

This agreed statement by the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches affirms that *koinonia* (communion) is grounded in the life of the Triune God, in which we are invited to participate together. It is God's gift for the life of the Church, to be lived out responsibly in God's world.

The report looks at the theological foundations of *koinonia*, how the Church's ecclesiology might be understood in the light of it, and at the implications for living with conflict and engaging in mission.

'We encourage our two communions publicly and consciously to recommit to deepening that unity we already share in the *koinonia* given in creation and uniquely renewed in Christ.'

This report builds on the 1984 report *God's Reign and Our Unity*.

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Koinonia:

God's Gift and Calling

The Hiroshima Report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue (IRAD) 2020



Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling

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Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling

The Hiroshima Report of the International
Reformed–Anglican Dialogue (IRAD)

2020

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Preface by the Co-Chairs

We are happy to introduce the report of the International Reformed–Anglican Dialogue (IRAD), which took place from 2015 to 2020. In accordance with our mandate, the commission reflected on the underlying nature of the Christian faith which the two traditions share, and explored the language of communion, informed by the biblical concept of *koinonia*. Our two Communion have been wrestling with what it means to be a communion within our own ecclesial tradition, and this has served as a point of mutual identification and connection in the pursuit of this dialogue.

IRAD came to a deeper understanding of *koinonia* as grounded in the life of the Triune God, in which we are invited to participate together. *Koinonia* is God's gift for the life of the Church, to be lived out responsibly in God's world.

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The diverse contexts within which the meetings took place highlighted the plurality and richness of the traditions and cultures which constitute the Reformed and Anglican Communions and the need for dialogues to be rooted in specific places as well as at the global level. It is our hope that the work of this dialogue will be able to take forward this focus on both the local and the global settings of the two Communions.

The work of IRAD builds on the report of the predecessor body the Anglican–Reformed International Commission, produced in 1984, *God's Reign and Our Unity*. The 1984 dialogue helpfully influenced regional dialogues across the world, but was taken forward in a limited way internationally. Although the 1984 report urged the advancement of the work it had begun, there has been a thirty-one-year gap in the formal international conversation, between that report and the start of this new dialogue in 2015.

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Two underlying factors influenced the current dialogue. The first was that, despite the helpful insights of *God's Reign and Our Unity*, the 1984 report was perceived as offering a more organizational and structural focus. The need was therefore identified to pursue a new pathway for the 2015 dialogue. The second was the way in which the World Council of Churches since its formation in 1948 and ecumenical dialogues since the 1960s have given attention to the nature of communion. Reflection on the understanding of communion led to the significant development of the thinking about *koinonia* that is offered in this report.

We were blessed by our meetings happening in five different contexts. Each of these helped to shape our thinking, and to emphasize the need for attention to the contexts in which the churches find themselves and what can be learnt in specific contexts. For example, in Kerala, India, the unity of the Church of South India was seen as a gift which could be received more widely,

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and in Cambridge, participation in the shared worship of a local Church of England and United Reformed Church congregation was a source of celebration. (More detailed attention to each context is given in the Introduction to the report.)

After a journey sharing insights from Scripture, history, theology, and mission with regard to *koinonia*, IRAD concluded, 'We encourage our two communions publicly and consciously to recommit to deepening that unity we already share in the *koinonia* given in creation and uniquely renewed in Christ.'

The IRAD report covers three areas, and it is our hope that each will receive due attention as part of the whole. The first looks at the theological foundations of *koinonia*, including scriptural and historical understandings. The second examines understandings of ecclesiology in the light of *koinonia*. The third highlights the role of *koinonia* in terms of an understanding of mission.

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The members of IRAD hope and pray that the conclusions can be taken up, and prayed about, reflected upon, and acted upon, locally, nationally, regionally across the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, for the sake of the fulfilment of God's *koinonia* in the church and the world. We invite people across each level of the churches' life to share their stories of *koinonia* with each other.

The significance of this work was brought home to us as the report was being finalized, when the coronavirus pandemic broke out. It has reinforced the need for different traditions to look at where they can come more closely together, for the sake of a suffering world. We are grateful for the work of IRAD, particularly in offering the insights on God's gift of *koinonia*, and how we can participate better together in this gift, and embody Christ's suffering and risen life more fully in God's world.

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We were blessed on our journey by those who travelled part of the way with the dialogue team, but who, for a range of reasons, were unable to complete the mandate with us. These include the Most Revd David Chillingworth, the first Anglican Co-Chair, who made a significant contribution in the early years of the dialogue, and a range of other representatives from around the world who made helpful contributions during parts of the dialogue process. (The full list of names of people can be seen in Appendix 4 at the end of the report.) In each country in which we met we were grateful for the input from guests from that country. Each of these helped to create the sense of *koinonia* in our shared journey.

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We give thanks for the support and hard work of the Co-Secretaries who serviced the dialogue, including The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, The Revd Neil Vigers, The Revd Dr Douwe Visser, The Revd Dr Hanns Lessing, Dr Aruna Gnanadason, and the support staff from the Anglican and Reformed Communions.

The Most Revd Dr Howard Gregory

Anglican Communion

Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch

World Communion of Reformed Churches

Introduction

When representatives of the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) met in 2011 to discuss resuming formal bilateral dialogue, already both bodies had been reflecting internally on the meaning of a ‘communion’ and noted the potential fruitfulness of exploration of the subject together. This report of the 2015–19 International Reformed–Anglican Dialogue (IRAD) flows from a desire to deepen our Communion’s understanding of communion, or *koinonia*, in light of new and emerging questions about the nature of Christian fellowship, because *koinonia* is the context in which all other ecumenical questions may be located.

In this dialogue, we have preferred to use the Greek term for communion, *koinonia*, which has enabled us to refresh and broaden our thinking about the Church and her mission. *Koinonia*—meaning communion,

Kochi, Kerala, India, October 2015

IRAD's first meeting took place in Kochi, India, hosted by the Church of South India (CSI). The formation of the CSI on 27 September 1947 is considered the beginning of the reunification of the fragmented Body of Christ in the region. The CSI brought together four major ecclesiastical traditions—Anglican, Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist—to form a united church, which adopted governing and theological elements from all these denominations. The Church stands as a witness to koinonia in the fragmented society of India, where people are divided in the name of creed, caste, race, and region. Since the Anglican Communion and the WCRC are both in full communion with the CSI, both the Anglicans and Reformed members of the dialogue were 'at home' there.

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fellowship, sharing, participation, and partnership—refers to sharing together in a reality that is greater than ourselves and our own individual needs. The language of *koinonia* roots us in the New Testament, the early Church, and our different but shared experiences of the Reformation. Emphasizing *koinonia* offers the Church a fresh opening and renewed language about how to live together, encompassing unity and diversity within and between churches and in relationship with the whole of creation.

This report reflects on the nature of *koinonia* as God's gift and calling. The Anglican Communion and the WCRC have recognized a longing in the wider Church for an enriched and renewed way of life—particularly new ways to live and act together intentionally in *koinonia*. For many years the idea of *koinonia* has been a formative concept in the ecumenical movement. The Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order in 1993 emphatically underlined its significance: 'This *koinonia*

Cambridge, England, August 2016

The second meeting of IRAD took place in the serene setting of Clare College, Cambridge, England. Within the English context, the historic memories of painful conflict and discrimination continue to echo in the lives of the churches today. In Cambridge, the members of IRAD attended the Eucharist at St Luke's Church, a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church. Worshipping there, IRAD encountered a congregation for whom the distinction between Anglican and Reformed was an external one. At St Luke's, there was a simply one community, an expression of koinonia. This was illustrated by a song during worship, 'We are the Church Together', which was led by congregation members of diverse ages, levels of ability, walks of life, and countries of origin.

which we share is nothing less than the reconciling presence of the love of God. God wills unity for the Church, for humanity, and for creation because God is a *koinonia* of love, the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This *koinonia* comes to us as a gift we can only accept in gratitude. Gratitude, however, is not passivity. Our *koinonia* is in the Holy Spirit who moves us to action. The *koinonia* we experience drives us to seek that visible unity which can adequately embody our *koinonia* with God and one another.¹

Despite the pause in formal dialogue between our Communion after 1984, this report builds on *God's Reign and Our Unity*, particularly the implications of the claim that in our baptism we are already made one body in Christ.² The members of IRAD hope that a focus on *koinonia* will bring the churches of our two Communion closer together in worship, fellowship, and mission, locally and globally; as we read in the First Letter of John: 'We declare to you what was from

Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa,
August 2017

The third meeting of IRAD took place in South Africa, whose peoples and churches have suffered much from the experience of apartheid—itsself a denial, rejection, and distortion of God's call to communion. Visiting historical sites such as the Mandela Capture Site and Museum underlined issues of historical memory and the yearning for truth, justice, and reconciliation.

