our ecumenical dialogue” suggests a possible third phase of ARCIC when the dialogue might turn its attention to what the letter identifies as one of the “underlying questions of broad ecumenical significance: the relationship between the universal Church and the local church”.

some Catholics it may be of particular importance that Part Two of *GTUM* foresees a co-operation in which Anglicans and Catholics work and witness together as equal partners, especially in those places where Anglicanism has a special status or established position. Discussion of such issues, arising at local or national level, will surely strengthen the culture of dialogue that must accompany our reflection on practical proposals.

Looking to the future of Anglican–Roman Catholic dialogue we should feel encouraged by the Catholic Church’s conviction that in a relationship in Christ of real though imperfect ecclesial communion the *reality* of that communion is fundamental to the relationship. Only on the basis of that existing communion is it possible to fashion a dialogue about the remaining or emerging *imperfections* in our communion which can then lead us towards an experience of fuller or less imperfect communion. Thus, even emerging obstacles to communion between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church can be the subject of a dialogue that we believe continues to lead us towards full, visible unity.

For both the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church in *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission offers: “a glimpse of what has been achieved already, a realistic view of the setbacks encountered, and an agenda for future discussion.”⁴⁶ As such it deserves to be welcomed and further studied by our two Communiones so that the present reality of our ecumenical relations may be more clearly understood and the real though partial communion we enjoy may become more visible in effective witness and mission.

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15 June 2007

⁴⁶ Dr Michael Nazir-Ali (Anglican member of IARCCUM) speaking at Leeds, England, 14 November 2006.