Anglican - Orthodox Dialogue

The Church of the Triune God

The Cyprus Statement
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International Commission for
Anglican - Orthodox
Theological Dialogue
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The Cyprus Agreed Statement

The Church of the Triune God

Preface by the Co-Chairmen

The release of the 1984 *Dublin Agreed Statement* which concluded with an 'Epilogue' summarizing agreements and disagreements as well as points for further study, marked the completion of the second in the current series of theological conversations between Anglicans and Orthodox. It was noted at the time that the work so far, while impressive in both quantity and quality, appeared to lack a central focus and that the time had come for the commission to organize its work more systematically. The Lambeth Conference of 1988 passed a resolution on 'Anglican/Orthodox Relations' which "encouraged the work of the Commission towards the restoration of that unity for which Christ prayed, particularly noting its intention to address the question of ecclesiology which it is hoped will include the increasingly significant concept of 'reception', the issue of ecclesial diversity and the inter-relationship between faith and culture in which it is expressed, believing that these are pressing issues which affect both our Communions…" (Resolution 6.4).

The new Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, in his 1991 enthronement address, expressed esteem for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the entire Anglican Communion. He also voiced his intention "to continue with faithfulness the long tradition of fraternal relations with the Anglican Church…and [his] desire to promote our theological dialogue until we achieve the unity of faith".

Five years were to pass between plenary sessions of the Anglican - Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions. During this period the Commission was re-constituted, reduced in size and given a new Orthodox as well as a new Anglican co-chairman. At its first meeting at the New Valamo Monastery in Finland in June of 1989, a new plan of study was presented. The proposal was to begin with a consideration of 'the Mystery of the Church in the light of our faith in the Trinitarian God', then move on to explore the 'Mystery of the Church in relation to Christology, Pneumatology and Anthropology'. Next the Commission should study some specific ecclesiological matters such as what constitutes heresy and schism and the question of reception in the Church. A third set of questions relate to church structure and order and includes the nature and authority of the episcopal ministry.

The results of the Commission's deliberations are made available here in the hope that Anglicans and Orthodox will come to appreciate the things they have in common and to understand the nature of their disagreements. Membership of the Commission has been an enriching experience both personally and theologically. As one Commission member put it, "Now it is a

conversation of delight and illumination. Like all true conversations, it has had its moments of surprise and strangeness…But then it is good to be drawn into a conversation which engages in profound and sustained reflection on what it is that makes the Church the Church and to affirm the hidden life of the Trinity at the heart of our communities".

This report represents the fruit of the Commission's work and carries only the authority of its members, but it is offered to the Anglican and Orthodox churches in the hope that, as it is studied and reflected upon, it will help Christians of both traditions to perceive anew the work of the Triune God in giving life to His Church, and draw us closer to that unity which is His will for all the faithful.

✠ Mark Dyer
✠ John of Pergamon

London, December 2006

Introduction

The publication of this *Cyprus Agreed Statement* concludes the third phase of the Anglican - Orthodox international theological dialogue. The dialogue began in 1973, when the Anglican – Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions (A/OJDD) held its first meeting in Oxford. The first phase of the dialogue was concluded by the publication of the *Moscow Agreed Statement* in 1976. The publication of the *Dublin Agreed Statement* in 1984 brought its second phase to a conclusion. Both statements recorded a measure of agreement on a range of specific topics, while acknowledging continuing divergence on others.

The third phase of the dialogue began in 1989, when the commission was re-constituted as the International Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD). Its task has been to consider the doctrine of the Church in the light of the doctrine of the Trinity, and to examine the doctrine of the ordained ministry of the Church. Particular attention has been given to the question of who may be ordained to the presbyterate and episcopate. This third phase of the dialogue has given further consideration to ecclesiological issues discussed in earlier phases, and to aspects of Trinitarian doctrine. The *Cyprus Agreed Statement*, like its two predecessors, registers considerable agreement over a range of issues, while leaving the question of the ordination of women unresolved.

The Agreed Statement takes its name from the meeting held in June 2005 at the Holy Royal and Stavropegic Monastery of Kykkos in Cyprus, during which the final chapter of the statement was completed.

Section I : The Trinity and the Church

1. ‘This life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us - we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ (1 John 1.2-3).

2. ‘By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit’ (1 John 4.13).

3. What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the fellowship or communion (*koinonia*) of life in the Church reflects the communion that is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This is not the revelation of a reality remote from us, for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life. 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).

4. All our theology of the Church presupposes the eternal priority of this mystery of communion in the life of God. If God were not eternally a communion of love, the *koinonia* of believers would not be what it is, a real participation in the divine life, a *theosis*. As the Church has come to understand and articulate this truth, it has seen that the communion of the divine Persons must be a relationship in which each Person has identity and life in and through the others. The Father, the sole source of divine life and being, gives birth eternally to the Son, who has all that he has from the Father. The Spirit, eternally proceeding from the Father, receives from him the fullness of the same divine life. The divine Persons are not manifestations of a prior divine essence, but irreducible hypostatic realities, existing in their relation to each other. Neither a psychological nor a social analogy can express this divine life. The former tends to reduce the three Persons to aspects of one substance, while the latter does not adequately express their consubstantiality, the simultaneity of oneness and threeness. When we understand this, we see how crucial is the distinction between person, in its full sense, and individual: the person exists not in possession of its own nature in opposition to others, but in giving itself wholly into the life of others. Thus the person

is not a part of some whole, but the place where the wholeness of nature is real and concrete.

5. 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness' (Genesis 1.26). It is the will of the Blessed Trinity that each human being is created for, and called into, a personal way of existence in communion with God, the whole human community and all creation. That is why each human being is a person who not only shares with all others a common human nature, but also participates with them in the whole of creation. Humankind, however, rejected the call to personal life in communion, and instead fell into a narrow way of selfish existence leading to death rather than eternal life.

6. Coming among us 'in human form' (Philippians 2.7) in obedience to the Father's will, Christ the eternal Son, by his self-giving death and resurrection and in the power of the Holy Spirit, reveals and opens to us the communion of the life of the Holy Trinity. 'For through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father' (Ephesians 2.18; see also John 5.30, 15.15, 16.28, Philippians 2.8).

7. In his own person, fully human and fully divine, Christ renews humanity disfigured by sin. In his body the Church, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, sinful human beings are brought, through faith and the sacraments, into communion with God, for which they were created. Christ prays that all faithful humanity may by grace be embraced for ever in that divine communion shared by Father, Son and Holy Spirit: 'I ask, Father, as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be completely one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may be completely one, as you and I are one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me' (John 17.20-23).

8. To reach eternal life in communion with God and each other, we must be open in humility to the gift of God's new life; we must die to the old life and be born again in the waters of baptism (John 3.3,7). In order to come to the table of the Lord for the eucharistic banquet of his Body and Blood we must first be baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28.18-20), and so be conformed to his death and resurrection. But that is not all. The grace of God in sacramental mystery draws us to a life in the world of love for God and neighbour expressed in devotion to 'the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2.42) and in charity to the poor (Acts 2.44-45; 4.32).

9. By the indwelling grace of the Holy Spirit, the Church is created to be an image of the life in communion of the Triune God; and she lives in this world in anticipation of the day when the whole creation will be renewed, and God will be 'all in all' (1 Corinthians 15.28). In every aspect of its life the Church reflects the life of God. Informed by the life and work of God in the baptismal and eucharistic liturgy, the Church always seeks to die and be raised again.

10. According to Holy Scripture, the revelation unique to Christianity is experienced in the mystery of the communion of grace within the body of Christ between Christians and God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13.13). The mystery of this communion of believers with the Triune God and among themselves is the essence of the Church as the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

11. In the life of the Church we come to know that God is Trinity in his eternal existence. It was in response to the revelatory and saving economy of the Blessed Trinity, celebrated and experienced by the Church in the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, that the Church was led to formulate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This doctrine is the confession of the Church's faith, and shapes her worshipping life. In the divine activity in the world, the fellowship of the Holy Trinity communicates itself to believers through the descending movement of grace from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Conversely, believers enter the trinitarian fellowship through the ascending movement made possible by grace in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father (St Basil the Great, On the Holy Spirit, XVIII, 4-7. PG 32, 153 B). The dynamic economy of the Trinity is grounded in, and has as its goal, the fellowship of the Holy Trinity expressed by the teaching of the Church and in her worship.

12. The Eucharist builds up the body of Christ as one single body which transcends the racial, social and cultural diversity of its members, and reveals and realises the gift of trinitarian communion given to the Church by the Holy Spirit. This gift of communion enables human beings to receive forgiveness of their sins and healing of their wounds and divisions, and to experience the unity of God's kingdom. The Eucharist so understood manifests the way the Church should live if she is to be true to her essential nature. The Church as an institution should always be a visible sign of her inner reality as the mystery of communion with and in the Blessed Trinity.

13. The Christian understanding of life in the Church requires not only a reflection on the pattern of divine agency in creation and the history of salvation, but also a grounding in our theology of the divine life as it eternally is, the 'immanent Trinity'. Unless we try to grasp what kind of God it is who acts in this way towards us, our theology of the Church will be impoverished. Yet these questions at once raise some of the most difficult issues that have historically been disputed between Eastern and Western Christians.

14. It is sometimes said that the Western doctrine of the Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son (*filioque*) might be acceptable from the Orthodox standpoint if understood to relate only to God's self-revelation in the divine economy. The *Dublin Agreed Statement* of 1984 (§45) referred to St Maximus as allowing a distinction between the causing of the existence of the Spirit by the Father alone, and the 'shining forth' (*ekphansis*) of the Spirit from Father and Son together.

15. The distinction between a possible affirmation of the filioque at the economic level and its denial in respect of the immanent Trinity goes back to Theodoret of Cyrus in the fifth century. It is however important to note that this is neither the sole nor the canonical Eastern response. The East cannot be said to have accepted as definitive Theodoret's clear-cut distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity with regard to the Son's role in the spiration of the Spirit, and the views of Maximus cannot simply be reduced to this distinction. Against Theodoret, St Cyril argued that the Spirit did not proceed from the Father independently of the Son; and his argument echoes the earlier affirmations of St Gregory of Nyssa, in his work, 'To Ablabius, That there are not three Gods'. Gregory maintains that the Father alone is cause (*aitia*) in the divine life, the sole principle of origin of the Son and the Spirit. But the Son alone is only-begotten (*monogennes*), coming forth immediately from the Father; the Spirit is brought into being by the Father through the mediation (*mesiteia*) of the Son.

16. For Orthodox theology therefore the Son is not and cannot be the source of the Holy Spirit's being; and in this particular St Augustine agrees precisely, even if his followers were not always so careful. But some argue that in patristic thought the involvement of the Son in the coming forth of the Spirit is not wholly restricted to the level of the economy. This point requires further reflection and elucidation, and holds significant promise both for the reconciliation of Eastern and Western theological perspectives and for our vision of what life in the Church truly entails.

17. The objections of Orthodox theologians to the filioque have a great deal to do with a point insufficiently discussed in both mediaeval and modern Western theology, a point crucial to the development of trinitarian doctrine by the Cappadocian fathers in the fourth century. Against the Eunomian heresy, the Cappadocians were anxious to stress that the fatherhood of God and the substance of God do not coincide; if they did, the Son would be excluded from the divine substance. This means, in Cappadocian theology, that the source or ground of the divine life is not a substance with specific characteristics that exists prior to the divine persons. The movement, life and love which characterise God's being are not 'natural' features of divinity (as for the Neoplatonists) but are caused by the person of the Father.

18. Partly because Western theology has reserved the language of causality for the relation of creator to creature, on the understanding that a cause is superior to its effects, the West has not been happy with using such language in trinitarian theology. But this has had the unhappy effect of obscuring the central insight of earlier trinitarian theology which is that the life, love and movement that is the divine life has its ground, not in a given set of natural determinations, but in an act of giving and generating that we can only speak of as personal and free. As Western theology would agree, the essence of God is nothing other than the divine action; but Eastern theology insists that this divine action is always personal, the active life of the Trinity. If this is forgotten, impersonal categories enter our language about the Trinity and distort it. The mediaeval language of Father and Son together acting as one 'principle' to produce the Spirit is an example of this imbalance: the personal agency of the Father in generating the Son here seems to stand alongside another kind of productive agency. Eastern theologians have seen in this a danger of ditheism, a doctrine of two sources of divine being and life.

19. There are however dangers in a one-sided or polemical assertion of the Eastern doctrine that the Spirit proceeds 'from the Father alone'. As we have already said, some argue that Greek patristic theology did not deny some kind of dependence of the Spirit on the Son within the immanent Trinity. It is certainly true that we cannot think of the Spirit proceeding from the Father without recognising that the Father is Father of the Son, just as we cannot forget that the Father who begets the Son is also the one who breathes forth the Spirit. The Spirit does not proceed from an isolated divine individual but from a person, a Father eternally related to a Son.

20. Trinitarian theology must therefore avoid both impersonalism, with its tendency to obscure the vision of personal act as the ground of divine life, and the risk of an individualistic interpretation of 'from the Father alone' that would obscure the eternal mutual involvement of Father, Son and Spirit. If it can avoid these extremes, the importance of the theology of the Trinity for our thinking about the Church becomes much clearer. A proper understanding of the nature of causality in the divine life will help to free us from serious errors in our theology of the Church; and a proper grasp of the interrelatedness of Son and Spirit in the immanent Trinity will help us to see the work of redemption as the action of the Triune God sharing his life of communion with us.

21. We turn now to the consequences of trinitarian theology, including the question of the filioque, for ecclesiology. In the first place, it must be made clear that the ultimate purpose of the Church, and of the divine economy as a whole, is nothing less than to bring human beings into communion with the life of the Holy Trinity itself. This is what the Greek fathers and the Orthodox tradition have called *theosis*. This healing of humanity implies the healing of all creation. We cannot understand the being, structure, mission, worship, and ministry of the Church apart from God's trinitarian existence.

22. The Church is the body of Christ, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and the abode of the Holy Trinity. It is not primarily a sociological phenomenon, but a gift of God the Holy Trinity. That is why we speak in the Church about the mystery of the graced human person living in time the eternal mystery of the Trinity.

23. The Church is both a local and a universal reality. As the one God is a communion of three persons, so the universal Church is one communion in Christ of many local churches. She is not a federation of separate parts. The relationship between the local church and the universal Church is determined by the revelation of the life of the Holy Trinity.

24. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity implies that to be 'in the image and likeness of God' is to be in communion, to be simultaneously 'one' and 'many'. Reflected in the life of the Church, this means that the one universal Church cannot logically precede the multiplicity of local churches. The local churches can be neither parts of, nor derived from, the universal Church; rather, they constitute the 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'. Catholicity is a quality of each local church in communion with the other local churches, just as each Person of the Holy Trinity is a hypostasis of the whole of the divine substance by being in

communion with the other two Persons. The unity of the universal Church is the communion in faith, truth, love and common sacramental life of the several local churches. The catholic Church exists in each local church; and each local church is identified with the whole, expresses the whole and cannot exist apart from the whole.

25. Ecclesiology is thus related to the issue of the priority of substance, or ousia, in relation to personhood, or hypostasis. If the one God were prior to the Trinity and identical with the one divine substance, then substance and oneness would precede personhood and multiplicity, in the Church as well as in God. The consequences for ecclesiology would be very serious. Not only would the local churches be subordinated to the structure of a universal Church, but equally each human person would be subject to that structure. Universal laws would be imposed upon particular personal beings, and the Church would be a totalitarian authority over the person. But such is not the case. Just as the one nature of God exists, not in the abstract, but only in the three Persons, so the universal Church exists only as a communion of local churches. In this respect there is a convergence between Orthodox and Anglican understandings of the Church. Orthodox and Anglicans agree in rejecting a single centralised authority in the Church. This is not for local and cultural, but for profoundly theological reasons.