The group also listened carefully to South African Christians participating in public spheres of democratic life, such as the young student leaders in the #FeesMustFall movement working against the commodification of education. ...

the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ... that you also may have fellowship [*koinonia*] with us; and truly our fellowship [*koinonia*] is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete' (1 Jn 1.1-4).

IRAD's discussions about *koinonia* emerged not only from ecumenical concerns, but from the reality that both Anglican and Reformed Christians have been experiencing fierce internal struggles and threats of division within our respective Communion, as well as in society at large. In other words, the fullness of *koinonia* is not always what is experienced within and between churches; God's gift of *koinonia* is not always fully received. Our dialogue thus flowed from several questions: Can communion contain conflict so that conflict loses its power to divide? What are the responsibilities and mutual accountabilities inherent

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... Churches continue to hold conflicting positions in post-apartheid South Africa—some actively supporting the status quo, some passively supporting the status quo through silence and complicity, and some actively struggling against life-denying realities and for more life-giving forms of communion in church and society. This raised the critical question of what it means to be a 'responsible' communion within and beyond our diverse contexts, a question with which our Communion must continue to wrestle.

in Christian fellowship? What are the broader implications of such an understanding of *koinonia*? Both the Reformed and Anglican Communities have grappled with these questions—as two separate communities, and together during these five years of dialogue.

The chapters that follow are responses to such questions. The first chapter, ‘The Foundations of *Koinonia*’, reflects on the shared scriptural and historical foundations of our two Communities, and in particular common affirmations of *koinonia*. The second chapter, ‘*Koinonia* in the Church’, considers how God’s calling to live in *koinonia* is manifested in Christian communities, but also how the gift of *koinonia* has not always been fully received or experienced in the Church. St Paul asked the divided church in Corinth, ‘Has Christ been divided?’ (1 Cor 1.13). This report recognizes that the Body of Christ, the Church, is wounded in its impaired reception of *koinonia*, but that Christ cannot be divided.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada,
September 2018

At the fourth IRAD meeting in Vancouver, Canada, the members of IRAD were welcomed by the Musqueam people, on whose land the group met. IRAD members heard the stories of Cree and Gitksan First Nations individuals who were formerly students at residential schools, and worshipped at The Longhouse Council of Native Ministry of the United Church of Canada in Vancouver. The Canadian churches continue a journey from colonial oppression of indigenous people towards reconciliation and healing. Hearing the experiences of First Nations people marked a new encounter with the effects of denied, distorted, and rejected communion on the part of the churches themselves. This deepened IRAD's commitment to its theological reflection on koinonia to reflect the social and political call, challenge, and demand of God's gift of communion.

Koinonia is thus a way of life and a continual calling to be in fellowship and communion together. The third chapter, ‘*Koinonia* in Mission’, contemplates the wider consequences of *koinonia* beyond the Church—across humanity, and throughout God’s creation in struggles for justice, peace, and ecological sustainability.

A. *Koinonia*

Drawing from the long ecumenical engagement with the meaning of *koinonia*, this report explores various aspects of *koinonia* in theology, ecclesiology, and missiology:

- *Koinonia* flows out of the interpersonal life of the Trinity into the personal relationality of human existence.
- *Koinonia* is scripturally complex and multidimensional; its essence is found in Old

Hiroshima, Japan, August 2019

For its fifth meeting, IRAD gathered in the city of Hiroshima, Japan. The city's destruction by an atomic bomb during the Second World War remains the iconic image of the human capacity to reject koinonia. The group was deeply moved to hear atomic bomb survivor Ms Keiko Ogura share her experience of 6 August 1945. Together, IRAD members visited the Peace Park and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and bore witness to the devastation of the bombing. IRAD also worshipped at the Anglican Church of the Resurrection, and experienced the powerful hope embodied in Hiroshima's commitment to peace and nuclear disarmament. This experience deepened IRAD's commitment to koinonia as embodying peace-making in the Church and in the world.

Testament covenant and prophetic theology, in the New Testament in the person and work of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit, and throughout the early Church.

- *Koinonia* is rooted in worship, specifically in the proclamation of the Word of God through Scripture, and in the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist.
- *Koinonia* leads to fellowship and dialogue within and between different churches and traditions, and works against lasting division and segregation.
- *Koinonia* has an eschatological dimension, as the Spirit leads from the past and present to a future of communion in fullness.
- *Koinonia* frames a missiological understanding of God's world as interconnected and interdependent.

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- *Koinonia* encompasses accountability and responsibility for one another and all of God's creation. The social and moral dimensions of *koinonia* require life-giving stewardship of God's gifts.

B. The Dialogue

At every meeting, IRAD members were sustained by celebrations of Holy Communion in the Anglican and Reformed traditions, and by shared morning and evening prayer. This reiterated that lived *koinonia* flows from worship. IRAD's work was also strongly influenced by the contexts in which the meetings took place. Members were inspired and moved by the work of local churches and organizations. Moreover, IRAD members perceived the energy of lived *koinonia* in the joy and pain witnessed in each meeting location. These experiences led the discussion to shift away from trying to resolve questions of ministry in order to affirm *koinonia*, to instead affirming that *koinonia* is a gift already experienced in many ways, including standing together against the evils of the world. Within this understanding of *koinonia*, IRAD found vision and hope that might re-centre the conversation about shared ministry in the future. Rather than emphasizing

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classical 'faith and order' questions of unity, this report suggests an orientation towards more fully receiving and living the gift of *koinonia*—a trajectory that emerged in part from meaningful experiences of *koinonia* in local settings.

A Central African image offered by one of the IRAD members repeatedly provoked the commission's thinking: that of sharing a family meal. It is an image that carries multiple meanings and can be understood in many ways. In a family meal, there is one shared pot and one meal, and all sit at the same table—a vision of *koinonia*. However, there are times when family members disagree and do not communicate well. They can hurt each other. Some may choose not to share in the meal at all. Still, the family leaves the eating pot out for the one who might some day return to family fellowship. So also with *koinonia*. Communion may not be perfect, and reception of the gift can be impaired

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or rejected, but in the Church's calling to *koinonia* we repent of our brokenness and remain ready to receive one another in *koinonia* again.

This report on *koinonia* is presented to the Anglican Communion and the WCRC as an offering to wounded Church in its ongoing search for *koinonia*: 'How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!' (Ps 133.1).

I. The Foundations of *Koinonia*

A. *Koinonia*: Gift of the Triune God

1. *Koinonia* finds its origin in the dynamism of the life of the Triune God. It comes to us as a gift. It overflows to us from the beautiful and holy truth of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—love and grace in relationship. The Trinity itself manifests the personal interconnectedness of perfect unity and difference in abiding and caring community. The totality of creation, which embodies complexity and beauty, was deemed ‘very good’ by God the Creator (Gen 1.31). Within the diversity of the Body of Christ, *koinonia* is both gift and calling; we are formed into a new creation as one and many (2 Cor 5.17), a creation born of the reconciling power of Christ. As disciples of Jesus, we continually grow into God’s loving *koinonia*, bearing witness together as part of something larger than ourselves.

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2. As is affirmed in *God's Reign and Our Unity*, the 'Church is sent into the world as sign, instrument and first-fruits of a reality which comes from beyond history—the Kingdom, or reign of God'.³ The Church is 'a people in pilgrimage',⁴ and we are on a journey, called by Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit, into the reign of God. Thus, full recognition and reception of the gift of *koinonia* and the unity of the Church is the goal yet to be reached. However, in this pilgrimage our Communion have shared worship together and received one another's hospitality in Christ, and have encountered common scriptural and theological touchstones on the path.

3. All Christian thinking about the Church is necessarily rooted in how Christian communities have received the *mysterium fidei*, the mystery of faith. God is the object of our wonder and the source of all life, joy, and love. All of creation speaks of the glory of God, and revelation, principally in Scripture and

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through the historic common traditions and earliest doctrinal formations, is primary and fundamental to how we speak of God and God's ways with the world. God's own being is inseparable from God's action and self-revelation, to the extent that we see, in the pages of Scripture, how from the first moments of creation God is establishing a dynamic relationship with that creation, rich in its intended variety, declared to be very good and commanded to be fruitful.

B. Scriptural Witness to *Koinonia*

4. In Genesis 1 it is at God's will and command that the world springs to life. All creation is therefore in relationship with the divine life which brought it into being. Made in the image and likeness of God, humankind shares in this dynamic relationship in particular ways, as responsible stewards who are commanded to be fruitful and multiply, and as agents of the divine gift of relationship both in the creation

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of new life and in community (Gen 2–3). This pattern of receiving and sharing in God's own dynamic life is fundamental to the narrative of salvation history: it is the story of creation and redemption, of salvation and sanctification.

5. The Bible reveals this pattern of God's engagement with the world in the act of creation and throughout the story of covenant and election—themes central to the ongoing theological lives and histories of both our traditions. Since the beginning of creation, God has sought covenant relationship with creation in order to establish community. Israel's relationship with God is always defined by covenant (Ex 19.5, 24.3ff.; Josh 24.25). Covenant signifies this close relationship without compromising the truth that the entire relationship is based on the sovereign grace of God. God enters into covenant with individuals such as Noah (Gen 9.12–16) and Abraham (Gen 17), and with the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Ex 34.28); and into a new covenant

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that seals restoration from exile (Jer 31.31-37). God's covenant involves the search for justice (Mic 6.8; Isa 1.17); God's desire is to widen this covenant to bring all nations towards eternal communion (Isa 2.2-4, 60.3). The pattern is an all-embracing one, reaffirmed in the vocation of the people of Israel to be a priestly blessing to all nations. Through them all are invited on pilgrimage to Mount Zion, where they will discover how they, too, are citizens of Jerusalem and will find their origin and fulfilment at the heart of God's limitless creativity (Ps 87). Covenant implies the idea of communion between God and human beings.

6. Covenant emphasizes the relational and communal aspect of life, including human relationships with each other and with all creation. Specifically, human beings do not live for themselves but in mutual commitment to each other and God's created world. Likewise, 'covenant' is often an appropriate description of the relationship between God and God's people

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even where the word 'covenant' (*berit*) is not used (e.g. Jer 7.23, 24.7, 30.22). In the Old Testament there is a close connection between covenant and steadfast love (*hesed*). The Lord keeps covenant and shows steadfast love and faithfulness (1 Kings 8.23; 2 Chr 6.14; Neh 1.5, 9.32; Ps 89.28), and calls God's people to show hospitality and care for the widow and orphan (Deut 14.29), and for the stranger who resides in the land to be loved as oneself (Lev 19.33–34). Israel's covenanted obligations are reasserted by the prophets as the foundation of social responsibility, or, as Anglicans and Reformed have learnt to say in this dialogue say, of 'responsible communion'.

7. In the New Testament, *koinonia* is the fundamental unity of the Body of Christ, which is not corrupted by either the diversity of its members or the variety of opinions about the organization of the Church or engagement in its life. *Koinonia* is as complex and

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multidimensional as the Church itself. *Koinonia* is a divine *gift*, given to the Church by the grace of the Holy Spirit; a *challenge* that the Church is called to meet day by day; and an eschatological reality that will be fulfilled completely in the world to come (Eph 2.19–22; Rev 7.9).

8. This multidimensional reality of *koinonia* in the New Testament is expressed in texts of Paul: it is God who calls believers to *koinonia* with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1.9), and brings them into the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13.13), which comes from God (1 Cor 2.12). Thus, the *koinonia* that is expressed within the community of the faithful flows from the dynamic vibrancy of the divine *koinonia* into the self-giving of the Church for the good of all creation. As the three persons of the Trinity are distinct and yet exist in perfect unity, the Church is many, yet one Body.

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9. However, the scriptural witness also testifies to incomplete or inadequate receptions of the gift of *koinonia*, or even its rejection. The disobedience of Adam and Eve, the sin of Cain, the arrogance of power of the Babylonians, and the unfaithfulness of the Israelites in the wilderness and in the history of Israel (constantly denounced by the prophets) all show that humanity can refuse to hear God's call and choose not to receive and live out God's irrevocable gift. Such examples are not confined to the Old Testament. The *koinonia* represented by the collection for the Jerusalem church is diminished when members of the Corinthian community claim conflicting identities, some in Paul, some in Apollos, some in Cephas, and some in Christ (1 Cor 1.12). Their exclusionary boundaries prevented people from participating at the Lord's Table (1 Cor 11.17–22).

10. However, diversity does not in itself militate against *koinonia*. Care needs to be taken when constructing

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identities to ensure that the fundamental gift and call of God can be shared within and beyond the Body. In the reversal of Babel in the Luke-Acts Pentecost story, *koinonia* encompasses diversity rather than limits it, and opens particular cultures to one another so that in Christ we hear one another, 'each of us, in our native language' (Acts 2.8).

II. God's gift of *koinonia*, fundamentally given in creation and renewed uniquely in Christ, is a gift which is irreversible and unbreakable at the extremes of both divine self-emptying (*kenosis*) and human suffering. In the Scriptures, the gift continues to draw people into new relationships of transformation even when it appears to be mortally threatened. The cosmic reconciliation effected through the cross and resurrection reveals that at the very moment *koinonia* appears to be broken (e.g. Jesus's cry of dereliction, the tearing into two of the veil of the Temple, etc.), a new richness and fresh unity is being unveiled.

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This communion is the irreversible achievement of Jesus's cross and resurrection, confirming the permanence of God's reign into which all are invited.

12. Our two Communion testifies with the Church throughout the ages that the activity of the Triune God is most perfectly revealed in the gift of creation and in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The *incarnation* is the renewal of God's covenant in creation and the election of Israel, and the healing of Adam's fall. The Gospels are full of accounts of how this gift is shared.

13. When Jesus is born and the shepherds hurry to Bethlehem, social boundaries are redefined. Jesus pursues his ministry of *koinonia*, notably through table fellowship with the outcast, with the unclean, with women, and with those from the traditional religious establishment who come to him in faith (Mk 2.13-17; Lk 14.1; Jn 12.1-3). Christ, whose new humanity

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inaugurates the last days (the *eschaton*) in which the healing of all creation is promised, is the agent of a restored *koinonia* for those who come to him.

14. The resurrection is a forward-looking, eschatological event that inaugurates the new creation. Paul's phrase 'in Christ'⁵ reminds us that the believer shares in this new creation by sharing in *resurrection* (Rom 6.1–5). The Risen Lord is frequently identified with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 15.45; 2 Cor 3.17). Through sharing this *koinonia*, those who proclaim Christ's death and resurrection become one Body for worship and mission. This points to the corporate salvation, which sees the embodiment of the divine perfection of humanity in a community of faith, the Body of Christ. As sign and servant of the coming Kingdom that Body becomes sacramental, as Christ is the ultimate Sacrament through whom the full riches of God's promises for the whole of creation are known and realized.

C. Theological and Historical Witness of the Church

15. The Anglican–Orthodox dialogue report *The Church of the Triune God* emphasizes the Trinitarian grounding of this complex reality: the communion manifested in the life of the Church has the Trinitarian fellowship as its basis, model, and ultimate goal. Conversely, the communion of the Persons of the Holy Trinity creates, structures, and expounds the mystery of the communion experienced in the Church. It is within and by the Church that we come to know the Trinity, and by the Trinity that we come to understand the Church because ‘the Church is full of Trinity’.⁶

16. Our Communion drinks deeply from the wells of the patristic period, reminding us that the biblical record has always been received and interpreted. John Chrysostom made a clear and necessary connection between *koinonia* and the Church: ‘Ekklesia [church]

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means assembly. It is not a name of separation but a name of unity and concord.⁷ Or, as Augustine put it, the whole Christ is Jesus and his Body.⁸ Our dialogue, while delighting in particular gifts and in the individual believer's encounter with the Risen Christ, is clear that this relationship—mystical and eschatological—is fundamentally with the Church, as Christ's Body, of which each believer is a member (Rom 12.5; 1 Cor 12.12–27; Eph 3.6, 5.23; Col 1.18, 1.24). We receive the Spirit not simply as individuals, but as members of that eschatological community which is Christ's Body.