26. These considerations highlight the importance of personal causation, both in the doctrine of the Trinity and in ecclesiology. If divine existence and life spring from and are caused by a Person, the Father, rather than an impersonal general *ousia*, and if this Person is inconceivable apart from his relationship with the other Persons, nothing general can be imposed on the particular. In ecclesiological terms this means that all forms of primacy in the Church are relational in character, as all *arche* (principle) and *aitia* (cause), in being personal, cannot but be relational. By assigning causality in God's being to the Person of the Father, we indicate the way the Church, too, should conceive and practice *arche* and authority.

27. Finally, any connection made between the Holy Trinity and the Church cannot be based on any kind of Platonic typology of 'iconic' correspondence between the two. It must pass through Christology. The Church manifests the trinitarian life and participates in it only by being the body of Christ. God's fatherhood touches the Church, and is reflected in it, only through the relation granted us by our incorporation into Christ. That relation the New Testament calls *huiothesia*, adoptive sonship. Orthodox and Anglicans agree in taking for granted that the

reality designated by the word sonship applies equally to men and women. This truth is made explicit by St Paul in 2 Corinthians 6.18, where Paul quotes God's covenant promise to his people in these terms: 'I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'.

28. While much has been said about the bearing of the life of God the Holy Trinity on the essential nature of the Church, it is important to remember the hidden otherness of the life of God and the mystery of the divine communication both in creation and re-creation. In concluding this section, we offer a short reflection on the limitations of human language in the theological task.

29. Both the Bible and the Christian tradition recognise that we cannot know God. God in his essence is beyond human comprehension and expression. This is not a specifically Christian perception. In the Timaeus (28E) Plato states that it is difficult to apprehend the Creator and the Father of this world, but to express him is indeed an impossibility. St Gregory the Theologian modifies Plato's statement to say that 'to form an adequate concept of God is even more impossible than to express it when formed' (Theol. Oration, II). 'God is infinite and incomprehensible', writes St John of Damascus, 'and all that is comprehensible about him is his infinity and incomprehensibility' (De Fide Orthodoxa, II, 4).

30. Although God in his essence is altogether unknowable, radically unable to be grasped and objectified, in his energies and personal communications as Father, Son and Spirit God gives himself to be known in creation and supremely in the Incarnation of the Word. We know God therefore through his manifestations, movements and operations. This means that we can communicate with God and speak about him, because God has personal communication with us through his energies and in his Word.

31. The language of theology is neither speculative nor philosophical in the technical sense. It expresses a disposition of faith which presupposes the priority of revelation and the commitment of those engaged in theology to a life of love and communion. The language of theology is in this respect unique. It is rooted in an existentially and radically transformed mentality. It is of capital importance to realise that if Christian theology is to be authentic it must transcend the anthropocentric 'wisdom of this age' (1 Corinthians 2.6-7) and attain communion with God. Knowledge of God and participation in God are inseparable. We cannot speak about God without being in communion with him.

32. In both the Orthodox and Anglican traditions, theology is understood not as an individualistic enterprise but as a corporate experience. It is rooted in the ecclesial community. Theology does not exist as such apart from the Church. Outside the Church it becomes religious metaphysics or pious speculation. Within the Church we are engaged in theology as persons, not as isolated individuals apart from the body of Christ. As we have already said, the Church is a communion (*koinonia*) in the image of the communion of the Divine Persons. In the same way the human person in the Church is an image of God, and as such reflects the common ecclesial experience. All members of the Church share the same ecclesial theology, follow the same ecclesial method and consequently understand the iconic symbols and language used by all who participate in ecclesial communion. This does not at all mean that human persons in the Church are imprisoned in a fixed, static theology. On the contrary, they have considerable scope for the dynamic expression of their ecclesial experience.

33. We wish to emphasise that the language of theology is a response to the revealed and experienced reality of the presence of God. Being in a personal relationship to God is at the heart of knowing about God (cf. Jeremiah 31.31ff.) Such knowledge engages the whole human being: intuition, imagination, and the emotions as well as intellect. Theological language can therefore be non-verbal as well as verbal.

34. Some consider that 'we have no other language besides metaphor with which to speak about God' (G.B.Caird). Analogies, metaphors and symbols are among the common tools of theology. While technically they are not the same, these modes of expression share a common function. Analogies, metaphors and symbols allow us to speak about one thing in terms of another. While a literal, direct or descriptively exact definition of God is impossible, such modes of expression make possible indirect theological communication. As modes of theological discourse, they enjoy two distinct advantages:

    i) they protect the transcendence of God, recognising that God cannot be confined, either spatially or verbally

    ii) they take seriously the fact that God has spoken to us in a language we can understand.

35. We need however to be alert to the constant tendency of all language about God to become idolatrous. When we forget the relative, provisional, and non-literal character of analogies, metaphors and symbols we run the risk of idolatry.

36. There is another kind of language which we may call iconic. It is given by revelation and based on the fact that theology can attain its fullness only within the ecclesial body. Iconic language is not based on the distinction between subject and object, like analogies and metaphors, but on the unique character of the ecclesial *koinonia*. In this context the use of metaphor poses difficulties, given that it is grounded exclusively in human experience. We cannot separate iconic language from the fact of revelation, expressed in Holy Scripture and ecclesial tradition. Unlike symbolic language, iconic language is not rooted in human experience.

37. Symbolic language involves the use of metaphors, words transferred from their usual context to illustrate revealed truths about God. Scripture makes frequent use of metaphor, describing God as a rock or a fountain, or comparing God to a flock of hovering birds (Isaiah 31.5) or a woman in labour (Isaiah 42.14). In his parables Jesus speaks of God's activity by telling stories of human activities and relationships. In the tradition of the Church metaphors are used to cast light upon the relationship of the Persons of the Trinity among themselves. Tertullian speaks of Father, Son and Spirit in terms of the source, the spring and the stream; and many writers, from Origen to Gregory of Nyssa, compare the generation of the Son to one flame being kindled from another.

38. Metaphors taken from the natural world run little risk of being misunderstood. No-one is likely to think that God is really a rock or a flock of birds. But symbols derived from human activities and relationships carry a greater risk. Metaphors can more easily be mistakenly thought to give us true insight into God's inner being and life.

39. A more serious misunderstanding can arise when no distinction is acknowledged between illustrative metaphors and iconic language. When God is called Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Christian theology is not using illustrative metaphor. Although such language is the language of human relations, its use makes it clear that these are not terms borrowed from elsewhere in order to elucidate a truth that could be expressed just as well in other symbols. Theology and worship alike control the way these words are understood. There should therefore be no danger of imagining God the Father to be one instance of a general class of fatherhood, or even to be like a male parent. In the language of Father, Son and Spirit given to us in Scripture, what is significant is the ontological derivation of the Three Persons and the total personal mutuality thus designated. Understood in this way, within the mutual personal communion of the Church, these words may be called iconic: they are transparent to the reality of God.

40. Serious problems arise if these terms are seen simply as useful symbols. In the fourth century, Arius appeared to take 'Father' and 'Son' as metaphors, and to misunderstand them in an anthropomorphic way: a son must be younger than a father, and a father is someone who might not have begotten a son. Consequently the divine Son must have a beginning in time. More recently, some have rejected the language of God as Father and Son because they understand it as giving a privilege to men over women: if God is Father, God must be more like a man than a woman. But the theologians of the early centuries clearly and repeatedly deny that the earthly meaning of fatherhood, or of any gender-specific language, has any application to God. The proper use of this iconic term, referring as it does to the infinite and transcendent life of the Trinity, should rule out such misunderstandings. Any anthropomorphic understanding of gender-specific language in relation to the Holy Trinity must be rejected. Any attempt to limit our understanding of the Fatherhood or Sonship of God to human models, or any attempt to replace the biblical and traditional terminology with new human models, runs the risk of an anthropomorphic understanding of God and consequently of a theology confined within the limits of human reason and experience.

41. We agree that the names of the three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, properly express their personal identity and cannot be changed. At the same time we believe that the loving activity of God can be illuminated by exploring other imagery found in scripture and tradition, including imagery that is feminine in character (Deuteronomy 32.18; Isaiah 42.14, 49.15, 66.13; Psalm 131.2). Such imagery no less reveals God's loving activity, and may help some more deeply to appropriate their salvation. This exploration arises, not from any desire to undermine the classical doctrines which are our common heritage, but from a pastoral and missionary imperative to find ways of communicating the saving love of God to everyone.

Section II : Christ, the Spirit and the Church

Christ and the Trinity

1. Christology cannot be separated from trinitarian theology. Since all persons are relational, we cannot think of the person of Christ apart from his relationships within the trinitarian communion which form his identity. As the christological teachings of Chalcedon affirm, it is his relationships with the other Persons of the Trinity, as distinct from his human relationships, which are the basis of Christ's personal identity, his *hypostasis*. While the Council affirmed Christ's divinity for soteriological reasons, it also underlined the hypostatic and relational aspects of Christ's personhood. Chalcedon emphasised that it is the hypostasis or person of Christ that is important in Christology, not simply his divinity.

2. Chalcedon affirmed Christ's identity for soteriological reasons. But the question arises whether we are saved by Christ by virtue of the eternal relations with the Father and the Spirit that constitute him a person, or by virtue of the human relations emerging from the Incarnation. Clearly we are saved by God, not by a human being, as the affirmation of Christ's pre-existence in St John's Gospel and the *homoousios* of Nicaea make plain. These eternal relations are the cause of our salvation. At the same time the human relations originating with the Incarnation have their own soteriological significance.

3. The question 'who saves us?' cannot simply be answered by the word 'God' in the sense of divine 'nature' or 'deity' in general, but rather by the phrase 'one of the Trinity'. We cannot identify Christ apart from the immanent Trinity. We must, however, distinguish his personal identity from that of the other two Persons. The 'who' of Christ is bound up relationally with the Trinity, and yet is distinct from the other two Persons with whom he is related. Consequently, soteriology requires the involvement of all three Persons of the Trinity in and through the Son, who is 'one of the Trinity'. Christ's saving work presupposes the activity *ad extra* of the Father and the Spirit. We are not saved by a 'deity' but by the three Persons of the Trinity operating in the saving work of the Son (John 6.44; 2 Corinthians 13.14; 1 Peter 1.2).

4. Theological language which speaks of the Holy Spirit as a force, agent, or power, even when rooted in biblical imagery (e.g. John 14.26, 20.22-23; Acts 2.2-4), can be misleading when used in isolation, reducing the Spirit to a force rather than a Person. Augustine, among others, describes

the Spirit as *donum*, the gift which the Father and the Son give to each other and to the world. Subsequently, some theological language in the Western tradition has given the impression that the Godhead comprises two Persons, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit as an indistinct power flowing from them. Until fairly recently there has been a comparative neglect of the Spirit in the Western theological tradition. Such neglect has to do with the notion that the Spirit is not the same sort of entity as the Father and the Son.

5. If the word 'Person' leads to images of personality and of consciousness of a human kind, it is easy to see why the terms 'Father' and 'Son' lend themselves to such images, while the term 'Spirit' does not. Yet these terms speak of identities that eternally constitute each other in their mutual relationships. Affirming the independent reality of the Spirit implies that the perfect mutual love of Father and Son, the completeness of giving and receiving in God, is not all that should be said about the divine life. There is no exclusivity or mutual self-absorption in the relation of Father and Son, because there exists also the relation between the Father and the Spirit, and the Son and the Spirit. Thus God's life is a dynamic, eternal and unending movement of self-giving. God is the primary gift of the Father's love: the Father gives himself in generating the Son and causing the Holy Spirit to proceed. God is also the perfect response to the gift of the Father: the Son or Word mirrors the Father and returns the gift of love. God is too the free out-flowing of the Father's self-giving: in the economy of salvation the Holy Spirit offers a share in the divine life to created beings. This means that creatures may be drawn by grace into the Son's relation with the Father. It also means that the Father's gift of the Spirit to us makes the Church a 'Spirit-bearing' body, so that the Spirit is manifested in the entire life of the Christian community, in sacramental action, in the mutual relation of believers, and in the lives of holy persons.

6. The economy of our salvation begins and ends with the Father. The ground of our salvation therefore lies in the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity. To be saved means to be recognised and identified not through human relationships, but through entry into the relationship that allows Christ to call the Father his Father and allows us too to call the Father our Father. At the heart of this understanding of soteriology is filiation, identified in the language of the New Testament as adoption (*huiothesia*) (Romans 8.15 and 23), and in that of the Greek Fathers as divinization (*theosis*). Here the Spirit forms the believer in the likeness of Christ. The crucial link is made in

Galatians 4.6: 'And because you are sons,[1] God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba, Father!' '. God gives us the Spirit of Jesus, who is the Son of God. Our ability to use the language of Jesus in calling God 'Abba' is the sure hope of the transformation of the whole of our creatureliness, the whole of our relatedness to each other and the rest of creation. To be in the relation that entitles us to call God 'Abba' is to be delivered from slavery. Since it is the Spirit who communicates to creatures the possibility of calling God 'Abba', we may speak of the Spirit as the outpouring into that which is not God of the divine relationship of gift and response shown to us in Jesus' relation with the Father.

7. The Spirit of God works to draw all humanity into the trinitarian life. Nevertheless the Spirit's presence should not be seen only in the transfiguration of human lives in isolation from the rest of the cosmos. The purpose of the whole creation is to glorify God in its beauty and order, through the heart and mind and voice of humanity redeemed in Christ. The cosmos, as we experience it, is flawed and disfigured: the non-human world often is violent and seems meaningless, showing little beauty or order; and the human world is scarred by sin and unfaithfulness. Only God can bring the world into the wholeness for which it was created. God gives to the new humanity in Christ the freedom and power to relate to the whole cosmos in a new way, so that the material creation may be seen as speaking of God and giving glory to God. St Maximus the Confessor understands redeemed humanity as performing a liturgical role on behalf of all creation. St Paul speaks of the 'labour pains' of creation as it waits for the realisation of the freedom of the children of God (Romans 8.22f). Creation awaits the time when humanity will have the freedom to make its universal declaration of God's glory (Psalm 19.1). In this waiting the Spirit is at work, aiding our weakness (Romans 8.26) and prompting our longing for this cosmic fulfillment. The Spirit is present in the life of the Church, above all in the sacraments, as a pledge and foretaste of the future God purposes for us and our world, a future already realised in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5.5, Ephesians 1.4).

8. Such a soteriology of filiation can operate only within the framework of a Christology set within the personal relations of the Trinity, particularly the filial relationship between the Father and the Son in which the Holy Spirit enables us to participate. Christology secures its proper

1. *Gk huioi* is inclusive of both sons and daughters.

soteriological meaning only within the trinitarian context. Christology is concerned with nothing less than our reception in Christ into the life of God, which is eternally sustained by the relationships of the Persons of the Trinity among themselves.

Christ and the Holy Spirit

9. Pneumatology is constitutive of Christology. The person of Christ can no more be discussed without reference to the Spirit than it can without reference to trinitarian theology. The 'who' of Christ is identified fundamentally in the context of trinitarian relationships. But the 'who' of Christ after the Incarnation, by which, without being a human person, he acquired human nature as well as human relationships, is determined by the presence and activity of the Spirit.

10. The Holy Spirit is operative in the biological conception of Jesus Christ, and so is constitutive of his humanity. The eternal Son of God assumed human identity through the operation of the Holy Spirit. This has consequences for Christ's identity after the Incarnation: the Spirit shapes in him the life of the eternal Word. Jesus' wholly consistent life of loving freedom directed towards God is filled with the Spirit; but he is what he is because his human life is being conformed to the pre-existing perfect eternal relation of the Son to the Father. The humanity of Christ is inconceivable without his relationship to the Spirit.

11. In the same way Christ's ministry is inconceivable without the Holy Spirit. The descent of God's Spirit is a clear and central motif in the traditions about Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3.13-17, Mark 1.9-11, Luke 3.21-22). It is significant that the Fathers understand this event as related to Christ's humanity. Yet the gospels do not suggest that the baptism is a moment of conversion, by which Jesus enters a new stage in his life. They present the story of the baptism of Jesus as the affirmation, through the Spirit, of Jesus' relation to his Father. What has been true of Jesus since his birth is made plain: he is the Son of God. John's baptism anoints the Son to fulfill his redeeming mission. Jesus is then led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matthew 4.1); and he inaugurates his teaching ministry with the words of the prophet Isaiah: 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor' (Luke 4.18).

12. The Son of Man is glorified in his betrayal and death: the work of God's Spirit is power made perfect in weakness. This means that the signs and wonders of Jesus' Spirit-filled ministry must be understood in the light of the paschal mystery. The kingly rule of God achieves its purpose by

sacrifice, not by domination. God's power is seen in the powerlessness of Gethsemane and Calvary.

13. The resurrection is an act of the Father performed by and through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8.11). It is not simply a miracle brought about by Christ's divine nature. Pentecost, on the other hand, may be properly understood as a christological event, signifying the return of the risen Christ. The *eschaton* that the Spirit of Christ brings into history anticipates the final coming of the risen Christ to establish on earth the kingdom in its fullness.

14. The biblical accounts require the introduction of Pneumatology into all aspects of Christology. The identity of Christ is determined by the presence and activity of the Spirit: Pneumatology has a constitutive role in Christology. This essential association of the work of the Spirit with that of Christ challenges views held by some Orthodox and Anglican theologians. From different perspectives some speak of an 'economy of the Spirit' distinct from the work of Christ.

15. Many theologians hold that the Spirit is the agent of God's presence in the created order at large, that is, outside the bounds of the visible Church. In the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, expressions such as 'Word', 'Wisdom' and 'Spirit' are sometimes overlapping expressions of God's presence and agency in the order and beauty of creation (e.g. Wisdom 9.1ff, 9.17; and perhaps Genesis 1.2 and Psalm 33.6). On this basis a theology of the Spirit at work in art and science has been developed. Many hold too that the Spirit is present and active in other religions: Christ is reserved to the Church while the Spirit is assigned to the non-Christian world. Such a view may suggest that 'Spirit' is simply a term for God's outreach to the world, of which Jesus is the highest embodiment.

16. Contemporary Western renewal movements sometimes assign to the Holy Spirit a role more or less independent from, and perhaps more significant than, that of Christ and his cross. Spiritual gifts and works of power have come to be seen in some Christian communities as the primary business of the Church. There is a tendency to associate Christology with the realm of the historical and the objective, and Pneumatology with the personal and the subjective. These and similar views are often justified by the biblical association of the Spirit with freedom (2 Corinthians 3.17) and the comparison of the Spirit to the wind which blows where it wills (John 3.8).

17. We believe such inadequate views need to be corrected by relating Pneumatology to the primary focus of the New Testament. Scripture requires us to think of the Spirit as making God's life active and accessible outside God's own being. The divine life thus given, in and by the Spirit, is a life already in movement and relationship. The Spirit is no less present throughout the economy of salvation than are Christ and the Father.

18. There is, strictly speaking, no economy of the Spirit. There is only the economy of the Son, in which the Father and the Spirit are actively present. Christ is the axis of the divine economy, from creation to consummation. As St Maximus the Confessor puts it, everything exists to be incorporated into Christ. The Spirit draws from Christ and points to him (John 16.13-14). The Spirit is constitutive of Christ without being prior to him or following him, and without forming its own distinct economy. In the economy of salvation Christ and the Spirit are dependent one upon the other.

19. Christology cannot be dissociated from the realm of the personal: Christ is the supreme manifestation of personhood. Given the objective relationship of the Spirit to Christ, it is equally impossible to dissociate the Spirit from the objective.

Towards a Synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology

20. Each Person of the Trinity makes a specific contribution to the economy of salvation. At the same time, according to both Greek and Latin Fathers, the *opera ad extra* of the Holy Trinity are an indivisible unity. So St Athanasius and St Basil argue that where the Father is present and active, there are also the Son and the Spirit.

21. Before we describe the specific work of each Person to the economy of salvation, we must be clear that each Person's contribution does not derive from an ontological state within the immanent Trinity. The Incarnation is not an ontological necessity, but the consequence of the good pleasure of the Father and the free consent and love of the Son, and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

22. The distinctive operations of the divine Persons, so far as the Incarnation and Christology are concerned, include the following:

    i) It is the Father who, as St Basil specifies, has the good pleasure (*eudokia*) to save the world he creates. He takes the initiative in the work of salvation: 'every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights' (James 1.17). It follows that everything

said about Christ is related to the Father, who initiates the work of Christ and brings it to its fulfillment. The liturgical tradition of the Church reflects this truth: the eucharistic anaphora, which sums up the saving work of Christ, is normally addressed to the Father.

ii) The Son undertakes to realise this initiative by incorporating the world into himself through humanity, since from the beginning human beings were created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1.26). The mission of the Son is to unite in himself the entire creation (*ta panta*) and bring it into communion with God. We should understand Christ's divinity not only in terms of the divine nature, but also as the realisation of the Father's will in his person and work. In this way Christ makes the good pleasure of the Father present and active in history.

iii) The Spirit, as again St Basil affirms, perfects (*teleei*) the work of the Son. The Resurrection, that supreme eschatological event, is inseparable from the giving of the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Spirit at Pentecost is described in the Acts of the Apostles as the coming of 'the last days' into history (Acts 2.16, 17). The *eschaton* then inaugurated by the Spirit of Christ is identical with the risen Christ in his final coming to establish on earth the Kingdom in its fullness. The identification of the Spirit as the bearer of the *eschaton* in history is reflected by St Gregory of Nyssa and St Maximus the Confessor, who equate the Spirit with the kingdom of God.

Christ, the Spirit and the New Humanity

23. Trinitarian theology has as much to say about humanity as about God. To speak in a particular way of God's being, on the grounds of God's action, is to commit ourselves to a particular vision of our calling in the world. This is why the theology of the Trinity is not a matter of detached speculation. The human vocation is defined in terms of Christ, the eternal Word made flesh. Consequently, Godlikeness is never a matter of our independent initiative. There is in God not only perfect giving, but also perfect responding. Listening, receiving, and depending do not contradict divine freedom and creativity. Neither are we obliged to struggle for a life without dependence and receiving in order to be free. Since God is Trinity, and since Jesus embodies the life of God as response, we find our proper creativity and liberty, not by distancing ourselves from others, but by learning to receive from, as well as give to, others in mutual interdependence.

24. The fact that God is Spirit reminds us that our response to God is a channel for God's giving through us to the world. Our growth in the likeness of Christ cannot be separated from the mission of the Holy Spirit, in whom the life of humanity is constantly widening out to embrace the whole of creation.

25. A Christology conditioned by Pneumatology proclaims and affirms the humanity of Christ. It speaks to our human condition, and discloses a Saviour who is as fully human as we are. The presence of the Spirit constitutes the humanity of the incarnate Son. This humanity, conditioned by the Spirit, is not only the subject-matter of Christology: it is the goal of Christian existence. Such a Christology reveals to us what it really means to be human.

26. Jesus is not only an example of Spirit-filled humanity, nor is his life only a pattern for us to imitate. Our free co-operation with God's grace is required for our salvation. But our growth into his likeness depends ultimately, not on our initiative, but on his. We receive the Spirit as a transforming power in our lives because of Christ's self-offering to the Father in his living, dying and rising. But if Jesus Christ is God's gift to us, our relation to the Spirit cannot be exactly the same as his. Jesus Christ is the source from which the Spirit flows to us; he defines the meaning of life in the Spirit and he enables us to live that life.

27. Jesus is already what we are called to be, and our human vocation comes to us through him. In Jesus, God's call to the world and the world's response to God are joined together. Jesus' human yearning to give himself to the Father and to see God's will done is one with the divine yearning for the world to be brought back to God (cf. Luke 12.50).

28. The humanity of Christ, conditioned by the Spirit, does not conform to our humanity, but passes judgement on it, calling us to repentance and conformity to his humanity. It judges us not from above but from within our human condition. Whether at Gethsemane, on the Cross, or 'with the Spirits in prison' (1 Peter 3.19), Christ's humanity is the criterion by which ours is judged. Christ's descent into Hades reveals, not that our humanity abiding there is true humanity, but that true humanity, constituted by the Spirit, has to pass through our estranged condition before it can be perfected. That is why Byzantine iconography represents the crucifixion as the glorification of Christ's humanity: on the cross we see true humanity constituted by the Spirit. Christ's humanity brings into being a new humanity by which we are called to measure ourselves as human beings. The humanity of Christ, constituted by the

Spirit, has anthropological consequences. The Spirit, by being communion (*koinonia*) and bringing the *eschaton* into history, opens up humanity to the future.

29. Christ forgives by giving the Spirit (John 20.22). The theological context of forgiveness is eschatological. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and the Apostles' Creeds, the 'forgiveness of sins' is linked to the 'resurrection of the body'; and both follow confession of faith in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is associated with forgiveness precisely because there the Holy Spirit is at work. Forgiveness is about opening humanity to the future and to a new quality of human relationships. Existentially, forgiveness has to do with identifying someone, not on the basis of his or her past or present, but by granting this person a future in spite of his or her past or present. It is about healing the past and realising the new humanity in Christ. The Holy Spirit opens up this future to humanity in and through the humanity of Christ, constituted by the Spirit.

30. Since it is constituted by the Spirit, Christ's humanity overcomes death. The Spirit is operative in the Resurrection, for it is Christ's humanity that needed to be raised. Again, credal affirmation of our own resurrection follows the confession of faith in the Spirit. St Paul calls our resurrection body a 'spiritual (*pneumatikon*) body' (1 Corinthians 15.44). St Methodius of Olympus and others understood this expression to mean 'being filled with the Spirit'. The Spirit is called 'life-giving' (*zoopoion*) in both Scripture and the Creed because overcoming death is linked existentially with healing and transcending fragmentation, decomposition, and alienation, that is, with communion. Communion (*koinonia*) is true life (*zoe alethine*) because it overcomes 'being-unto-death', namely individualization and separation, the opposite of communion.

31. By being communion (*koinonia*) the Holy Spirit transcends the boundaries of self and subjectivity, and enables humanity to reach out to meet the other. The Spirit makes Christ *pro me* or *pro nobis*, a 'corporate personality' who exists for others, suffers with others, and dies for others. Without the Spirit, Christ would be just Jesus, whose sacrifice would have to be understood solely in ethical, not in ontological terms. Christ's humanity is an existence for others not because of a moral imperative, but because it is ontologically constituted in such a way as to open up the boundaries of selfhood for every believer, so that selfhood might become personal. Christ's humanity is personal because it overcomes individualism and individualization. As the eternal Son

within the Trinity, Christ is truly a person because of his unbreakable relationship with the Father and the Spirit. Constituted by the Spirit, Christ's humanity is conformed to this Trinitarian Personhood and, to use St Cyril of Alexandria's terminology, becomes itself 'hypostasised'. In this way human nature is united to the divine in Christ in the sense of being elevated to 'hypostatic' or 'personal' existence. The Spirit creates a personal existence, free for love, mutuality and creativity. It is an existence which is free within the bounds of life in the world, but does not promise escape from it. The freedom given in Christ is a freedom for relationship and community, the freedom proper to the kingdom of God and the people of God.

32. The Spirit forms the corporate and personal likeness of Christ in us. For St Paul, the Spirit is what sets us free to take on this likeness of Christ (e.g. calling God *Abba*: Galatians 4.6, Romans 8.15). There is a christological criterion by which the achievements of the human spirit must be tested, more obviously so where Christian spirituality and holiness are concerned. If we consider how human identity is moulded by God's Spirit, we have some fairly clear standard of discernment for the spiritual life. Again, this judgment or testing is not from above but from within our human condition.

33. This means we must question certain widespread ideals of humility that have produced immaturity and dependence in Christian lives. Such ideals can produce people for whom dependence means an obsessive conviction of inferiority, and who lack the capacity to take responsibility as adults for their actions. We must question whether such ideals are truly related to life in the Spirit. Proper dependence upon God makes us his friends, not slaves. 'I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing' (John 15.15).

34. We must no less question the ideal of the 'moral athlete', the person who feels that his or her life has reached such a state of perfection that he or she cannot possibly be vulnerable to human frailty. Those who struggle towards self-mastery, afraid of exposing vulnerability and admitting need, stand under the judgment of the Holy Spirit's work in Jesus Christ. Jesus does not avoid the pain of admitting human need, as when he begs the disciples to watch and pray with him in Gethsemane. In relation to those whom he comes to redeem, he 'is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters' (Hebrews 2.11).

35. Within the communion of the Church any account of how the Holy Spirit is to be discerned in human lives must allow for the possibility, to

say the least, that the Spirit works also in those circumstances where our faithfulness to Christ crucified and risen prompts us to decide and act without clear validation from subjective certainty, a sense of guidance, or confirmatory wonders. It must also confront the possibility that this represents not a spiritual deficiency but a moment of costly breakthrough to some fuller maturity. Greater intimacy and fuller union with God may involve at times a deep and disorientating loss of the sense of God tangibly and specifically at work, or of God as a discernible 'other'.

36. While we neither deny the abiding centrality of the concept and experience of relationship with God, nor capitulate to the mysticism of absorption or identification, we recognise that the experiential content of this relationship varies. When God trusts us to decide and act without tangible assurance, it marks an advance in the intimacy between Creator and creature, and so can be understood as the Holy Spirit's work in us. It is the moment where suffering and promise may coincide, where death and forsakenness are taken into the reality of being children of God. The Spirit lives and works in our risks as well as our securities, our hurts as well as our triumphs, in so far as these are signs of our maturity.

37. The work of God's Spirit is related to St Paul's insight that God's power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12.9). Humanity shaped by God's Spirit is defined by the humanity of Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2.2; cf. Romans 6.4). The new humanity is dependent on a power that achieves its ends by sacrifice. More specifically, the union of believers with Jesus is a union in vulnerability. 'If we suffer with him we shall also be glorified with him' (Romans 8.17).

Christ, the Spirit and the Church

38. So we arrive at an ecclesiology by way of a Christology conditioned by Pneumatology. The New Testament's description of Christ as Isaiah's 'Servant of God' or Daniel's 'Son of Man' can only be understood in terms of Christ's relational existence. Both images relate Christ to others: the Servant shed his life for the 'many', and the Son of Man is the eschatological figure who brings with him the 'saints'. Christ, then, as head of the ecclesial body, is inconceivable without the many: they are part of his identity.

39. The question arises as to how the 'many' who live here and now relate to an individual who lived in first century Palestine. For some the answer is primarily ethical, consisting in the imitation of Christ and obedience in faith to what he said or did. For others worship is the means

to bridge the gap, for we meet him through prayer. In both cases, Christ risks being understood as an individual and not as a person. Yet Christ transcends individualism and individualization by being personal. We need to recover an understanding of Christ as a person who includes us in himself, who is 'one' and 'many' at the same time. Such an understanding presumes a Christology conditioned by Pneumatology that de-individualizes Christ and makes him a true person. So the gap between the Christ of the first century and ourselves is filled through Christ's relational being, which in his grace and love and true personhood reaches out to include us in himself. It is the Spirit that makes the Church what it is, the body of Christ. As such the Church is an indispensable part of Christ's identity.

40. The Holy Spirit forms and unites the Church, just as the same Spirit shapes and defines the work of Jesus in its paschal fulfillment. As the descent of God's Spirit is clear in Jesus' baptism, so we should look for the work of the Spirit in our own. His baptism is an initiation into the whole of his mission culminating in the cross. St Paul insists that baptism unites us with Christ in his death and resurrection (Romans 6.1-11). At our baptism the Spirit forms Christ in us, and enables us to share in Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Then we begin to live in the Spirit, not primarily because extraordinary gifts instantly manifest themselves, but because the liberation of our humanity for life among God's people, accomplished in Jesus' death and resurrection, becomes a reality in us.