17. Our dialogue has therefore avoided setting creation and redemption against each. The *koinonia*, renewed and intensified through Jesus's incarnation, cross, and resurrection, and the work of the Holy Spirit, are what gives renewed life to creation itself. John Calvin, an influential theologian in both our Communion, asserts that creation testifies to God's manifestation of perfection 'in the whole structure of the universe ...

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[God's] essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending all human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraven in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none ... can plead ignorance as their excuse.⁹ Creation is shot through with God's creative and redemptive glory that calls humankind to Godself.

18. The reality that *koinonia* is a gift from the Triune God to be shared and lived out together is testified to in many ecumenical agreements. As *The Church of the Triune God* reminds us, the Church is not primarily a sociological phenomenon, but a gift of God the Holy Trinity.¹⁰ This gift is mediated through Christ and the Holy Spirit, and offered to the world so that all may believe and participate in the life of the Kingdom. As *God's Reign and Our Unity* testifies, this gift, the Church, is not an end in itself, but rather a 'sign and foretaste of the kingdom' and 'the first-fruits and sign of that promise which is for all mankind'.¹¹ God's covenant in creation,

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irreversibly renewed and intensified in redemption, comes to us through *koinonia*, God's fundamental gift which invites people into a transformed relationship of reconciliation, justice, and love.

19. Both our Communions recognize the call, in communion, to engage with the whole of Scripture in its diverse patterns. Through prayer, preaching, biblical study, and contextual reflections, we discern the will of God. Drawing on Scripture, tradition, and theological understanding, Anglican and Reformed Churches have much in common and share clear family likenesses. However, the challenge remains to engage the differences between the two families of Churches, and thus fully receive each other as gift. The work of this dialogue is a refreshed emphasis on God's gift of *koinonia*, which is both challenge and responsibility, in order to develop a deeper shared understanding of the Church and of mission. This is the context in which to consider further theological questions.

II. *Koinonia* in the Church

20. As Anglicans and Reformed have already affirmed together in *God's Reign and Our Unity*, our common baptism draws us into *koinonia* relationships with one another. We enter an eschatological and mystical relationship with Christ through the Spirit, which is a corporate form of sanctification, through which the baptized participate in the Lord's glory. 'Baptism means, therefore, the participation of believers through the Spirit in what Christ has done for us and continues to do for us as he shares with us his communion with the Father and his mission to the world.'¹²

21. Baptism is the initiation into a life of dying and rising with Christ (Rom 6.1-11; 2 Cor 4.7-15), sharing with him his ministry as the servant in the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection, immersed in his liberating death where our sins are buried, where the 'old Adam' is crucified with

Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling

Christ and the power of sin is broken.¹³ Baptism is the foundation of our *koinonia* in the Church, which embodies *koinonia* and points to a fuller *koinonia* in the Kingdom of God. 'The one baptism is therefore our common incorporation into Christ, into this common life of shared worship and mission in him. It is the visible and effective sign and seal of that gracious work of the Spirit by which the Church is constituted.'¹⁴

22. Thus, we live in the dynamic embrace of God's eternal movement towards reconciliation and *koinonia*. In our dialogue we have found significant convergence about the fundamental 'givenness' of this *koinonia*, and a remarkable unity in our common view that this gift of communion—perceivable in creation, witnessed to in Scripture, and revealed fully in redemption—is an unbreakable reality which springs from the vibrancy of the divine life itself. As our two Communion had already stated together in 1984: 'If we are as realistic about baptism as the apostolic writers are, then we are

II. Koinonia in the Church

already by our baptism one body, and the continued separation of our two communions is a public denial of what we are already in Christ.’¹⁵

23. The depth of this *koinonia* is revealed in mutual sharing, mutual recognition, mutual respect, and mutual belonging, in which unique gifts of individuals and groups are recognized and honoured as part of a larger whole (1 Cor 12). *Koinonia* is not merely a form of Christian behaviour or a spiritual exercise to be practised, but a relational way of being together in Christ, in whom we are being shaped ever more fully ‘from one degree of glory to another’ (2 Cor 3.18). Christ is the hospitable host at the table where all are fed with compassion, love, and forgiveness, and where we are at home together as family rather than strangers. The very nature of *koinonia* as communion and relationship means it is a gift to be received, not only personally but as one within the Body, a fellowship in Christ across time in the communion of saints.

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A. Liturgy

24. *Koinonia* is manifest in prayer and worship together. The primary purpose of the Church is the worship of the Triune God, which flows out in service to the world. Its liturgies are constitutive of its life—in particular in the preaching of the Word and in the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper. This is fundamental to the Church's life in Christ, to its proclamation of his death and resurrection, and to its participation in the divine *koinonia* and the commission to serve.¹⁶ In the breaking of bread we participate in one Body (1 Cor 10.16–18, 11.23–29).

25. *Koinonia* is experienced uniquely when we are one Body in the praise and worship of our Lord and Creator. Our common use of the Lord's Prayer gives expression to our common life in Christ. The liturgies of the Church give expression to the sharing of people's joys and sufferings, and to the support and care which

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members of the community give each other as they worship together.

26. *Koinonia* is also found in the apostolicity of the Church, expressed liturgically in Scripture, and in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. The Church, of which our Communion is a part, is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These are also the marks of the *koinonia* in which we are caught up as we participate in worship. As Churches of our two Communion have affirmed together on several occasions: 'We acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.'¹⁷

27. The IRAD commission was particularly impressed by how this commitment to unity is being lived out in the united churches in South Asia, in which Christians from Anglican, Reformed, Congregationalist, and

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Baptist backgrounds are already united for decades. The dialogue started in 2015 with a meeting in Kerala, where the commission was hosted by the Church of South India, which regards the unity of the Church as a central tenet of its vision: 'The Church of South India (CSI) affirms that the purpose of the union is to fulfil the priestly prayer of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church "That they all may be one, and that the world may believe that you have sent me". And the Church of South India would become an effective instrument of God's mission so there will be greater peace, closer fellowship and fuller life in the Church and a renewed commitment for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed.'¹⁸

II. Koinonia in the Church

B. Nurturing the Life of *Koinonia*

28. In the Anglican and Reformed traditions *koinonia* is expressed in consultative leadership and collective discernment in different ways. We believe that the movement of the Spirit is perceived and received in the unity and diversity of synodal and conciliar assemblies.¹⁹ As a sign and servant of God's design for the world, the Church lives into its calling and being as *koinonia*, and offers itself as a community of compassion and justice shaped by the love of Christ for and with the world. The unity and *koinonia* of the Church are celebrated and nurtured, overseen and safeguarded by the ministry of oversight (episcopate), embodied in different ways in our two traditions signifying the Church's catholicity and apostolicity.²⁰ Our own church structures will need careful attention—even transformation and development through self-critique and aided by insights from other parts of the Body—to ensure that they are porous to the gift of *koinonia*.

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29. In Christ, we are freed to love one another (Gal 5.1). In listening well to each other, we trust that seeing from a different perspective can be a way in which God speaks to us and builds up the community of the Church. In the diversity held together within *koinonia*, faithful attention to our differences prompts us to test and explore the limits of our vision, softens our pride and brittleness, and broadens our receptivity. Such relationship requires deep humility and self-giving that is continually open to conversion and change. Our Churches need to be formed in patience and respect for one another, not rushing to close down complex discussions or to resolve every disagreement artificially. Instead they need to renew our trust in the *koinonia* which is the irreversible achievement of the Paschal Mystery in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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30. Jesus's ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing builds new kinds of community that surpassed social, religious, and economic boundaries. In this proclamation of the Kingdom Jesus reaches out relentlessly to those considered separate. Jesus invites us to share with him in this ministry.

31. Dialogue is a vital reality within and between Christian communities that creates a beautiful space in which we both give and receive, opening us to one another and enlarging our understanding of the ways God works. Dialogue thus deepens our *koinonia*. None of us holds complete knowledge of God or truth, and we find reassurance and courage in the opportunity to partner with others in our seeking. Here are the fruits of *koinonia*: we are freed to engage each other's traditions because our posture is already one of responsiveness to the other. We seek to learn of the work of the Spirit in the other's experiences and traditions.

C. Healing and Wholeness

32. Because *koinonia* is a radical and primary gift of God, we believe it has the power to transform conflict. As disciples, we carry an abiding hope for healthy, just, and whole relationships with others, as well as an earnest desire for reconciliation and the healing of divided and broken communities. We have considered in this dialogue whether *koinonia* can contain conflict so that conflict loses its power to divide. We are learning that difference and disagreement are not in opposition to the unity and catholicity of the Church. Even extremely demanding difference and conflict have the potential to teach us more fully about *koinonia* precisely because they demand empathy, deep listening, patience, and humility, which are also necessary for relationships that deepen and grow rather than fracture. Though conflict can be destructive, the gift of *koinonia* turns us away from a posture of defence and persuasion towards one of honest listening and a desire for mutual

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understanding. In the redemptive work of Christ, *koinonia* disarms destructive conflict. The fullness of *koinonia* amid diversity moves us beyond our fear so as to approach others with curiosity, openness, and compassion.

33. The empathy, deep listening, patience, and humility that are gifts of *koinonia* also reflect a decidedly ethical imperative: *koinonia* requires us to attend to who has not been fully included. If God's desire is to reconcile all things and God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5.18–19), we must be willing to embrace those with whom we are not in relationship, and those who might otherwise be unnoticed or dismissed. There is an important space for the prophetic ministry of speaking truth. At the same time, aligning with God's reconciling ministry in the world often requires us to ask for perspective from others and to repent for the limitations of our vision and understanding, for we see only in a mirror, dimly (1 Cor 13.12).

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34. Furthermore, when relationships are damaged or broken, God's reconciliatory mission insists that we never close the door to the possibility of healing. We may have been the ones to walk away, or who have been left out, and yet we repeatedly offer hospitality, which is a mark of *koinonia*. *Koinonia* encourages us to cultivate the virtue of humility, which allows us to acknowledge where we have all fallen short. Likewise, *koinonia* does not allow us to be satisfied with division, or to be comforted by a sense of self-righteousness when division occurs.

35. Division is present within and between our ecclesial bodies. Ecumenical discussion has frequently spoken of how communion is 'impaired' between churches. This IRAD dialogue, however, prefers the language of how *koinonia* has been 'variously received' in the different traditions within and between our Communion. We fail to receive the gift of *koinonia* when we do not rejoice in the fundamental and unbreakable unity we have with

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our brothers and sisters in Christ. Though we affirm that God has created and willed diversity, we often see variety and difference as sources of disagreement and conflict, and thus as a hindrance to *koinonia*. Sometimes, in a desire to safeguard our understanding of the Gospel, we adopt positions of defence and rigidity that leave us unable to see the face of God in our siblings in the Body of Christ. Though all are born with a capacity for full and just participation in *koinonia*, too often we limit God's family to those who look like us, sound like us, or agree with us. In all of these our reception of the gift of *koinonia* is incomplete; though the gift is given, we do not accept it in fullness.

36. The Christian life requires ethical and moral responsibility, in which demands are laid upon our thinking and behaviour, our action and restraint (Rom 14.1-4). *Koinonia* strengthens and encourages that which is life-giving and seeks to overcome that which is life-denying, both within the Christian community

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and beyond. *Koinonia* may be enacted as 'responsible communion', in which belonging to one another is a call both to fellowship and to particular kinds of ecclesial relationship, including mutual responsiveness, shared interpretation, accountability, and solidarity. While our responsibility is to care for *koinonia*, power and position can be abused and voices unjustly silenced. Sinful behaviour is found both within the Church and outside it, for example, abuse, marginalization, xenophobia, and dehumanization—which cannot be tolerated anywhere. The temptation of a superficial pretence of 'unity', which masks unjust, coercive, or exploitative relationships or communities, must be exposed and resisted.

37. We recognize the seriousness and complexity of the conflicts within the community of faith. There are personal fallouts, high tensions over theological, social, and ethical matters, and the experience of longing for what is seen as life-giving (Jn 10.10) being denied or swamped by others. The stakes are high. There may be

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occasions where temporary separation seems necessary. But since *koinonia* is a divine gift, such separation can never be final, and the door has to be left open for re-examination, forgiveness, and repentance for all.

38. And yet, before they become causes of separation, conflicts can become opportunities for even deeper engagement and relationship, the seeking of greater understanding, a continuing in prayer and worship together as we await further clarity and wisdom. We bear 'with one another in love' (Eph 4.2). The gift of *koinonia* eternally and radically reaches out, always seeking to bring people in rather than keeping them out. The table fellowship Jesus shared with Pharisees, tax collectors,²¹ and Gentiles is an example of what *koinonia* requires of us: that we come to a table where all might some day eat together. The kinship we have in Christ's *koinonia* is a recognition of our mutual interdependence, participation, solidarity, and belonging, which so grips us that we are unwilling to say in absolute terms,

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'I have no need of you' (1 Cor 12.21). In fact, in *koinonia*, any 'I have no need of you' is *anathema*, a denial of the very being of God who wills reconciliation and calls us into friendship, despite our finitude and fallenness. The reconciling presence of the love of God is the very nature and mission of God, because the Triune God is a *koinonia* of love.

39. Both our Communion celebrate *koinonia* as formational in its richness, in the embrace of its welcome, and in the joy of its abundance. The power of *koinonia*—both the experience and the absence of it—can cultivate an even greater longing for its fulfilment. We are formed and moulded by *koinonia*, such that our hope for God's reign itself becomes *koinonia*-oriented. Anything less than the fullness of relationship and reconciliation is simply incomplete. When we do not receive one another in *koinonia*, we experience the emptiness and loss as a wound, both individually and collectively. When we are divided from one another,

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we feel the pain of being wrenched apart from that to which we are to be connected. The maiming of the Body of Christ is sinful. A festering injury to the Body can be healed only with restoration, repentance, reconciliation, and the return of self-giving love, the ministry of Christ himself. Though some wounds run so deep as to be unhealable in a human lifetime, we do not give up hope. We pray and work for the day when *koinonia* will be fully received as God desires, when the Church has grown into the full stature of Christ (Eph 4.13), and Christ will be all in all (Eph 1.23).

III. *Koinonia* in Mission

A. *Koinonia* for God's World

40. *God's Reign and Our Unity* described the Church 'as a pilgrim people called to a journey whose goal is nothing less than God's blessed Kingdom embracing all nations and all creation, a sign, instrument and foretaste of God's purpose "to sum up all things with Christ as head" (Eph 1.10). It is only in this missionary and eschatological perspective that the question of unity is rightly seen.'²² The gift of *koinonia* given by God in Christ empowers God's people to be a community of faith, hope, and love. In baptism Christians are grafted into the *koinonia* of the Body of Christ, who is the 'firstborn of all creation', 'through him and for him' everything has been created (Col 1.15-16). And as a result, Christians are called to lives shaped by the invitation to and challenge of mission (Mt 28.16-20). The implications of *koinonia* are life-changing and profound; in *koinonia*, it is impossible to ignore responsibility to and for one other.

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This 'responsible communion' points to the interconnection and interrelatedness of all God's creation, in which all have a part to play.

41. The Christian commitment to justice and peace comes from the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Sin is judged and found wanting, and the new horizon of hope is opened up through our repentance and faith. Human community can be reshaped by the bonds of love. Barriers of race, class, and gender will be crossed. There is good news for the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, and liberty for those who have been oppressed (Lk 4.18). To receive the gift of *koinonia* prompts proclamation in life and words of the love, hospitality, reconciliation, and justice that characterize the Triune God, as the Church is sent out without reserve to share in God's mission of reconciliation, which extends to all people and all of creation.

III. Koinonia in Mission

42. *Koinonia* is received and experienced in the worshipping and witnessing life of the Church in its manifold forms and expressions. This gift is for the sake of the whole world. The Church is sign and servant of missional *koinonia*, the missional life of God in the power of the Holy Spirit to celebrate life and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces. God summons the Church to participate in reconciliation, justice, healing, and peace for a wounded and divided creation. As a missional people, the Church seeks the transformation of the world by proclaiming God's loving presence, witnessing to God's justice and reconciliation, and bringing new and abundant life.

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B. Living out the Missional *Koinonia*

Opening to Radical Hospitality

43. In embracing this *koinonia* the missional community will open itself to radical hospitality. Hospitality—extended and received—is a pattern of *koinonia* in the life and teaching of Christ himself (Lk 11.37–42, 19.1–10; Jn 12.1–2). This is a way of life into which Christians are drawn and from which we are sent. Following the example of Jesus, missional communities will be characterized by openness to receiving the neighbour, the stranger, and those who are frequently excluded by church and wider society. In seeing the world from the perspective of the margins and acting in solidarity with them, the missional community has a chance to become a witness to the *koinonia* that surpasses the divisions of a world torn apart by division, conflict, and exploitation.