41. The Spirit of the Christian community is the Spirit of Jesus. Christ and the community share the same Spirit, who forms believers in the likeness of Christ. Although Jesus is the supremely Spirit-filled person, this does not mean that he has an unrivalled capacity for miracle and mastery, or even that he is the supreme example of selfless love. It means that he is the one around whom is gathered the community of God's sons and daughters, by the creative life of the Holy Spirit he bestows.

42. Within the community formed by the Holy Spirit, we can live a life of love and obedience to God, and bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5.22-23). Spiritual gifts are given to the community whose identity is defined and characterised by being 'in Christ'. Jesus, as the incarnate Word, receives the Spirit, who energises the life of the eternal Word in his specific human body and soul. He also gives the Spirit, pouring out the gift he has been given. The Spirit is both the gift and promise of the Father, and the gift of the Risen Christ (cf. Luke 24.29; John 14.16, 26; 15.26).

43. In our own century as in the past, the Church is rich in examples of Christian holiness that reflect the humanity of Christ constituted by the Holy Spirit. They display the selfless love of those who have begun to share in the death and resurrection of Christ and so reflect his likeness. In them we see the reality of humanity's liberation in Jesus' death and resurrection. That freedom may be displayed in resisting worldly powers. Mother Maria Skobtsova defended Jews in occupied France during the Second World War, and suffered martyrdom in Ravensbruck in 1945. Archbishop Janani Luwum witnessed to the gospel in Uganda at the cost of his life in 1977. Countless ordinary Orthodox believers suffered in the camps and psychiatric hospitals of the former Soviet Union. Many Anglican believers, alongside other Christians, witnessed to the need for racial equality in South Africa. The same freedom can be seen in the often solitary witness of those whom God's Spirit has empowered to break through the limits of their religious or secular culture for the sake of the kingdom.

44. Such examples bring into sharper focus the vocation of all who are in Christ. Their freedom from the constraints of class and race, temperament and taste, enables them to discover a new and creative identity in Christ. That freedom springs from and nourishes the simple, trustful prayer of the Holy Spirit in us, 'Abba! Father!' (Romans 8.15) In countless diverse lives the Spirit is realising the likeness of the incarnate Word; and the Spirit's vital energy is reproducing in them Jesus' own life as Son of God. So the glory of God's own life of giving and sharing is manifest in and to the creation: and 'This comes from the Lord who is the Spirit' (2 Corinthians 3.18).

Concluding Remarks

45. A Christology shaped by Pneumatology may help us to avoid misunderstandings that arise in the debate over the filioque. Eastern theologians have argued that the filioque obscures the distinctiveness of the Spirit, and tends to make the Spirit seem inferior to the Father and the Son. Western theologians, even when admitting the force of such fears, have defended the filioque on the grounds that we must never seem to divorce the Spirit from the Father's purpose of bringing us into the trinitarian communion by adopting us as sons and daughters in the Son.

46. We have sought to show that Anglicans and Orthodox are agreed about both the inadequacies of the filioque and the need to develop Christology and Pneumatology in the closest possible connection. To set aside the filioque is not to deny the mutual relation of the Son and the

Spirit, in the eternal life of the Trinity as well as in the economy of salvation.

47. If our trinitarian theology fully expresses the mutual relation of the three divine Persons, we can properly witness to the inseparable connection between the work of the Son and the work of the Holy Spirit in achieving our salvation, without having recourse to the filioque. We should never seek to understand the Son and the Spirit in isolation from each other. That would be to deny the fundamental vision of our trinitarian faith.

Section III : Christ, Humanity and the Church: Part 1

Introduction

1. The current issue of Christ and culture is relevant to Anglican - Orthodox dialogue, particularly to the issue of Christ, Humanity and the Church. We need to examine the relationship between the life of the Church and her proclamation of the Gospel, and the various cultures in which the Christian life is lived and the Gospel proclaimed. We need also to consider the relationship between the Church's message and the cultural settings in which the Church proclaims Jesus Christ.

2. We begin our consideration with a theological interpretation of culture and its interaction with Christianity. We then explore in particular the relationship between Christology and culture. While acknowledging the universal permanence of the conciliar definitions of christological faith, Anglicans and Orthodox also wish to pose questions concerning the inculturation of the Gospel, and expressions of Christology emerging at the end of the twentieth century from different cultural contexts.

3. Christology relates to the Church's proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent into the world so that the world might be saved through him (John 3.16ff.). The world which is saved by Christ, and to which the Gospel is proclaimed, comprises many cultures. While it is difficult to define culture precisely, we understand culture as a way of being human. Since there is no way of being human that does not involve being with other human persons, and since human coexistence requires communal forms of expression and communication, culture is an inevitable aspect of human life. As social creatures, human beings need common means of communication: symbol, word, gesture, and image. It is through these that members of particular cultures can give expression to knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and all other capabilities and habits. Hence the question of Christ and culture is integral to the wider discussion of Christ and humanity.

4. There are different Christian responses to different cultures. An awareness of the distinctiveness of particular cultural settings is vital to the discernment of what may be an authentic Christian response, or range of responses, to those situations. In many parts of the world Anglicans and Orthodox live in societies which are coming to realise the implications of such developments as multi-culturalism, the emerging role of women, and the place of aboriginal peoples within Church and society.

5. In discussing Christ and culture, it is essential to pay attention to the variety of cultures as well as to the variety of possible Christian responses to any given culture. We must take into account the particularity of each culture, with its own unique characteristics. Our discussion needs to proceed cautiously from considering specific interactions of Christianity and culture to a general statement of how the two relate.

Christ, Church and Culture

6. For the Christian community Christ is not only a teacher or lawgiver. Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Lord of glory, who through the Incarnation became part of human history and of a particular human culture. The question of the Person of Christ has been a dominant theme throughout the history of Christianity, both Eastern and Western. This is understandable, since the Person of Jesus Christ is the focus and ultimate goal of the Christian life. St Symeon the New Theologian expressed it well when he said: 'The beginning is Christ, the midpoint is Christ and the completion is Christ as well; in everything is He who is within the first things. In the midpoint and in the end as in the first things, Christ is all in all' (*Chapters*, III.1, cf. Colossians 3.11).

7. Before we consider Christ and culture, we must affirm our conviction that the Church's understanding of Jesus Christ cannot be adequately treated in isolation from trinitarian theology, Pneumatology and ecclesiology. The ecclesial experience and reality is so inextricably interwoven with Christ that our vision of his Person contains within itself our vision of the Church. St Gregory of Nyssa states that 'he who sees the Church sees Christ before him' (*In Canticum Canticorum*, PG 44, 1048 C, cf. Ephesians 4.11ff). The ecclesial life is nothing less than a living communion with Christ.

8. While an anthropological appreciation of culture is valuable, the ecclesial experience and reality must also include a theological understanding of culture. A theological interpretation of culture is important to an understanding of the relationship between Christianity and culture. Culture is related to the creativity given to human beings by God. In Genesis the Lord God put Adam 'in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it' (Genesis 2.15) and later to name every living creature (Genesis 2.19-20). In so doing, God gave humanity a creative responsibility to care for the created world. Our primordial human vocation and mission is a unique, God-given service (*diakonia*) for the preservation and integrity of creation. We are called by God to act in the created world as

kings, priests, and prophets. Human labour, skill and language are marks of culture, which has a God-given spiritual dimension.

9. The essential unity of the gift given by God to human beings and their free acceptance of the responsibility to cultivate 'the garden' is of substantial importance for a theological understanding of culture. We should not underestimate or minimise the creative vocation and power bestowed on humanity by God. In considering the importance of culture, therefore, we may place considerable value on human achievement. The substance and destiny of culture is relevant to the original and ultimate vocation of human beings. This means that the reality and justification of culture is closely related to the conviction that, as St Gregory of Nyssa has said, God 'made human nature the participant in every good' (*De hominis opificio* 16, PG 44 189 A-D).

10. From the beginning, the calling of human beings has been not only to progress towards fuller participation in the life of God, but also to engage actively with their environment, seeking to consecrate it in God's name and by God's help. It is on this that the theological justification of culture is grounded. Culture is not justified unconditionally, on exclusively anthropocentric grounds *in abstracto*, but precisely because human beings have received the divine gift of creativity. In other words, culture is related to human authenticity.

11. Sin has affected the very being of the human creature. Our God-given capacity for creativity has been obscured, and human culture has lost its original vitality, validity and scope. Through sin human beings have become divided in themselves, and so are alienated and estranged from their original and authentic state of communion (*koinonia*). It is only through the self-emptying (*kenosis*) of the Person of the Word of God that humanity is recreated and restructured. It is a fundamental point of patristic anthropology that the eternal Word of God of his own free will dwelt among us in order to realise in his incarnate person the restoration of humanity. Christ healed and recreated the human race, including culture. This understanding of creation and redemption enables us to affirm certain points concerning Christ and culture.

12. A positive attitude to culture is integral to our belief in the creation of human beings by God and our re-creation in Christ, the incarnate Word. That faith enables us to affirm that human persons are given immense potentialities for creating a personal history of holiness. At the same time, humanity is called by its Maker to meet the needs of this present age and to use the divine gift of creativity to build a culture worthy of

the original and ultimate vocation of humankind: 'Human culture can be a transformed life in and to the glory of God. For man it is impossible, but all things are possible to God, who has created man, body and soul for Himself, and sent His Son into the world that the world through Him might be saved' (H.R.Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, New York 1951, p.196). Culture is intrinsic to human life and integral to our communion with nature, our fellow human beings, and ultimately with God. It is not possible to live outside the context of culture. Even when human beings, including Christians, offer a critique of a particular culture, or even reject it or some of its aspects, they cannot reject culture as such; they can only replace one culture by another, for culture itself is inevitable. In the course of history, Christians have had a wide range of attitudes towards particular cultures.

13. In the early Church, contemporary Greco-Roman culture was in principle regarded positively. Justin Martyr declared: 'The lessons of Plato are not alien from those of Christ, although they are not similar. The same is true for the Stoics and the poets and the ancient writers ... Whatever things have been rightly said by anyone belong to us Christians' (*Second Apology* 13, 2-4, PG 6, 465 B-C). The patristic period was one of cultural evolution, transformation and revaluation. The critical Christian assimilation of Greco-Roman culture may be understood as a 'conversion of Hellenism'. This gradual process gave birth to a new, Christian culture, which was a synthesis of all the creative traditions of the past. It was a new, profoundly Christianised, Greco-Roman culture. Elements of the old were retained and even cherished, but were given a new, Christian interpretation. An Orthodox theologian described it as an acceptance of the postulates of culture and their transvaluation (G.Florovsky, Christianity and Civilisation, *Christianity and Culture*, Belmont 1974, p.123).

14. At the present time '[t]he authority of nineteenth and twentieth century notions of progress, economic growth and the free market economy, the omnipotence of scientific method and technology, and competitive individualism is no longer accepted without question. In many places there is a search for cultural, personal and social identity, which honours the integrity and value of cultural roots' (*The Virginia Report: The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission*, I.4, p.8). Within this context Christians 'strive to be faithful to their particular cultural contexts, and to face moral, doctrinal, social and economic exigencies which demand discernment and response if identity as the Christian community is to be maintained. Issues of justice

and human rights including human sexuality, the family and the status of women, racial equality, religious freedom and the use and distribution of resources demand attention. Our response to these issues is conditioned by our particular cultural context, our way of interpreting the Bible, our degree of awareness of being part of a wider human community and our attentiveness to the response of our ecumenical partners, and to the concerns of those of other faiths'(*ibid*. I.5, pp.8-9).

15. In our highly technological culture spiritual elements are barely discernible, and human beings are constricted by their own achievements. It has been said that human beings now suffer from the tyranny of cultural routine and from the bondage of civilization. Too often little or no room is left for a creative and authentic human life. At a time when human achievements, such as the development of certain political and economic systems, are often given absolute, and even 'divine' value, it is important for Christians to remember that a particular culture can only be a means of understanding the Gospel, and in no way a substitute for it. We must therefore face responsibly questions surrounding culture, and realise its limitations as a vehicle for the Gospel, in whose critical light we need to look at any particular culture. In this way those within the ecclesial community can exercise their calling to seek the true value and the limits of culture. It is also from within the Church that the Gospel can exercise its transforming and creative role in culture. Our attitude towards culture should be conditioned by the Church.

16. Sometimes churches become identified uncritically with a prevailing culture. Then they too stand in need of the Gospel's corrective critique. Churches have sometimes supported oppressive powers and colonial domination. There are times when the Gospel calls the churches to draw attention to aspects of a society where change and transformation are needed, whether Christianity is new to that society or has already made itself at home in it. The churches may find themselves called to discern whether their own attitudes and actions require repentance and forgiveness, so that they may be transformed and renewed. St Paul wrote to the church in Rome: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God— what is is good and acceptable and perfect' (Romans 12.2).

17. Just as the Gospel is never proclaimed apart from culture, neither is any comfortable accommodation of Christ to a particular culture possible without that culture being transformed by the Gospel. The Gospel will affirm some aspects of a culture, but it will call others into question, and point to possibilities for transformation. The Church in apostolic and

patristic times was open to the achievements of contemporary culture, but at the same time was dedicated to the truth of Jesus Christ. It has always been difficult and often dangerous for the Church to witness to the Gospel's prophetic critique of culture. But many Christians have felt called to this task and have responded in costly ways.

18. From a theological perspective we may conclude that particular cultures are in themselves neither wholly good nor wholly evil. They may assist in understanding the Christian Gospel, or they may oppose its realisation. Cultures may facilitate human life and promote the spiritual development of human persons. They may also alienate them from genuine human life, and inhibit them from seeing that their human vocation lies in an infinite growth in knowledge of God and union with him.

19. The Gospel appraises and transforms cultures. Christians are called to be critical of the culture in which they find themselves, and to modify them in the light of their faith in Jesus Christ. The Church takes culture seriously and yet also stands over against it. Her attitude towards cultures should be dialectical, one of approach and distance, of judgment and transformation.

Christology and Culture

20. A consideration of the relationship between Christianity and culture in general leads to the more particular question of the relationship between Christology and culture. Christology expresses our understanding of the person and work of Jesus, the Christ who encounters us, and of his significance for us. Like the Christian life as a whole, it is rooted in our experience of the living tradition of the Church.

21. The mission of Jesus of Nazareth took place within a particular cultural setting. St Paul believed this was not accidental: 'But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his only Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons and daughters' (Galatians 4.4). For the first Christians, culture included the social, philosophical, and artistic heritage of Palestinian Judaism and the Greco-Roman world. The Son of God's involvement in human history and culture means that Christianity is not simply a matter of accepting certain axioms about God: it is primarily a new way of living within the reign of God. Jesus proclaimed this way of living in images and language specific to his Palestinian Jewish cultural setting. But even within the New Testament itself, and increasingly as Christianity spread and developed, the person, ministry and teaching of Christ came to be interpreted and proclaimed in Hellenistic and other cultural contexts.

22. Every expression of Christology has its origin within a particular culture or combination of cultures. A Christology not formulated in relation to a particular cultural setting would not speak to anyone: the Gospel is never proclaimed in a vacuum. In the New Testament itself, specific cultures are important to the interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The process of proclaiming Jesus Christ in an increasingly wide variety of cultural contexts goes back to the day of Pentecost itself:

> And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs — in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' (Acts 2.4-11)

If people are to respond to the Gospel, they must be able to hear it. That means it must be expressed in particular languages within particular cultural contexts.