III. Koinonia in Mission

44. God's hospitality extends beyond humanity to all creation (Ps 24.1). The Gospel is good news for the whole of creation and every aspect of life and society. *Koinonia* is calling as well as gift, summoning us to nurture the interconnectedness of our common home: a gift meant for the care and well-being of all (Gen 1; Ps 8). Living out God's *koinonia* precludes the commodification and exploitation of all creation. Creation glorifies the Creator, who is the author of this web of *koinonia* between and among humanity, the natural world, and the whole creation.

Embodying Justice

45. The *koinonia* that the living God gives to the Church likewise embodies the justice and righteousness of God.²³ Life in *koinonia* manifests the interdependence of all spheres of human experience, including the spiritual and the political, the personal and the public,

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the domestic and the civic. God's *koinonia* is just, and human injustice is a denial, distortion, and rejection of *koinonia*. It is an imperative to defend and uphold just relationships for the well-being of humanity and all of creation.

46. The call of *koinonia* is to act justly (Mic 6.8). Missional *koinonia* entails courageous participation in life-affirming action in and for humanity and all of creation. Justice is served through discerning God's will in creation and God's intention for the world. This necessitates paying careful attention to contextual nuance and the specificity of culture and place. *Koinonia* is not abstract but is experienced in particular lives and situations as Christ's call is heard afresh in every age.

47. *Koinonia* compels us to see and embrace those who are most in need (Mt 25.40). Within societies, there are multiple 'centres' of power and many who are

III. Koinonia in Mission

pushed to 'margins'. Those in the centres often have their rights, freedoms, and individuality affirmed and respected, while others are excluded from justice and dignity. Threats to life are particularly acute for those on the margins. That any person or community would be relegated to margins is itself an indication that *koinonia* is distorted and has yet to be fully received.

48. Yet *koinonia* is not an expression of charity from the powerful to the powerless. It is a manifestation of communion with God, humanity, and all of creation. In contrast to prevailing social patterns, in life together in *koinonia* the experiences and perspectives of people on the margins are valued, lifted up, and considered transformational for the whole. This is a profoundly important theological insight; it is not simply an incorporation of marginalized persons into existing systems and structures. Those at the margins become witnessing agents of life-transforming *koinonia*.²⁴

Koinonia: God's Gift and Calling

Affirming Life

49. *Koinonia* is especially tangible in communities that open themselves to participating in God's life-giving mission together. As churches acknowledge their frailty, woundedness, brokenness, fear, and pain, they open themselves to hear more fully what God is saying. Often our sisters and brothers in Christ are the ones who prompt us to repentance and deeper faithfulness, leading us into healing so that our life in mission is renewed.

50. God also speaks to the Church from voices outside its own structures in the midst of national and global upheavals. At the same time, the temptation for the Church to covet, exercise, and align itself with life-denying power and influence can raise serious questions about the integrity of ecclesial critique of power systems. Moreover, the ability of the Church to speak truth to power can be compromised.

III. Koinonia in Mission

51. Life-denying socio-economic and religio-political forces challenge the Church to engage in cathartic processes of repentance, remoulding, and transformation. Through *koinonia* Christians participate in a communion of wounded and broken people who respond to God's gift of grace. As sign and servant of *koinonia* the Church offers ministries of healing even as it recognizes its own woundedness and vulnerability (2 Cor 12.9).

52. Even so, the Church's reception and subsequent offering of *koinonia* to the wider world has been and continues to be compromised by hypocrisy as we fail to participate faithfully in the ministry of Jesus. For many this is a scandal. As sign and servant of God's *koinonia* Christians are called for the good of the Church and the world to transcend the walls we build around ourselves. The call to repent and the need to deepen commitment to missional *koinonia* is thus imperative as a summons to truth. Dialogue leads to renewal in the *missio Dei*,²⁵

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as together with Christ we bear witness to truth (Jn 18.37).

53. It is critical for mission that the Church finds ways to attend to conflict without allowing it continually to divide. The Church is called to demonstrate in meaningful and practical ways that differences in contextual identity and lived experience must not compromise the affirmation and reception of God's gift, *koinonia*. Missional *koinonia* transcends false and life-restricting barriers and emphasizes the oneness of God's gift, which is a foretaste of the abundant life promised for all creation.

III. Koinonia in Mission

C. Crossing to the Other Side

54. In every time and place missional *koinonia* must be expressed in relevant and contextual ways as part of the Church's faith, hope, and love. Missional communities are challenged to move beyond mere maintenance of their structures and institutions and to engage together in life-giving ministry and mission, so that the world may believe (Jn 17.21). Entering more deeply into *koinonia* together compels followers of Jesus into courageous missional engagement that crosses dangerous frontiers with moving feet, open minds, and growing hearts, affirming that we are interconnected and one in the Body of Christ, entrusted with the precious treasure of the Gospel.

55. The Gospel of Mark speaks of Jesus calming the storm and crossing the Sea of Galilee to the other side (4.35–5.21). This faith-driven encounter has many lessons from which we may learn. Entering into *koinonia* with

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Jesus, walking in the way of the cross, means repeatedly 'going over to the other side', wherever that may be. We encounter our own vulnerability and fragility (Heb 13.12–13) and discover in *koinonia* the source of our own healing. Mission goes beyond the physical healing of wounds and seeks reconciliation and restoration of fullness of life in the faith, hope, and love that one day all will share the same table.

56. This missional journey is frightening and destabilizing, and takes the disciples into new, unfamiliar environments across the sea where they encounter people who are demonized, stigmatized, and marginalized. But in Jesus's gift of peace, their faith is renewed, and they recognize the unrestricted capacity of his power. The gift of faith stirred up and renewed in the disciples gives them the confidence to enter the unknown and witness Christ's liberation and healing of those held captive by death. In this way, *koinonia* is realized in God's world.

IV. Summary of Our Findings for Use in Our Two Communions

A. The Good News of *Koinonia*: A Message of Hope to a World Torn Apart by Division, Conflict, and Exploitation

57. Anglicans and Reformed assert strongly that *koinonia* is a gift of God for the whole of creation. It is a participation in the divine life, through which we encounter the eschatological gift of the new creation even in a world torn apart by division, conflict, and exploitation.

58. This *koinonia* is God's gift uniquely renewed in Jesus Christ. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is called in a particular way to be sign and servant of the Kingdom of God. Together, our Communions celebrate the goodness of creation and God's gift of salvation which is offered to the whole world.

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59. Together our Communion believe that this abundant, life-giving *koinonia* inspires a sense of gratitude in the life of our Churches. Even in situations of conflict, great danger, marginalization, secularization, or persecution, the irrevocable gift of *koinonia* inspires joyful confidence in all the churches as they seek to share the relational abundance of Christ with those around them.

B. *Koinonia*: A Gift and a Calling for the Whole Church

60. The gift of *koinonia* has strong implications for the Church's life and health. Despite the real pain of historical separation and manifold disagreement, the nature of *koinonia* as gift was never ours to possess alone nor to deny to one another. There are profound implications for how we speak of one another, and of our Churches' sharing in the same *koinonia*.

IV. Summary of Our Findings

Thanks to the abundance of God's gift, it is inappropriate and inaccurate to speak of having been 'in or out' of communion with one other.

61. In receiving the divine gift we recognize God's calling to testify to the gift of *koinonia* in the life of the Church, to share the gift of *koinonia* in our mission to the world. The sharing of this gift is an act of proclamation and mission, obeying the Lord's call to make new disciples. Our two Communion also witness to the current incompleteness of the Church's life. This is sometimes due to our partial reception of the divine gift itself. It is also because the whole truth belongs to the whole Church, so while our Communion are united in the fundamentals of the Gospel, each will need to be open to insights which emerge from the other for the integrity of the whole Body of Christ. Our Communion testify together that Christian communities are frequently called to witness to the Lord's power revealed in human frailty,

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vulnerability, and weakness. Thus we are to be people of reconciliation, healing, and renewal.

C. Koinonia: A Gift and a Calling for the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches

62. Together our Communion affirm that *koinonia* summons all Christians to work wholeheartedly for the flourishing and protection of the whole of creation. As we celebrate life in its diversity, it is central to the Church's vocation to resist and transform all life-denying forces—social, cultural, economic, environmental—and to promote reconciliation and healing to a wounded and divided world.

IV. Summary of Our Findings

63. In *God's Reign and Our Unity* our two Communions have agreed that:

Anglican and Reformed Churches seek together ways in which all forms of discrimination which devalue persons may be eliminated. As a step in this direction we urge our Churches around the world:

- a. to work together to overcome those barriers which exist between privileged and under-privileged, black and white, male and female;
- b. to share their human, spiritual and material resources with those in need.²⁶

In this report we want to reaffirm this commitment and call upon our two Communions to base their cooperation upon the Lund Principle that the Faith

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and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has already formulated in 1952: 'Churches ... should ... act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.'²⁷

D. The *Koinonia* between Anglicans and Reformed

64. In *God's Reign and Our Unity* (1984) our two Communions already have agreed on the following:

If we are as realistic about baptism as the apostolic writers, then we are already by our baptism one body, and the continued separation of our two Communions is a public denial of what we are already in Christ. Moreover, there are consequences beyond these ecclesiastical ones. In the one man Jesus we see our common

IV. Summary of Our Findings

humanity taken up, redeemed and given back to us so that we can share it together—Jew and Gentile, man and woman, slave and free, rich and poor, white and black. Fidelity to our baptism commits us to affirm in word and practice the full, equal and God-given humanity of every person, to embody that affirmation in our public and political life, and to oppose and resist all that denies this shared humanity.²⁸

65. In reaffirming this statement of faith, we encourage our two Communion publicly and consciously to recommit to deepening that unity we already share in the *koinonia* given in creation and uniquely renewed in Christ. Such recommitment has practical implications for how we visibly work together in mission for the life of the world. Since *God's Reign and Our Unity* a number of local theological agreements have been achieved by member churches of our two Communion.

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Alongside the lived experiences of our united member churches, particularly in India, the Meissen and Reuilly agreements are perhaps the most notable of these. This commission believes that such agreements might be studied and acknowledged at an International level as statements which belong to both Communion, as encouragement and further stimulus on the journey towards full, visible unity.

Appendices

Appendices

Even as 'communion' has been a topic of ecumenical significance in recent decades, the question of what it means to be a communion has also been of particular importance within the Anglican Communion and the WCRC. Discerning how to live faithfully as communions that wrestle internally with conflict and division, as well as how to deepen koinonia within and between our traditions, have been driving forces behind this dialogue. These appendices offer context out of which our Communions come to these conversations.

Appendix 1: Anglican Developments

66. Since the mid-1980s the Anglican Communion has seen a numerical growth. It has almost doubled in size, from 47 million Anglicans in 1980 to 86 million Anglicans worldwide in 2016. It is worth noting that the increase in Anglicans has been uneven, with remarkable growth in the global South and serious decline in the global North. Consequently, the number of provincial Churches has increased during this period, from twenty-eight to forty. Just as global Christianity has witnessed a shift of the centres of gravity from the North to the South, so has global Anglicanism in terms of both numbers and influence. This period has also seen a rise in local leadership in the provincial Churches. This shift is reflected in the numbers of provinces from the global South that are represented at the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), and the Primates' Meeting.

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67. Another significant demographic development in this period is associated with ongoing patterns of global migration. Migration within provincial churches and migration between provincial churches from different parts of the world have given the Anglican Communion a rich and diverse experience of multiculturalism locally as well as globally.

68. A significant example of such growth and maturity is the Communion's self-understanding in terms of mission. A vital rallying point for mission across the Anglican Communion has been the Five Marks of Mission, first developed by the ACC in 1984. The Five Marks of Mission are an important statement on mission which expresses the Anglican Communion's common commitment to, and understanding of, God's holistic/integral mission:

Appendix 1: Anglican Developments

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

69. The Five Marks of Mission need to be understood as dynamic and should be subjected to review from time to time. While Anglicans may experience disagreement in many areas, the Five Marks have won wide acceptance across the Communion. The strength of these Marks is that they link doctrine with justice and peace and hence they say something fresh.

Appendix 2: Reformed Developments

70. Until 2010, the Churches of the Reformed tradition (including Presbyterian, Congregational, Waldensian, other First Reformation, United, and Uniting traditions) were organized in two international confessional groupings, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (itself a union in 1970 of the Alliance of Reformed Churches and the International Congregational Council) headquartered in Geneva; and the Reformed Ecumenical Council with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. These bodies merged in 2010 to become the WCRC.

71. The WCRC now consists of 233 member churches (uniting churches of the Waldensian, Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational and United and Uniting traditions) in 107 countries, and more than 100 million members. Its central office is in Hannover, Germany.

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The WCRC describes its mission as 'called to communion, committed to justice'.

72. The current WCRC discourse on communion was shaped by the debates on racial segregation in South Africa and on economic injustice. In 1982, the General Council of the (then) World Alliance declared a status confessionis on apartheid—declaring apartheid sinful and its theological justification heresy. Two member churches were suspended. In 2004, the World Alliance adopted the Accra Confession, which rejected 'the current world economic order imposed by global neoliberal capitalism and any other economic system, including absolute planned economies, which defy God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable and the whole of creation from the fullness of life' and called for 'covenanting for justice'. Both debates were guided by the example of the Barmen Declaration of 1934 that had responded to the heresies of the Nazi state

Appendix 2: Reformed Developments

in Germany in the form of a confession, which appealed to the Evangelical (Protestant) churches of Germany to stand firm against Christian accommodation to National Socialism.

73. Several members of the WCRC have adopted the Confession of Belhar as a central guideline for their understanding of Communion. The Confession was adopted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa (today the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa) in 1986. In the heydays of apartheid the Belhar Confession was a commitment to the belief that unity is ‘both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ’, and therefore rejected any understanding of Christianity that absolutized ‘either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people in such a way that this absolutization hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, or even leads to the establishment of a separate church formation’.

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74. When the World Alliance and the Reformed Ecumenical Council came together as the WCRC at the General Council in Grand Rapids in 2010, they confessed that the unity of the new Communion was based on the oneness in Christ, which had to be received as a gift that had to be proven in working through the 'obstacles in communication': language barriers, dominance, hierarchies, lack of engaging the grassroots level; but also 'different theological and hermeneutical perspectives'.

Appendix 3: Anglican–Reformed Conversations

75. While the Reformation movement initiated in Switzerland by John Calvin predates the English Reformation, the two traditions were in close contact and cooperation. Though the ecclesiastical order proposed by Calvin was not adopted by the Church of England, his theology was highly influential. Early leaders such as Calvin and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer corresponded with one another. Reformed refugees were welcomed in England, including their ordained ministers, while at other times English refugees were welcomed in Calvin's Geneva. In short, the relationship between British Anglicans and European Reformed Christians was good. Later, the relationships between Anglican and wider Reformed traditions became strained in the British Isles. Ecclesiology, structures of ministry, and liturgy were at the heart of the matter.

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This division led to the English Civil War with the abolition of the Book of Common Prayer in 1645, the abolition of episcopacy in 1646, the execution of King Charles I in 1649, and the adoption of a Presbyterian polity throughout the Interregnum period. With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, within an almost Anglican counter-reformation movement, the inheritors of Calvin's tradition were persecuted in England. From the seventeenth century, this significant break between Anglican and Reformed traditions was exported around the world.

76. The eighteenth century brought change. Anglican and Reformed Churches have since then worked together in various societies and councils all over the world. In some places, they have united with other Churches, such as in the CSI (1947) and the Church of North India (1970), and elsewhere entered into a covenant (Wales). In 1981 the Anglican Communion

Appendix 3: Anglican–Reformed Conversations

and the (then) World Alliance of Reformed Churches gathered for formal dialogue. This international commission discussed obstacles to union between the two traditions, and its findings were published the report *God's Reign and Our Unity* (1984). This report did not use the concept *koinonia*, but the Trinitarian understanding of the nature of the Church is clear, and the implications of this ecclesiology point towards an understanding that all baptized share a degree of communion. After the publication of the report, the Anglican Communion and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches had a break in their ongoing bilateral dialogue. However, this does not imply that our two traditions have been out of communion or *koinonia* during the period from 1984 to the convening of this commission. In the light of the givenness of *koinonia*, the 'old' language of being 'in' or 'out' of communion loses its power and is no longer valid. Our report aims to illustrate this more fully.