23. A study of the early Christian period can illuminate our present debate about the Gospel and culture. Two worlds came into contact with each other: the new world of the Gospel and the ancient world of Judaic and Greco-Roman culture. There was often conflict and opposition between them. But we should not exaggerate the extent and depth of that conflict, as though Christianity and the prevailing cultures were completely incompatible. From the beginning Christians have expressed the good news of Jesus Christ in ways that have made sense within their own situation, especially in the Judaic and Greco-Roman cultural contexts. The early Church did not deny its cultural inheritance, and the earliest Christians were in principle open to embracing culture. In proclaiming the Gospel they wished to interpret faithfully their encounter with the incarnate Logos, and their new relationship with God made possible through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The languages, thought forms and symbols current in the early centuries contributed to the formation of the christological, pneumatological and trinitarian doctrines of the early Ecumenical Councils. These councils were not impervious to culture, but carefully related the Gospel to particular cultural contexts.

24. Christian theology has always been closely related with culture. The Gospel has to enter the human situation, and theology's task is to engage with human history and thought. This does not mean that the Gospel has to be relativised, and adapted to every current cultural achievement. It does mean that human thought, and human culture in general, can prepare the way for the Gospel and interpret it (*praeparatio et interpretatio evangelica*).

25. The Fathers addressed the question of Christ and culture. In their efforts to present the Christian faith in a language accessible to the people of God, they used and transformed the categories of Greek philosophical thought in order to speak of the Person of Christ. While they were opposed to pagan culture, they were also open to embracing all those things that were considered positive for the reception and interpretation of the Gospel.

26. Although the Gospel is always embodied in a specific culture, it transcends every culture. A particular formulation of christological doctrine may sometimes persist through cultural change, and may even bridge cultures. This does not mean that Christology is unconditioned by culture, but it does indicate that a particular doctrine of the person and work of Jesus Christ is not necessarily restricted to the cultural context in which it emerged. Formulated at a particular time and in a particular place, it may nevertheless speak to people at other times and in other places. Differences in cultural settings need to be taken seriously, but some doctrines of the person and work of Jesus Christ are able to span cultural divides. The New Testament is the principal illustration of how a particular witness to Jesus Christ speaks across cultural boundaries. The same is true of the christological definitions of the Ecumenical Councils. These early testimonies come from cultural contexts significantly different from our own, and deserve to be appreciated within their own contexts. But they continue to convey authoritatively to contemporary Christians the power and meaning of Christ's person and work.

27. When we recognise that the Scriptures and historic doctrinal formulations may speak with authority across cultural boundaries, we testify to our faith in the Holy Spirit. In and through the communion of the Holy Spirit, Christians in diverse contexts in time and space are brought into relation with the same divine Lord. That enables them to make their own the language of the first believers, the writers of the New Testament and the Fathers and Councils of the early Church. This is what Orthodox theologians mean by speaking of Holy Tradition in the

Church as itself the work of the Holy Spirit, the 'charismatic memory' of the Church. The Spirit brings to life for us the words of the Christian past that shaped the Church's historic understanding of God in Christ. On this basis Christians engage confidently with their diverse cultural environments, trusting that the Spirit works through the Church's constant endeavour to live and proclaim the historic faith in new, unfamiliar, and even hostile, contexts, in order to convert and transform them.

28. While culture has influenced Christology, the proclamation of Jesus Christ has had a profound effect on culture. When Jesus Christ is proclaimed in cultures previously untouched by Christian influence, those cultures are challenged and opened up to change. While early Christianity emerged in the Mediterranean world of the first century, it was not simply a reflection of Greco-Roman culture but was also profoundly counter-cultural. In our own day the Gospel continues to challenge and transform culture.

Christology and Inculturation

29. In recent times there has been a trend to express the message of Jesus Christ in terms of particular cultures, known as inculturation. Inculturation may be described as an attempt to translate the essential meaning of Christianity from the terms of one historical and cultural milieu into those of another. It has played an important role in missionary work. In the past evangelisation has often involved a policy of replacing so-called primitive cultures with so-called advanced ones. Missionaries have frequently assumed that Christianity could be expressed only in terms of European thought-forms, world-views and ways of living, inherited from Greco-Roman culture. These assumptions may have been well- intentioned and those who made them certainly contributed to the spread of Christianity, but they implied disrespect for other cultures.

30. Inculturation means proclaiming the Gospel in terms of people's own culture, so that it may permeate their personal and social life. As a matter of history the Church has expressed the Gospel in the concepts and language of different peoples, and has drawn on their poetic, artistic and philosophical traditions in order to clarify the Christian message. In such instances Christology has entered into dialogue with various human cultures.

31. Christianity has taken root in many different cultures, and this has been reflected in various forms of theological expression within the Church. This could be seen as threatening the Church's unity, in which case

Christians ought to resist the attempt to express the Gospel in a variety of ways in different cultural situations. But inculturation might equally be seen as entirely legitimate. In this case cultural diversity need not signal a threat to unity. The search for Christian unity can then be seen not exclusively as one for common formulations of the faith, but also as an attempt to discern the unity-in-diversity, where it exists, of different cultural expressions of the Gospel. We may affirm the unity of the Church, to which the historic creeds of the Ecumenical Councils bear witness, as a unity-in-diversity, not as a begrudged necessity but on the basis of positive theological conviction.

32. We return finally to the reality of the ecclesial experience. In discussing inculturation, we must recognise that no local church exists in isolation. In seeking to express Christology in terms of its own setting, each local church has a responsibility to the whole Church to be loyal to the Gospel. The communion (*koinonia*) of the local churches implies dialogue among them on their understanding of the Christologies of the New Testament and the Ecumenical Councils. Each local church should be able to expect thoughtful consideration from other churches as it engages in this task. Mutual accountability as well as respect is needed as the churches seek together to be faithful to the Triune God in very different cultural settings.

Conclusion

33. From the time of the New Testament to the present, Christology has never developed in a cultural vacuum, but always in relationship to a particular culture or grouping of cultures. The distinction between the Gospel and culture must not be ignored or blurred. There should be vigorous interaction and dialogue between them. There can also be a convergence between them, rooted in God's creation of human beings and their re-creation in Christ. That is why we need a theological interpretation of culture that will help us to understand it, and the part it can play in the life of the Church.

34. The reign of the Triune God claims the allegiance of each person and society. Christians are called to work with the Holy Spirit to bring their cultures into closer conformity to the Kingdom of God. Wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, there is a potential critique and transformation of the cultural context.

35. Particular doctrinal definitions are not necessarily restricted to the cultures in which they emerge. The New Testament's and the Ecumenical Councils' affirmations of Jesus Christ as truly divine and truly human

remain the foundation, touch-stone and nourishment of the Church's life and proclamation of the Gospel in every culture and in every age. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church becomes a source of creativity in the cultures in which it is present.

36. At the same time, cultures affect the articulation of the Gospel and Christology, and may prompt the Church to listen afresh to the Gospel, and perhaps hear it in new ways. That does not mean that culture will determine the meaning of Jesus Christ. It is vital to engage with the Scriptures and the living tradition of the Church, in order to ensure that faithfulness to Jesus Christ accompanies inculturation, and that cultures themselves are transformed.

37. Christians need to address the particularity of each culture as they seek to bear witness to the Triune God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Christians have a primary responsibility for expressing the Gospel of Jesus Christ within their cultural setting. This obligation cannot be imposed from the outside, even though it does not take place in isolation. There is a necessary process of discernment, for which the local church is accountable to Jesus Christ and responsible to the whole Church. The articulation of Christology in worship, teaching and the arts within a particular culture needs to be tested sympathetically but critically, to discern whether it remains true to Scripture and falls within the Church's living tradition. This same process of discernment is also required in our ecumenical dialogues, so that we can discern each other's standing in the faith.

38. In conclusion we return to the ecclesial basis of Christology. It is within the Church that we understand Christ not only as lawgiver and religious leader, but as the eternal Word (*Logos*) of God, who became flesh in order to change the world and culture. The Church's faith and hope with regard to culture, and more generally to the entire created order, is illustrated by the biblical narrative of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Church's mission is to open up every human situation to the possibility of transfiguration; and the ecclesial experience is nothing other than a communion in the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. 'For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12.13). In this new and unique context culture, together with every other aspect of human life, is transfigured, and becomes an occasion for love towards God and love towards the image of God, the human being, as well as the entire cosmos. Through transfigured human culture, the Father, the Son and

the Holy Spirit are glorified, and human persons and all creation gain dignity and honour as they come to share in the divine glory (2 Corinthians 3.18).

Section IV : Christ, Humanity and the Church: Part 2

Introduction

1. We propose now to consider the relationship of Christ and humanity as this affects our understanding of the Church. We have agreed that at the heart of our theology of the Church lies the mystery of communion in the life of God (I.4). The life of the Triune Godhead is supremely personal, and men and women, created in the image and likeness of God, are created for and called into a personal way of existence in communion with God, with the whole human community and the whole of creation (I.5). Theology and anthropology are intimately linked.

The Use of Gender Language in Theology

2. We recognise that our theological concepts of God and of the divine life in the Church are framed in the knowledge that God transcends our human perception. We are always in danger of forgetting that God is mystery, and of seeking to force God into our contemporary categories and concepts). As St Gregory of Nyssa said:

> We ... have learned that His nature cannot be named and is ineffable. We say that every name, whether invented by human custom or handed down by the scriptures, is indicative of our conceptions of the divine nature, but does not signify what that nature is in itself. (*Ad Ablabium, Quod non sint Tres Dii*. PG 45.121A)

3. It is not only the essence of God which the human intellect cannot conceive. St Gregory says that our own humanity too is a mystery to us:

> Is there anyone who has a proper conceptual grasp of his own soul? Is there anyone who has understood the soul's essence? (PG 45, 945D)

When we try to find clear and simple definitions of our humanity, including sexuality and gender, we encounter problems comparable to those that arise in speaking about God. When we consider the use of gender-specific language in relation to God, we must remember that we are dealing with not one but two profoundly mysterious realities.

4. We wish to emphasise that God is beyond gender and sexuality. This view was constantly affirmed by the Fathers in their debates with Gnostic teachers, whose mythologies included series of gendered aeons,

and with the Arians, who denied the Son's generation from the Father because they understood it to involve human sexual activity. God is known and worshipped in the Church as wholly without gender: he is neither male nor female, nor any combination of the two. Strictly speaking we cannot even say that God is beyond gender, since we cannot compare him with anything creaturely. The Greek and Latin fathers would have no sympathy with those contemporary theologians who see the divine as female, nor with those who regard God as male.

5. Jesus Christ is a perfect male person: he is no androgyne. But his saving work extends equally to male and female. As St Gregory Nazianzen says,

> Christ saves both by his passion. Was he made flesh for the man? So he was also for the woman. Did he die for the man? The woman also is saved by his death. He is called 'seed of David': and so perhaps you think the man is honoured. But he is born of a virgin, and this is on the woman's side. (*Oratio* 37.7.1)

St Augustine affirms the same truth:

> Since he had created both sexes, that is, male and female, he wished to honour in his birth both sexes, which he had come to save...In regard to neither sex, then, should we do injury to the Creator; the nativity of the Lord encouraged both to hope for salvation. (Augustine, *Sermo* 190.2, PL 38.1008)

Christ the Son of God

6. The Church's confession of Jesus Christ as the 'Son' of God does not apply gender language to God. We have affirmed that the terms 'Father' and 'Son' in Christian theology are not gendered: they refer only to the ontological derivation of the Son from the Father, and not to their likeness to a male parent and his offspring. By confessing Jesus Christ as the 'Son' of the 'Father', we acknowledge that the Son is distinct from the Father, and yet is Son by nature. That is what is meant by the term *homoousios* in the creed.

7. We confess Christ as the eternal Son of God on the basis of divine revelation. The Scriptures call the Son by many different names in relation to the Father. He is the logos, wisdom, power, light, truth, and righteousness of God. But the name which most naturally belongs to him is 'Son'. Our doctrine of God is based on the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This name reveals his true identity, and leads us to understand the Godhead as a Trinity of Persons. The Fathers agree

on the meaning of the names 'Son' and 'Father', and that the Logos is truly Son by nature. Jesus Christ is *homoousios* with the Father, and so is truly Saviour. Gender plays no part in their discussions. The Christian faith confesses that the Logos is the Son of God by nature, not in order to exalt male over female, but in order to confess the true God.

8. The Bible and patristic theologians are clear that the language of revelation can be truly understood only within the communion (*koinonia*) of the Church. There the terms 'Father' and 'Son' are understood to be neither analogous, metaphorical or symbolic. Their full significance, derived from revelation, is realised within the theology and worship of the Christian community. This kind of language we have styled 'iconic' (I.36ff).

Christ's Humanity

9. Gender-specific language has always been used in affirming that the eternal Son of God 'took flesh', and 'became man'. The question of Jesus Christ's gender was approached, in patristic and most theologies and anthropologies before the twentieth century, solely on the basis of his maleness. In opposition to Gnostic speculation about the possibility that Christ was androgynous, his maleness was regarded as attested by Isaiah 7.14, a messianic text universally applied by the Fathers to Christ: 'Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child (*paidion*) and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.'

10. The ancient theologies of both East and West stressed the fact that Jesus Christ assumed human nature common to both men and women. For St Gregory Nazianzen and virtually all theologians there was no contradiction between asserting that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man incarnate for our salvation, was fully human, and that he was a male. He assumed the human nature which both men and women share, and which was instrumental in his saving work. Some Fathers speak of Christ's 'common humanity', stating that the reason Scripture designates Christ's manhood as being simply 'flesh', is that he unites all of humankind, and not simply one individual, to God. His maleness therefore constitutes no barrier to the salvation of women.

11. In this connection it is important to note that the Fathers, when they spoke of the Word of God becoming man, used the Greek word *anthropos* signifying 'human being' rather than 'male', and the abstract *anthropotes* meaning 'humanity' rather than 'maleness'.

> For it behoved him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that he should himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is man. (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer*, 3.14.2)

That same truth is implied by the statement of St Gregory Nazianzen,

> For that which he has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved. (Gregory Nazianzen, *Epistle* 101; PG 37, 181D)

And by that of St Athanasius,

> For he became human that we might become divine. (Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, 54)

12. The importance of stressing the humanity of Christ, rather than his maleness, cannot be exaggerated. The New Testament witnesses to the universality of his redemption. In St John's Gospel, for example, our knowledge of the Father comes through the Son as we are drawn by the Spirit into the truth of what he has done and taught us (John 1.18; 15.26; 16.13ff). Such personal knowledge springs from the mutual indwelling of believers and the Son, through which they are taken up into the eternal life of the Godhead (John 6.56f; 17.3). In this process, Jesus' humanity plays a central role: 'the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh' (John 6.51). What believers must eat is the restored humanity of the Son; and those who receive it will be given power to become children of God. All believers are called into the relationship with the Father which Jesus actualises in his own human life, and are to be taken up into the divine life through their personal relationship of love with Jesus Christ, which is expressed and realised in the eucharistic life of the Church: 'he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him'. In all this there is not the slightest hint that any distinction is to be drawn between the way in which women and men share in Christ's new humanity, and so enter into the life of the divine communion.

The Risen Christ

13. Christ willingly assumed fallen human nature, 'sin excepted', with its gender distinctions, and healed and transformed it through his incarnation, passion and resurrection (Philippians 2.5-11). In the New Testament Christ's death on the cross, his resurrection and ascension, involve his entire human self, body, mind and soul. His resurrected body is continuous with his historical body.

St John Damascene writes:

> His flesh which was raised was the same flesh that suffered, for nothing of his (human) nature, not his body nor his soul, was cast aside (in his Resurrection), but he continued to possess a body endowed with the faculties of reason, mind and will, and thus he sits at the right hand of the Father, willing both as God and as man the salvation of us all. (John Damascene: *De Fide Orthodoxa* 4.1, PG 94, 2.1104AB)

But Jesus brings it to the Father restored to its original form and transfigured. To his disciples his body appeared as the new, incorruptible and transfigured body of the world to come.

14. Our bodies will be similarly transformed. St Paul says that after death we will not be disembodied, but rather 'clothed upon' with immortality (2 Corinthians 5.2-4). Elsewhere he writes of another, spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15.44). Humanity is restored to wholeness by its resurrection (II.29). Many of the Fathers, such as St Gregory of Nyssa and St Maximus the Confessor, affirm that in the resurrection life in Christ the distinction between male and female is radically transformed. So St Maximus says,

> Christ brought unity to human existence, mystically removing at the spiritual level the differences of maleness and femaleness; the true nature of humanity (*ton logon tēs physeōs*) is set free in both male and female from those characteristics that have to do with the passions. (Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassum* 48, PG 90, 436A)

Human nature is no longer defined by polarity between male and female, and human generation no longer perpetuates the cycle of birth and death. Countering the origenistic belief that the body will be annihilated in the age to come, the Fathers assert that even when glorified, the body of Christ is still a recognisably human body; and the assertion that sexual polarity is transcended in the resurrection life does not entail the destruction of human nature in its gendered form. Rather, participation in the divine life brings our male and female nature to the final destiny God has always intended for it. The Fathers look forward, not to an androgynous future, a humanity stripped of the distinctive qualities of men and women, but to a perfect communion in which human diversity is affirmed and glorified.

The Risen Christ and the Church

15. The Risen Christ is present in the Church through the Spirit: to know the Spirit is to know the Risen Christ. The Church's faith in the resurrection is grounded in its experience of the Spirit; as the community of the Risen Lord, it knows him above all in 'the breaking of the bread'. In the Church the goal of history, the promised reign of God, is experienced by anticipation within history. Faith in the reign of God affirms the goodness of creation as well as the reconciliation of estranged humanity.

16. St Paul speaks of the Church in iconic language as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.12-13). This phrase expresses the Church's most characteristic and enduring understanding of itself as an organic community within history. It denotes Christian experience as participation in an objective corporate reality, and also indicates the Church's vocation to be Christ's agent or instrument in the world.

17. Baptism in the name of the Trinity is an initiation into this eschatological community through identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6.4). It is also the sacrament of repentance in preparation for the final realisation of Jesus' promise. Because the reign of God is both present and future, the Church's life is characterised by temptation, struggle, and brokenness. Baptism initiates us into an arena of conflict between the old age and the new. All that is hostile to the reign of God has in principle been overcome, and we have been freed from the perversion of our creaturely finitude. But the powers from whose bondage we have been set free continue to assault and at times overwhelm us. Baptism is therefore a call to struggle against 'all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God' as well as 'the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God' (ECUSA-BCP, p.302).

18. The reign of God is central to both Gospel and Church. In the life of Jesus the reign of God breaks into history. The outcome of Jesus' mission is the fellowship of the renewed people of God, into which all peoples are now welcome to enter. The Church is both the principal fruit of the Gospel, and the Gospel's bearer in history. The life of the eschatological community embodies both word and sacraments. The Gospel calls us from communities dominated by death into the community of the risen Christ, through which he will establish his reign on earth. At the heart of the Gospel of redemption is the proclamation of the cross, which judges any attempt of the Church to pervert the Gospel by triumphalism.

19. The Church is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus as the Christ, and so in God's dealings with his people from the beginning. God called Abraham to be the father of many nations, and chose for himself a particular people to be a 'light to the nations'. Jesus came to preach to Israel and to call God's people to be the 'light of the world' (Matthew 5.14). He continues his mission through the Church, a royal priesthood called to preach to all nations. The Church awaits the realisation of the messianic hope that 'all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11.26) and all nations will come to the light: united in peace, they will acknowledge the glory of God. This vision obliges Christians to work for justice and peace in a world torn apart by oppression and violence.

20. Jesus called the Twelve from among his disciples as a sign of the imminent reign of God. They were symbols of the renewed people of God. After the resurrection Matthias was chosen to complete the number of the Twelve, and to join the others as 'a witness to his resurrection' (Acts 1.20-26). Their role as the nucleus of the apostolic community emphasises Israel's mission as the focus of the Gentiles' inclusion in the eschatological people of God. From the beginning Jesus' disciples have understood themselves to be that people. We celebrate the Eucharist as the messianic banquet, in which we are renewed and re-affirmed as the people of God, called to participate in Christ's mission to the world.

Section V : *Episcope*, *Episcopos* and Primacy

Introduction

1. The *Dublin Agreed Statement* of 1984 states clearly that both the Anglican and Orthodox Churches share a doctrine and practice of 'seniority' or 'primacy'. 'The Ecumenical Patriarch does not, however, claim universal jurisdiction over the other Churches, such as is ascribed to the Pope by the First and also the Second Vatican Council; and Orthodoxy sees any such claim as contrary to the meaning of seniority, as this was understood in the early centuries of the Church'. For Anglican Churches a similar seniority has come to be ascribed to the See of Canterbury. 'But this seniority is understood as a ministry of service and support to the other Anglican Churches, not as a form of domination over them...Thus, even though the seniority ascribed to the Archbishop of Canterbury is not identical with that given to the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Anglican Communion has developed on the Orthodox rather than the Roman Catholic pattern, as a fellowship of self-governing national or regional Churches.' It remains unquestionably true that neither the Anglicans nor the Orthodox perceive the Church primarily in terms of a global bureaucratic structure which confers ecclesial life and ministry downwards or outwards from its centre (cf. DAS 27 g. p.18).

2. In the Anglican and Orthodox vision the primary way of ecclesial being is the local church. Existing agreements have recognised this fact and its ministerial implications. Ecclesiologically, the Reformation in the Church of England was a reassertion of the national or local church's right to govern itself within its conciliar relationship with the world-wide Church. The great schism of 1054 resulted from a rejection of the Western Patriarchate of Rome's claim to jurisdiction over the Eastern Churches. Historically and theologically Orthodox and Anglicans share a commitment to the scriptures and ecumenical councils as decisive elements in their ecclesiology.

Episcope *and* Episcopos*: Historical Developments to the Fourth Century*

3. In the New Testament the local churches never appear without *episcope*, or oversight, the ministry of care rooted in the Gospel. In the apostolic Church this ministry took various forms, but its presence seems to be invariable. There is scholarly debate regarding the early forms of *episcope*. Sometimes the New Testament speaks of ministries in the

plural (cf. Romans 12.4-8; Ephesians 4.11; Philippians 1.1; Hebrews 13.7, 17; Titus 1.5-8). At the beginning of the second century the Ignatian epistles provide the first unequivocal evidence of the three distinct but cohering ministries of bishop, presbyter and deacon, of which the bishop provides *episcope*. This seems to have been the case at least in the communities of Asia Minor, although we cannot assume that as yet this structure was universal.

4. Historically it is safe to conclude that the apostles did not hand on a fixed ministerial structure to a college of bishops as part of a clearly-defined threefold order of bishops, presbyters and deacons. The picture is one of gradual development from various forms of an *episcope* always present, into a pattern of one bishop in each local church, who functioned at a local level without any centralised control.

5. It is generally recognised that a significant change occurs in the fourth century. A key factor is the changed relationship between the Church and the Roman Empire, following the peace of the Church and its recognition by the state. This has new implications for ecclesiastical power. The ecclesiological question is how to interpret the development of the pattern of *episcope* as it relates to the local church.

6. We agree that the Spirit had a guiding role in this development. How it should be interpreted, and how ecclesiology should draw on the past as a criterion for the present and future, is an important theological issue. Neither Anglicans nor Orthodox claim that the New Testament texts provide a blueprint for subsequent church order, although the Anglican Ordinal of 1662 assumes the threefold order to have originated in the time of the apostles. Anglicans and Orthodox regard Holy Scripture as a crucial source for all doctrine, including ecclesiology. Both regard the doctrinal decisions of the Ecumenical Councils as normative interpretations of scriptural witness, especially in trinitarian and christological doctrine (cf. MAS pp.84-85).

7. The post-apostolic Church's need to develop *episcope* is thought to have been motivated by the death of the apostles who had known Jesus Christ. Their loss, and the delay in the Second Coming, prompted the Church to find a way of preserving the apostolic witness to Christ. The essential link between the apostolic and post-apostolic Church proved to be the local community, rather than a centrally co-ordinated structure of missionary delegates. The post-apostolic Church recognised each local church as a full and catholic church, capable of judging any itinerant minister. The Church was also helped to make the transition from the

apostolic to the post-apostolic period by the local church's celebration of the Eucharist, together with its president's role in expounding the traditions received from the apostles, traditions which were subsequently canonised in the New Testament.

8. The association of *episcope* with the local church and with the Eucharist implied that whenever the local community gathered to celebrate the Eucharist, the eschatological community was present in its fullness. In this way the local church reflected heavenly reality. Theologically this can be understood to entail a parallel between God and the president of the eucharistic assembly, surrounded by presbyters. It is therefore possible to suggest that this eschatological understanding of the local church gave rise to the one bishop (*ho episcopos*) in Ignatius. The eschatological, rather than linear-historical, origin proposed here for the emergence of the one bishop is important, as is the context of worship and pastoral oversight in which episcopal leadership in the local church emerged. We should not think of a juridical caste handing on power over the church or indeed creating the church. Over against the claims of gnostic groups, Irenaeus always emphasises the local bishop within the worshipping community as the guardian of true catholic doctrine.

9. For Hippolytus, as for Ignatius, *episcope* is two-fold. The bishop is the president of the eucharistic assembly; by implication the presbyters are parallel to the Twelve, as a ruling body of pastors. All *episcope* is truly exercised within the eucharistic community, and not apart from it.

10. With regard to the vital significance of the local church for ecclesiology in the early centuries, it is important to note that wider synods did not constitute an ecclesiastical structure over and above the local communities. Synodical decisions were not fully valid until they had been received by the local churches. *Episcope* was not therefore a means of subjecting the laity to a superior authority; it was rather a ministry which enabled the local church to remain a concrete community.

Episcope *and* Episcopos *from the Fourth Century*

11. A decisive change occurred as dioceses grew in size. In the experience of the majority of Christians the bishop was no longer the normal eucharistic president. Presbyters became the eucharistic ministers for parishes, although the bishop's name was mentioned in the eucharistic liturgy. The bishop's eucharistic role was overshadowed by his administrative and teaching functions. He never lost the right to ordain, although this was gradually seen, not as deriving from the relationship of his ministry to Christ, but as a function of the power (*potestas*)

delegated to him through the apostolic succession. The link between ordination and the local community was thus weakened, and ordination became the sacramental act of the bishop. In the West the bishop's reduced eucharistic role, and his increased political and worldly power, meant that he ceased to be seen as an essentially ecclesial figure.

12. Presbyteral collegiality was also weakened by this development: presbyters became individual parish priests. In effect they took over the role of the bishop with regard to eucharistic presidency. Bishops became detached from the local community, and formed a distinct caste with direct access to its apostolic origins. This development, spanning the Middle Ages to the Reformation, led to catholicity being focussed on a supra-local 'college' apart from the local eucharistic communities. The eschatological and eucharistic self-understanding of the church faded. The Church's relationship with the State and its structures after the fourth century certainly contributed much to this shift away from the eschatological and eucharistic understanding of the local church community.

Ecclesiological Issues of Episcope *arising from the Historical Analysis*

13. Scholarly investigation shows that the apostolic and sub-apostolic churches cannot be said to have inherited a fixed and normative structure of ministry. Anglican ecclesiology, notably since Hooker, has resisted the claim that there was an original structural blueprint which can be taken from Scripture and applied to the present day. *Episcope*, exercised personally by a bishop (*episcopos*) is accepted not only as a development which serves the needs of the Church, but also as a mark of catholicity and unity within the apostolic Church, together with the holy scriptures, the creeds and the sacraments. The Lambeth Quadrilateral spoke of 'the Historic Episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church'. The Orthodox understand the bishop in an eschatological and iconic sense as representing Christ. The bishop is a constitutive element of the Church, around whom the local church gathers.

14. In the early centuries there was the closest possible link between local churches and *episcope*: neither could exist without the other. The local church understood itself as eschatological in character, gathered around Christ in the Spirit, with the Eucharist as a crucial moment in its ecclesial life. 'Eucharist' should be understood to include pastoral

oversight and proclamation of the Gospel, which are no less central aspects of ecclesial life. As the significance of the local church faded, and the bishop came to be seen more as an administrator, this local, christological and eschatological understanding of the church was lost. But the primary ecclesial claim of the local church, though marginalised and neglected, remains strong.

15. Apostolic succession is best regarded as a succession of communities represented by their bishops, rather than as a succession of individuals with power and authority to confer grace apart from their communities. Local churches participated in wider councils through their bishop who represented them. The unity of the local churches was thus maintained and the catholicity of the faith preserved, without the loss of varying local customs. Such an ecclesiology is central to the way in which both Orthodox and Anglicans understand themselves as communions of local churches. So the Anglican - Lutheran Porvoo Common Statement recognised the succession of bishops as a necessary aspect of ecclesial life, but insufficient by itself without the succession of local ecclesial communities.

16. The clear eschatological note in apostolic and sub-apostolic ecclesiology challenges our churches today, tempted as they are to align themselves with worldly power structures in order to maintain a place in their national society. If the eschatological presence of Christ in the Eucharist is indeed the centre of local church life, then eschatological judgement, as well as grace, must be allowed to challenge both the community and its *episcope*. It is perhaps in this light that the Church should examine its own life, and also engage with the needs of the society which it should seek to serve rather than to dominate.

17. To see the bishop as the normal president of the eucharistic assembly is to pose sharp questions about the presbyterate and the size of local churches. The presbyter is now the minister of word and sacrament and the pastor and teacher of his congregation, under the oversight of the diocesan bishop. So far as eucharistic presidency is concerned, the presbyter fulfils the role of the local bishop. Smaller dioceses would make it easier to recover the understanding of the bishop as eucharistic president.

18. Anglican ecclesiology gives to the laity an important place in the life of the Church: the laity have their proper place in Anglican synodical structures. The Orthodox regard the bishop in synod as representing his whole community. This difference in approach requires further

consideration, to see whether it can be regarded as a secondary matter about which there can be legitimate diversity. Anglicans and Orthodox agree that the whole local church should be represented in synodical structures, while seeing that end achieved in different ways.

Conciliarity and Primacy: the Present State of the Question

19. We have not so far considered the question of how theology appropriates the results of critical scholarly study of historical patterns of ministry in the Church. But we cannot escape this question with regard to a universal primacy in the Church. The historic claim of the Roman primacy to embody the primacy given to Peter has been shown on many grounds to be decreasingly tenable. In the *Final Report* of ARCIC I a more sophisticated theology of development was used to commend the Petrine primacy. It suggested that a ministry analogous to that of Peter in the early Church might help to meet the needs of the Church now. ARCIC stated 'The New Testament contains no explicit record of a transmission of Peter's leadership; nor is the transmission of apostolic authority in general very clear...Yet the Church in Rome...came to be recognised as possessing a unique responsibility among the churches: its bishop was seen to perform a special service in relation to the unity of the churches...Fathers and doctors of the Church gradually came to interpret the New Testament as pointing in this direction' (ARCIC I, *The Final Report*, pp.84-85). In other words ARCIC appeals to the guidance of the Spirit in applying a New Testament concept to the current needs of the Church. This raises the question of the criteria by which such a development should be reckoned as of divine or human institution.

Bishop, Synodality and Primacy

20. Anglicans and Orthodox agree that synodality is fundamental to the being of the Church. The bishop is only bishop in the context of his own community, and when he participates in a wider council he brings his community with him. ARCIC I stresses very strongly that primacy and conciliarity are inseparable. The bishops of the Church of England in their response to the Pope's Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* said 'It is to be regretted that the Encyclical makes so little reference to Ecumenical Councils and other conciliar forms of consultation and discernment in the Church', and cite the *Valamo Statement*[2] as upholding synodal life as

2. 'The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church', New Valamo Finland, 26 June 1988 (an Eastern Orthodox - Roman Catholic agreed statement).

the principal expression of communion in the life of the Church.[3] They urged that further work be done to ensure the right balance between primacy and conciliarity, and to safeguard the role of the laity in synodical structures. Both Anglicans and Orthodox emphasise the significance of the local bishop with his community as the primary expression of church life. Any form of primacy has to take this into account.