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77. Over recent years, local conversations have happened in many places, including the Meissen Declaration (1991),²⁹ the bilateral agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) (2008), Unity, Identity, and Mission (2012–15),³⁰ and Called to Unity in Mission (2016).³¹ The restoration of a formal dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the (now) WCRC is welcomed and must consider the developments that have happened in both world communions, as well as in the world at large, since 1984.

78. The formation of the CSI on 27 September 1947 is considered to be the beginning of the reunification of the fragmented Body of Christ. It brought together four major ecclesiastical traditions—Anglican, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist—to form a united Church, which principally adopted governing and theological elements from all of them. The Church stands as a witness to *koinonia* in the fragmented society

Appendix 3: Anglican–Reformed Conversations

of India, where people are divided in the name of creed, caste, race, and region. Since the Anglican Communion and the WCRC are both in full communion with the CSI, both the Anglicans and Reformed members of the dialogue were ‘at home’ in India.

Appendix 4: Members of the Commission

2015–2019

Anglican

The Most Revd David Chillingworth
Scottish Episcopal Church, 2015–17

The Most Revd Dr Howard Gregory
The Church in the Province of the West Indies
2018–19

The Revd Dr James Hawkey
The Church of England, 2016–19

The Rt Revd Kumara Illangasinghe (Consultant),
Church of Ceylon, 2015

The Revd Canon Elaine Labourel
The Church of England (Diocese in Europe), 2018–19

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Dr Clint Le Bruyns

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2015–19

The Revd Professor Dr Renta Nishihara

The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Church in Japan), 2015–19

The Revd Dr Amy E. Richter

The Episcopal Church, 2015

The Revd Canon Helene T. Steed

The Church of Ireland, 2016–19

Staff

The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut

(Co-Secretary 2015–18)

The Revd Neil Vigers

(Administrator from 2015, then Co-Secretary 2019)

Appendix 4: Members of the Commission 2015–2019

Reformed

The Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch

United Reformed Church in the UK, 2015–19

The Revd Gertrude Aopesyaga Kapuma

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 2016

The Revd Professor Priscille Djomhoué

Église Protestante Unie de Belgique, 2017–19

The Revd Dr Peter Donald

The Church of Scotland, 2017–19

The Revd Professor Roderick Hewitt

United Church in Jamaica & Grand Cayman, 2017–19

The Revd Professor R. Gerald Hobbs

United Church of Canada, 2016–19

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The Revd Dr Aimee Moiso
Presbyterian Church (USA), 2017–19

The Revd Helené Van Tonder
Dutch Reformed Church, 2015

The Very Revd Professor Iain R. Torrance
The Church of Scotland, 2015–17

The Rt Revd Dr Royce M. Victor
The Church of South India, 2015–19

Staff

The Revd Dr Douwe Visser
(Co-Secretary), 2015

Dr Aruna Gnanadason
(Co-Secretary), 2016

Appendix 4: Members of the Commission 2015–2019

The Revd Dr Hanns Lessing
(Co-Secretary), 2017–19

The Revd Fundiswa Amanda Kobo
(WCRC intern), Uniting Presbyterian Church in
Southern Africa, 2015

The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard
United Reformed Church in the UK, 2016

Miss Eri Yoon
(WCRC intern), Presbyterian Church of Korea,
2018
The Revd C. Nolan Huizenga
(minute taker), 2019

Observers

The Revd Dr Sandra Beardsall
United Church of Canada, 2018

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The Revd Shintaro Ichihara
The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Church in
Japan), 2019

The Revd Dr Lynne McNaughton
The Anglican Church of Canada, 2018

The Revd Dr Nadia Marais
Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, 2017

The Revd Dr Allan Samuel Palanna
The Church of South India, 2015

The Revd Sharath Sowseelya
The Church of South India, 2015

The Revd Thulani Zikhali
The Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2017

Endnotes

- ¹ World Council of Churches, *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, Message from the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 3–14 August 1993, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/x-other-documents-from-conferences-and-meetings/message-from-the-fifth-world-conference-on-faith-and-order-1993.
- ² *God's Reign and Our Unity: The Report of the Anglican–Reformed International Commission, 1981–1984* (London: SPCK, 1984), §§47–61, www.anglicancommunion.org/media/104250/1984_aco_warc_gods_reign_our_unity.pdf.
- ³ *God's Reign*, §29.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, §35.
- ⁵ 'So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!' (2 Cor 5.17).
- ⁶ *The Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus Statement Agreed by the International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2006*

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(London: Anglican Communion Office, 2006), www.anglicancommunion.org/media/103818/The-Church-of-the-Triune-God.pdf, §3: 'The communion manifested in the life of the Church has the trinitarian fellowship as its basis, model and ultimate goal. Conversely, the communion of the Persons of the Holy Trinity creates, structures and expounds the mystery of the communion experienced in the Church. It is within and by the Church that we come to know the Trinity and by the Trinity we come to understand the Church because "the Church is full of Trinity" (Origen, Fragment on Psalm 23.1, PG 12, 1265).' See *Origenus ta heuriskomena panta*, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, 12, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: Migne, 1862), p. 1265.

⁷ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. 1st series, vol. 12, ed. Paul A. Böer (Carleston, SC: Create Space, 2012), 1.1.

⁸ 'Totus Christus, caput et corpus' ('the whole Christ, head and body'): see Augustine, *On the Epistle of John*, 1.2 (www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf107.iv.iv.html), and also Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. IV: *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, part 2: *Jesus Christ*,

the Servant as Lord, trans. G. W. Bromiley, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (London: T&T Clark, 2004), p. 59: ‘This people, this community, is the form of His body in which Jesus Christ, its one heavenly Head, also exists and has therefore His earthly-historical form of existence. It is of human essence—for the Church is not of divine essence like its Head. But it does not exist in independence of Him.’

⁹ John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. I, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1960), book 1, chapter 5.1.

¹⁰ *The Church of the Triune God*, §22.

¹¹ *God’s Reign*, §§15, 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, §52.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, §61.

¹⁶ ‘Christ makes effective among us the eternal benefits of this victory and elicits and renews our response of faith, thanksgiving and self-surrender. Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist builds up the life of the church, strengthens its fellowship and furthers its mission. The identity of

the church as the body of Christ is both expressed and effectively proclaimed by its being centred in, and partaking of, his body and blood.' Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission, *Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine* 1971, §3, www.anglicancommunion.org/media/105215/ARCIC_I_Agreed_Statement_on_Eucharistic_Doctrine.pdf.

- ¹⁷ The Meissen Agreement (1988), section VI, §17A i, www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/The%20Meissen%20Agreement.pdf. Cf. also the Reuilly Declaration (2001), the Agreement between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) (2008), and the Columba Declaration (2016).
- ¹⁸ Church of South India, 'Vision', <http://csisynod.com/vision.php>.
- ¹⁹ World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Geneva, 2013), §53, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision.

- ²⁰ The Meissen Agreement, section VI, §17A iv: ‘we acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (*episkope*) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church’s unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry’.
- ²¹ Lk 19.1–10.
- ²² *God’s Reign*, §14.
- ²³ In the Accra Confession (2004) the WCRC confessed: ‘We believe that God has made a covenant with all of creation (Gen 9.8–12). God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. The covenant is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the market place (Is 55.1). It is an economy of grace for the household of all of creation. Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are preferential partners and calls us to put justice for the “least of these” (Mt 25.40) at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hos 2.18ff)’ (§20).

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- ²⁴ We gratefully receive the language of the 'mission from the margins' from the chapter 'Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins' in Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva, 2012), §§36–54, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes/@@download/file/Together_towards_Life.pdf.
- ²⁵ *Missio Dei*, literally 'the mission of God', captures the sense that before any arrogation by the Church of its driving purpose, it needs to own that the very being and mission of the Church is subservient to God's mission—the sending of the Son, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Cf. World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, I.A.1.
- ²⁶ *God's Reign*, Recommendation 8.
- ²⁷ *Report of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, Lund, Sweden: August 15–28, 1952* (Faith and Order Commission, 1952), p. 6.
- ²⁸ *God's Reign*, §61.

Endnotes

- ²⁹ Between the Church of England, the Federation of the Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic, and the Evangelical Church in Germany.
- ³⁰ Between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church, England.
- ³¹ Between the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada.