21. The theological argument for primacy begins with local and moves on to regional and global leadership. Primacy thus receives increasingly wide expression through episcopal representation of the Church's life. This ensures a proper balance between primacy and conciliarity; and the primate is the first among equals in synods of bishops. Primacy should not be seen as the prerogative of an individual, but of a local church. In the case of the universal primacy this would mean the primacy of the Church of Rome.

22. The concept of the college of bishops as an instrument of unity has been recently introduced into Anglican discussion as a means of unifying both teaching and policy (cf. *The Virginia Report*, p.26, 50 and appendix 16). Anglicans and Orthodox agree that bishops do not form an apostolic college apart from and above the local churches. Bishops are an integral part of their respective churches. Such an understanding precludes any form of centralised universal episcopal jurisdiction standing apart from the local churches.

23. If conciliarity is one important complement to primacy, reception is another. Decisions of councils and primates need to be referred back to the local churches for their acceptance. This was the case with the decisions of ecumenical councils in the early Church. In some cases local churches rejected conciliar decisions, as in the case of the council of Ephesus in 449 and the council of Ferrara-Florence 1438-9. Even when the local churches accept a council, time must always be allowed for them fully to appropriate conciliar decisions of major significance. Such decisions must be received by the community in order to become authoritative. This fact reinforces the truth that bishops, including primates, are not independent of their local churches.

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3. *May They All Be One: A Response of the House of Bishops of the Church of England to* Ut Unum Sint, London 1997, p.11.

Conclusion

24. The ecumenical journey of our two churches is bringing them new insights and bearing fruit, and is indeed vital for them. Searching questions about the eschatological, christological and local character of the Church require a fresh assessment of current patterns of ecclesial life. Mutual questioning in charity and ecclesial fellowship reveals aspects of church life which may need to be changed. Since each church is facing difficult issues including those of unity and diversity, and orthodoxy and dissent, this process may open up new horizons; and we may be able to help each other more than we can imagine.

25. This may well be true of our consideration of primacy and synodality, and of the way in which structures might be re-shaped to meet urgent needs on a properly theological rather than purely sociological basis. In a similar way we must approach the concept of the college of bishops with great care: it must not be allowed to undermine the basic principles of synodality by detaching the bishops from their church communities, and setting the college of bishops over against the Church as a whole.

26. The Orthodox emphasis on the local church is consistent with the Lambeth Quadrilateral's call for episcopacy to be locally adapted. Such a qualification excludes the suppression of legitimate local diversity. The Anglican and Orthodox Churches share too a eucharistic understanding of the local church. In this context 'eucharistic' must be understood in its widest sense: it includes the proclamation of the word and pastoral ministry, and presupposes the sacrament of baptism.

27. Further work needs to be done on the nature of the presbyterate in relation to the episcopate. Work must also be done on the role of the laity in synods and the ways in which the whole people of God participate in synodical decisions.

28. The eschatological nature of the Church shines clearly through our ecclesiology. It invites us to look to Christ, who nourishes and purifies his churches. He challenges our complacency, and questions our comfortable integration into secular and historic structures and mores.

29. We invite our churches to take seriously the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as of the utmost importance in developing appropriate models and structures of episcopacy and primacy.

Section VI : Priesthood, Christ and the Church

Introduction

1. In the previous section we considered the historical development and ecclesiological significance of the ministry of bishops in the Church. We noted the connection in the early centuries between the ministry of *episcope* and presidency at the local church's celebration of the Eucharist. We now reflect on the priestly understanding of eucharistic presidency, whether of bishops or presbyters. This priesthood is rightly understood within the context both of the priesthood of Christ and of the priesthood of the Church, and ultimately within the *koinonia* of the Trinity.

The Priesthood of Christ

2. There is one priesthood in the Church, the priesthood of Christ. From the beginning Christian priesthood has been understood as a living witness to the presence of Christ in the Church. It has been seen as a sign of the Paschal mystery, bestowed on all Christians through the power of the Holy Spirit. Priesthood, closely related to the work of the Holy Spirit, is an integral part of the life of the Church.

3. If we are to understand the role of priesthood within the Christian community and in the maintenance of its unity, we must emphasise its christological and pneumatological foundations. The early Christian tradition is clear that Christian priesthood is not simply a function necessary for the institutional life of the Church; it cannot be limited to particular tasks, such as *episcope*, pastoral care, or even liturgical presidency. Nor is it an autonomous office belonging to the ordained individual. It is rather a ministry belonging to the entire ecclesial body, always related to the saving communion of the body and blood of Christ.

4. In the New Testament all models and titles related to ministry and priesthood are referred first to Christ himself. He is 'the apostle and high priest of our confession' (Hebrews 3.1); he is 'priest' (Hebrews 8.4); he is God's prophetic word, God's definitive messenger and message (Hebrews 1.1-2; Luke 7.16); his ministry expresses the kingly rule of God (John 18.33-37; 19-22); he is 'teacher' and 'rabbi' (Matthew 23.7-8); he is 'the shepherd and guardian (*episcopos*) of our souls' (1 Peter 2.25). Jesus himself says 'I am among you as one who serves' (Luke 22.27); he is a 'servant' (*diakonos*) (Romans 15.8). In his priestly ministry Christ 'gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (Ephesians 5.2).

5. With reference to Jesus Christ the Letter to the Hebrews uses several interpretative models. Among them is the central image of Christ as God's merciful High Priest, the mediator of the new covenant. Jesus' death was integral to Christian experience and teaching. Attempts to articulate its significance and meaning had to be made in terms that people could understand. A considerable range of such attempts is found in the New Testament. The Letter to the Hebrews presents an unprecedented vision which broke new ground and crossed boundaries. It relates the prophecy of a new covenant to the Jewish Day of Atonement, and ascribes the fulfilment of both to the One who, as God's own self-expression and great High Priest, offered once and for all the supremely efficacious sacrifice of himself. This vision springs from the author's own experience of the living Jesus, of direct access to the 'throne of grace', and of a personal and liberating communion with God. Such was the promise of the new covenant, and such too was the goal of priesthood. Both involved breaking down the barrier of sin, which stands in the way of full communion with God. To explain how this barrier was broken down, the Letter to the Hebrews uses familiar Jewish imagery of priesthood and sacrifice: 'And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, 'he sat down at the right hand of God', and since then has been waiting 'until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified' (Hebrews 10.11-14). Jesus is both the fulfilment and the end of the sacrificial system. He has 'appeared once for all…to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself' (Hebrews 9.26). The offering of Jesus Christ, both priest and victim, has sanctified us once for all.

6. Christ's priesthood is expressed in his incarnate life and ministry, in his atoning self-offering, and in his eschatological presentation of a redeemed creation to the Father. As priest he is the mediator between us and God, and as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 he intercedes for us with the Father. Through him, the sinless priest and atoning victim, we have access to the throne of God. He is 'the pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12.2), who sanctifies and cleanses us. His priestly work involves the most profound empathy with our condition. His priestly sacrifice is unique and expiatory. The Church derives from Christ's unique self-offering, and is associated with it as she offers herself in response to his redeeming act of divine love. In the life of the Church, the Eucharist is the focus of the Church's grateful offering of herself in union with Christ, and the eschatological moment when she is drawn in worship into the life of God the Trinity.

7. On the basis of the New Testament writers' understanding of Christ we can affirm that Christian priesthood is directly related to Christ's priesthood. Christian priesthood is not simply a result of Christ's service in the world, nor does it seek to duplicate or parallel that service; it is ontologically incorporated into Christ's ministry and identified with it. If there is a sense in which the Church is Christ himself extended in history, it follows that Christian priesthood is Christ's priestly office extended in every period of the Church's life, the reflection and the projection[4] of Christ's saving work throughout the centuries. Priesthood is therefore so inextricably bound up with the Person of Christ that our perception of the historical Jesus and his ministry determines our view of Christian priesthood.

Trinity and Priesthood

8. From its beginning Christian theology has understood Christ as, in the words of St Ignatius, 'the firstborn, the only high priest' (*Smyrnaeans* 9). Significantly St Ignatius adds, 'according to the nature of the Father'. This suggests that the point of Christ's priestly work is not only to present the redeemed world to the Father, but to open up creation fully to the Father's will and action. 'My Father gives you the bread from heaven' (John 6). It is Christ's priesthood that enables us not only to offer praise to the Father on behalf of creation but also to be nourished by the Father's gift of the Son.

9. The christological understanding of priesthood involves too a pneumatological dimension: 'No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12.3). Only through the Spirit are we drawn into the economy of the Son. The Holy Spirit is sent into the world through the Son and in his name, to bring to our remembrance all that Christ has said and done for us (John 15.26). Christology and Pneumatology cannot be mutually exclusive: the work of the Son and the Spirit are not independent divine actions. The Son enters into human life 'incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'; the Spirit, sent by the Son, enters into the world to be an unceasing witness to the Son's work and to be the unfailing ground for realising Christ's ministry in his body. It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ's priestly work is present in the life of the Church, and the priestly character of the Church is related in the Spirit to the priesthood of Christ.

4. J.Zizioulas, *L'être ecclesial*, Geneva 1981, p.171.

10. Priesthood is therefore a trinitarian reality. The Father bestows his grace through the work of the Son, and that grace shows itself in the praise and thanksgiving offered through the Son by those who have been fed by the living bread from heaven. Both the feeding and the thanksgiving are made possible by the Spirit, who is sent into the world by the Son. The trinitarian foundation of priestly order reveals not only the divine origin of Christian priesthood, but the inseparable connection of this priesthood with the divine *koinonia*.

Priesthood and the Church

11. The whole Church is taken into the movement of Christ's self-offering and his eternal praise of the Father. In baptism, the human person enters into this movement and is configured within the ecclesial community to the priesthood of Christ. The First Letter of Peter, an early baptismal homily, says that the baptised are to let themselves 'be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ', and calls them 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation' (1 Peter 2.5, 9). The priesthood of the Church is inextricably linked with the priesthood of Christ.

12. The Church exists as communion (*koinonia*) with Christ in the Spirit. *Koinonia* aptly expresses the mystery underlying the various New Testament images of the Church. The Church's communion with Christ in the Spirit is lived out in the world. It breaks down human barriers to reach out to all in friendship and care. In Christ there is 'no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female' (Galatians 3.28): national, racial, socio-economic and gender barriers are overcome in the peace made by the blood of the Cross at the heart of the universe. The Holy Spirit is at work in history and nature, seeking to guide all things into harmony, and to bring about the kingdom of God, the eschatological hope of the universe. Christians seek to be true to their sacrificial and priestly calling to be ministers of reconciliation and servants in this sinful world. The life of the Church can be called 'eucharistic' in the fullest sense of the term, as it participates in the self-offering of the Son to the Father in the Spirit. Such participation includes sacrificial service to the world. As Jesus consecrated himself in self-giving both to the Father and to the human race, so the Church consecrates herself and enters into his self-offering as a 'royal priesthood, a holy nation' (1 Peter 2.9). We offer and present to God ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice. The whole Church is priestly.

Ordained Priesthood

13. There are various functions and images associated with the ministries of bishops and presbyters. Bishops and presbyters are pastors, preachers, teachers, evangelists, and presidents of liturgical worship. They are messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord. As church life developed, the term priest, used in the New Testament of Christ and the Church, was applied first to bishops, and subsequently to presbyters.

14. Priestly ministry is closely bound up with the life of the ecclesial communion. Through ordination bishops and presbyters receive the gift of divine grace to serve a specific community, to which their mission is inseparably related. The canonical tradition of the Church prohibits absolute ordinations, that is, ordinations without a specific appointment. The ministry of both bishops and presbyters should be exercised within a specific diocese or congregation.

15. The communal character of ordination rites reflects the understanding of priesthood as a ministry within a specific ecclesial community. Ordination should never be performed in private. It is always an ecclesial act, which takes place publicly within the Christian community. It is not performed by the bishop (or bishops) alone, but by the bishop together with the clergy and the congregation. The assent proclaimed by the entire community in Anglican and Orthodox ordination rites is not a ritual exclamation but a responsible expression of ecclesial approval. This liturgical consent has profound ecclesiological significance. It shows that the bishop is not acting alone, but as the person who has the sacramental authority to ordain within the Christian community and together with it. The bishop is the person charismatically appointed to safeguard the unity of the Church, who connects, past, present and future by what we call apostolic succession.

16. That is why the participation of at least three bishops in the ordination of a bishop is of fundamental ecclesiological significance. Every bishop who takes part in the ordination of a new bishop does so as the representative of his entire flock, which is present in the person of its bishop. All the consecrating bishops together are a visible image of the catholic Church. Episcopal ordination does not simply convey to the newly ordained juridical privileges, but calls the bishop to the relational ministry of a catholic person who is placed within the community as a living image of the ecclesial unity to which he bears witness.

17. When bishops, or presbyters as representatives of the bishop, celebrate the Eucharist, they build up ecclesial unity. In the Eucharist the people

of God are in a constant personal and communal relation to Christ, the risen Lord. Since earliest times ordinations have been liturgically and theologically inseparable from eucharistic communion. The fact that the eucharistic gathering is the exclusive setting of ministerial ordinations asserts that the priesthood belongs to the eucharistic community. Priesthood exists for the community; that is why every ordination takes place within the context of the eucharistic assembly. The people of God, gathered together in eucharistic communion, constitutes the basis for ordained priestly ministry.

18. This understanding of ordination has implications of paramount importance both for a theology of priesthood and for an understanding of its role for ecclesial unity. We must first stress that the Eucharist is indispensable for our spiritual well-being, as a sacrament decisive for our ecclesial existence. As such it should not be seen as an objectified rite, disconnected from our corporate identity, but as springing from the community itself. The Eucharist should be understood as a gift to the community, to both minister and people. In this sense the Eucharist is not the action of an ordained individual but that of a community; it is celebrated by priest and people together. The Eucharist is a liturgical action which is the work of the people, not of a minister apart from the ecclesial community. Ultimately the celebrant of the Eucharist is Christ himself, acting through the presiding bishop or presbyter and the community to build up the body of Christ.

19. The priestly president of the eucharistic assembly exercises an iconic ministry. As the *Dublin Agreed Statement* made plain, 'In the Eucharist the eternal priesthood of Christ is constantly manifested in time. The celebrant, in the liturgical action, has a twofold ministry: as an icon of Christ, acting in the name of Christ towards the community and also as a representative of the community expressing the priesthood of the faithful' (DAS p.56). In the context of the Eucharist, the bishop or presbyter stands for Christ in a particular way. In taking bread and wine, giving thanks, breaking, and giving, the priest is configured to Christ at the Last Supper. The president draws together the life and prayer of the baptised, and offers them to the Father with the bread and wine. In the eucharistic prayer, the offering of praise and thanksgiving for the mighty deeds of God, culminating in the sacrifice of the paschal mystery, is offered for all creation. Received by the Father, the gifts of bread and wine are returned in the Holy Spirit as Christ's risen life, his body and blood, the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation. In the eucharistic action, the Church is renewed in its prayer and self-offering as the priestly people of God.

20. We wish to stress again that priesthood cannot exist apart from the community. It is not an authority or a power above the community, nor a function or office parallel to or outside it. Priesthood is intrinsically related to the eucharistic offering, the central empowering event and source of unity of the ecclesial community. This means that local communities find their unity in their priest, through whom the local community forms a eucharistic body, sacramentally linked and canonically united with the catholic fullness of the Church. Through the gift of grace given to the ordained person, ecclesial unity and catholicity is realised in a particular place as eucharistic participation. Priesthood exists, then, as a gift of grace which belongs, not to individuals in their own right, but to persons who are dedicated to serving the community. The words of Christ addressed to his disciples are significant, and clearly describe the true character of priestly service: 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came, not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Matthew 20.25-28).

21. Christian priesthood involves participation in Christ's own priestly mission. It is the personal gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly-ordained that enables this participation. Through the epiclesis and the coming of the Holy Spirit in ordination, Christ's own priesthood is offered to them, and so remains alive and effectual within the ecclesial body.

22. Bishops and presbyters do not possess an indelible mark as if ordination were a magical seal granting them personal power to celebrate the Eucharist or any other liturgical action, apart from the ecclesial body. The priestly ministry is rather a charismatic gift, enabling those who receive it to serve and build up the body of the Church. It is a permanent order of service only in union with the Church and by its discerning authority. Any notion of 'indelible mark' would imply that the ordained individual possesses forever this peculiar mark of priesthood, which can never in any circumstance be removed or surrendered. Such a doctrine absolutizes priesthood and isolates it from the community of the Church. Priesthood is thereby grossly distorted and its significance greatly over-estimated. It becomes something imposed on the Church, which is unable to deprive the ordained individual of the priestly mark, even if the ordained person is unworthy to retain ecclesial grace. Such a doctrine divorces priesthood from its organic context in the life of the Church. It gives the ordained person an autonomous power above the Church itself, such that the Church cannot remove the indelible mark

even if those ordained relinquish the exercise of their ministries, or are deprived of them, or even excommunicated.

23. We are not aware that the theory of an indelible mark conferred by ordination can be found in patristic teaching. On the contrary, the canonical data leave no doubt that, once the Church decided to depose a bishop or presbyter, they returned to the rank of layman. Those deposed or excommunicated were in no way considered to retain their priesthood. The fact that the ministerial rehabilitation and restoration of such persons did not, according to the canons, involve re-ordination, does not imply any recognition that they were bishops or priests during the period of such punishment. It meant only that the Church recognised what had been sacramentally performed. The grace of ecclesiastical ministry was restored upon his assignment to an ecclesial community with no other sacramental sign or rite.

24. It should also be remembered that in catholic Christianity, the failings of ordained persons as human individuals do not invalidate the sacramental ministries they exercise. While Christian maturity and manner of life must be consistent with the calling of bishops and presbyters, their priestly identity is neither conferred nor maintained as a mark of, or reward for, a particular moral standard. In this sense, priesthood stands for the call and freedom of God over and above even the personal qualities of particular ministers and their communities.

25. In the light of what we have said above, we may conclude that priesthood is in no way a ministry which involves division or classification within the ecclesial body. The distinction between a priest and a lay person is not one of legal status but of distribution of the gifts of the Spirit. As St Paul says, 'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone' (1 Corinthians 12.4-6). This means that through ordination a member of the Church is set apart in order to minister the sacrament of ecclesial unity. In the patristic tradition, priesthood is never understood as an office based on an objectified mark imprinted on the soul of the ordained person, but rather as an ecclesial gift, a vocation whose purpose is to build up the Body of Christ. In debates about the nature of ordained priesthood the distinction has often been drawn between 'ontological' and 'functional' definitions, where 'ontological' has often been understood to mean a quality given to the individual priestly soul. We need to move beyond this approach, and consider priesthood on the basis of an ontology of relation. Priesthood should be

considered, not in and for itself, but rather as a relational reality. To arrive at an adequate understanding of the gift of priestly grace, it should be seen in its eucharistic context and in its connection with ecclesial communion.

Section VII : Women and Men, Ministries and the Church

Introduction

1. Christian ministry is rooted in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The pastoral, prophetic and priestly ministry of the Church reflects and continues the saving work of Christ. The whole ministry of the Church, including the particular ministries of lay people, those in minor orders, deacons, and the presidential ministries of presbyter and bishop, is situated within the context of baptism and the Eucharist. If the Church is Christ extended into history and reflecting his eschatological glory, equally Christian ministry is Christ's ministry realised in every historic period of the life of the Church.

2. Ordained ministry is significant in the life of both our churches and in our dialogue. It is often in practice equated with priestly ministry. But the Church's ministry is wider than priestly ministry. We should not overlook the ministries of deacons and lay people. This particular phase of our dialogue has been occasioned by the Anglican decision to ordain women to the presbyterate and the episcopate. But we believe this issue should be considered in the wider context of the ministries of women and men within the laity and the diaconate. It cannot to be isolated from the wider *koinonia* of the Church. Our discussion of the ordination of women therefore includes consideration of all the ministries exercised by women as well as men in the Church. Agreement between Orthodox and Anglicans on the ministry of women in the presbyterate and episcopate has not been achieved. But it may be possible for us to agree on the wider ministry of lay women and the ministry of women in the diaconate.

Lay Ministries

3. Lay ministry is too often defined in relationship to ordained ministries. We believe that all Christian ministries presuppose the grace of the sacraments of Christian initiation: they do not derive from ordained ministries. We do not consider here the manifold ministries of service and witness inherent in all Christian discipleship, but concentrate on certain ministries exercised in both our traditions by lay women and men, which are recognised or conferred by the Christian community and serve the Church and its mission in the world.

Liturgical Ministries

4. We first note that Anglicans and Orthodox make no distinction between female and male candidates for Christian initiation. Both are baptised in

water; both are confirmed in the Anglican Church or chrismated in the Orthodox Church in the same way; and males and females alike receive the eucharistic gifts in the same way. In both our traditions, women and men exercise the same ministry of sponsors or godparents to those being baptised.

5. Both our traditions assume that the normal president of the rites of initiation is a bishop or a presbyter, acting in the context of the eucharistic community. But in exceptional circumstances it is possible in both traditions for deacons to be the minister of baptism. When newborn infants are in danger of death, both Anglicans and Orthodox make provision for emergency baptism to be performed by a lay person. Such baptisms are equally valid, whether performed by lay men or lay women. The 'one baptism for the forgiveness of sins' in which Anglicans and Orthodox alike proclaim their common faith in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed is conferred without distinction on females and males. All the ministries of the Church, lay and ordained, presuppose the grace of this foundational sacrament of the Christian life.

6. Lay men exercise significant liturgical ministries in both our traditions. At the Eucharist lay men often read the epistle or Old Testament reading. In the sixteenth century Anglicans continued the practice of the late medieval period in restricting lay as well as ordained liturgical ministries to men. During the twentieth century restrictions on lay women were gradually removed, and women began to read the Scriptures in church. In many Orthodox churches now lay women as well as men read the epistle at the Divine Liturgy.

7. In both our traditions lay people function as thurifers, cross-bearers, and altar servers. In contemporary Anglican practice these ministries are generally performed by women as well as men. In the Orthodox Church they are normally performed only by men, although exceptionally they are on occasion exercised by women. In women's monasteries nuns normally act as thurifers, read the epistle, and perform other liturgical ministries, even in the sanctuary.

8. The Orthodox Church retains minor ministries, such as the subdiaconate, which the Church of England abolished at the Reformation. In many Anglican churches the liturgical function of subdeacon has been restored in recent years. It is exercised by lay women as well as lay men. In the Orthodox tradition the subdiaconate is regarded as a lay ministry. It is not exercised by women.

9. Anglicans recognise the office of Reader as a significant lay ministry, in terms both of liturgical and pastoral leadership. A form of this ministry emerged in the early Elizabethan period, due to a severe shortage of presbyters. The present office of Reader was instituted in the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century and quickly spread to other Provinces of the Anglican Communion. In the twentieth century women began to exercise this ministry. Readers have a variety of liturgical and pastoral duties in Anglican communities. They may assist the priest in the celebration of services. Where there is no priest they may be responsible for officiating at Morning and Evening Prayer. They are authorised to assist with the administration of holy communion. They are licensed to preach. In communities without priests, the bishop may authorise Readers to baptise, bury, and undertake pastoral care. In the Orthodox Church the office of Reader is one of the minor orders requiring episcopal appointment. Readers proclaim the epistle at the Divine Liturgy, and may read services such as the Typika. Women are not appointed to the Orthodox office of Reader, although sometimes they exercise it in practice.

10. In Anglican tradition the administration of holy communion was until recently restricted to ordained ministers. In recent years it has become common for properly trained and licensed lay people, both women and men, to assist in the distribution of the sacrament at the Eucharist. Such eucharistic ministers may also take holy communion from the reserved sacrament to those unable to go to church. In Orthodox tradition communion is administered only by bishops, presbyters and deacons. The communion cloth may be held by lay people, usually men but occasionally women, in particular in women's monasteries.

11. In both Anglican and Orthodox traditions lay men and women form liturgical choirs. In the Orthodox tradition cantors are usually men, although more recently women have begun to fulfil this role. Women are also being trained as choir directors. Anglican church choirs have traditionally been made up of men and boys. Women and girls now increasingly exercise a musical ministry as directors of music, choir directors, organists and choristers.

12. Lay men and women play an important part in Orthodox and Anglican liturgical life. They are involved in the care of church buildings and furnishings, and in preparing the church for liturgical celebrations. In the Orthodoxy Church the special bread used in the eucharistic celebration is often prepared by women.

Mission and Evangelism

13. Anglican and Orthodox lay people have been active in the evangelistic work of the Church. They have brought the Gospel to new lands and peoples, and have responded to the Church's call to serve the mission of local Christian communities. They have helped to found and support missionary organisations, and placed their professional skills at the disposal of such societies and the communities they have served. The title, 'Equal to the Apostles', given in the Orthodox tradition to certain outstanding evangelists, has been given to women as well as men.

Education and Scholarship

14. Anglican and Orthodox lay men and women have long been active in the field of Christian education. Women in particular teach in Sunday schools, as well as in church schools. Some schools have been founded and staffed by monastic communities, often of women. Women are involved in education in the mission field, as well as in theological colleges and university faculties of theology. In both our traditions women as well as men are academic theologians, although the tradition of lay theologians is stronger in the Orthodox than in the Anglican tradition, where academic theologians have normally been ordained.

Monasticism

15. Monastic communities of men and women are part of church life in both our traditions. Orthodox monasticism has had a continuous history since antiquity; Anglican monastic life came to an end at the Reformation, and was revived in the nineteenth century. In medieval England the majority of monastic and religious communities were male. Since its restoration Anglican monasticism has been predominantly female. Many communities are active, and have run schools, hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly. Others are contemplative, devoted to the monastic life of liturgical and personal prayer in community. In both our traditions nuns as well as monks undertake the ministry of spiritual direction, while the ministry of hospitality is fundamental to the monastic vocation. In Orthodoxy nuns often assist the local bishop.

Spiritual Direction

16. In both our traditions the ministry of spiritual direction has been exercised by lay people as well as clergy. The Orthodox *starets* or elder, though usually a priest, can sometimes be a nun or a non-ordained monk. They are sought out as spiritual fathers or mothers because of

their personal holiness. In the Anglican tradition gifted lay women and men conduct retreats.

Conclusion

17. Anglicans and Orthodox have not traditionally described the functions fulfilled by lay people as 'ministries'. Yet in both our traditions lay men and women serve the body of Christ and its mission. They can properly be considered ministers of Christ and his Church, who make an essential contribution to the life of both our Churches. We need to reflect on the theological and ecclesiological significance of such ministries, which St Paul describes as gifts: 'The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ' (Ephesians. 4.11-12). Anglicans and Orthodox together acknowledge the many gifts of the Spirit given to lay men and women for building up the body of Christ, the Church.

The Diaconate

18. Anglicans and Orthodox maintain the diaconate as a distinctive ministry in its own right, but also as an order which prepares the way for ordination to the presbyterate. There are more permanent deacons in the Orthodox Church than in the Anglican. But in both churches the great majority of those ordained to the diaconate are subsequently ordained as presbyters. The canonical tradition of sequential ordination, the *cursus honorum*, goes back to the fourth century. There is however some criticism among both Anglican and Orthodox theologians of the practice of conferring a lower order as the prerequisite for ordination to a higher. Our two traditions would do well to recognise the diaconate as a distinctive order, embodying the ministry of service (*diakonia*) given to the whole body of Christ. Ordination to the presbyterate from the diaconate, and to the episcopate from the presbyterate, should not be regarded as promotion in a worldly sense. This would be untrue to the model of ministry set out in Scripture and the oldest tradition.

19. Alongside the male diaconate has been the diaconate for women. There have been women deacons or deaconesses in both the Anglican and Orthodox traditions, though with very different histories. The diaconate of women was known in some New Testament communities, and is attested in the East from the third century, and in the West from the fifth. The Orthodox Church never formally abolished the order of deaconesses, but their demise in the Byzantine tradition dates from the

eleventh century. Recently there have been calls for the restoration of the diaconate for women in the Orthodox tradition. The Inter-Orthodox Consultation at Rhodes in 1988 recommended the restoration of the diaconate for women. The conference of Orthodox women at Damascus in1996, entitled 'Discerning the Signs of the Times', also commended the ministry of deaconesses. At a meeting in Istanbul in 1997 the Ecumenical Patriarch said:

> Among the many important recommendations of the Damascus conference is the call for the full restoration of the order of women deacons. This recommendation echoes a similar one coming from the Inter-Orthodox consultation in Rhodes in 1988. The order of women deacons is an undeniable part of the tradition coming from the early church. Now, in many of our churches, there is a growing desire to restore this order so that the spiritual needs of the people of God may be better served. There are already a number of women who appear to be called to this ministry.

Anglican Churches restored the order of deaconess in the mid-nineteenth century. The work of deaconesses, alongside that of other lay women, provided Anglicans with further experience of the ministries of women. Towards the end of the twentieth century women began to be ordained to the diaconate alongside men. The Anglican history of women's ordination to the presbyterate and the episcopate must be seen against this background. Anglican and Orthodox members of our dialogue do not disagree with regard to the ordination of women as deacons or deaconesses.

Women, Men and the Ordained Priesthood

Introduction

20. Anglicans and Orthodox together acknowledge the ministries of women and men among the laity and as deaconesses and deacons. However, we diverge from one another in both theology and practice regarding the place of women in the priestly ministries of bishop and presbyter, which involve eucharistic presidency. A number of Provinces of the Anglican Communion have ordained women to the presbyterate, and three Provinces now ordain them to the episcopate. Although the priestly ministry of women in the Anglican Communion is now widely accepted, the Anglican members of our dialogue are mindful that a significant minority within the Communion opposes the ordination of women as presbyters and bishops. While there are whole Provinces which oppose

such ordination, there is opposition within those Provinces which do ordain women. An Orthodox member of our dialogue has reminded us that some of the most persuasive arguments against the ordination of women have come from Anglican writers.

21. The Orthodox Churches have not ordained women to the priestly ministries, and have posed substantial theological questions to their ecumenical partners who have. This has been the case with Orthodox and Anglicans in their ecumenical dialogue. At the same time, the Orthodox members of our dialogue are aware of a small but not negligible minority of Orthodox who are in favour of the ordination of women, or see no theological reasons against it.

22. We are well aware of the divisive nature of this issue between our two Churches. Anglicans and Orthodox sometimes suspect that their differing positions on this question reflect an underlying division on fundamental Christian doctrines. We wonder whether our differences concerning women and priesthood stem from fundamentally diverging or flawed doctrines concerning the Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, anthropology, our understanding of the relationship of the Gospel to culture, ecclesiology, primacy and episcopacy, or our doctrine of the priesthood itself.

23. We each believe that our respective decisions have been made in fidelity to Scripture and Tradition, and in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is essential therefore that in our continuing theological dialogue we respect and understand each other's theological explanations in this area. Yet it seems inconsistent to believe that the Holy Spirit leads one community to one theological conclusion, and the same Spirit leads another community to another. If we are convinced that we are correct in our own positions, there might seem little point in engaging in dialogue with one another. But as we have already stated we are convinced that the Spirit is calling us to search for the truth with openness and a readiness to question our own certainty (V.24).

24. Our present aim is therefore to understand each other's theological position on the place of women and men in the presbyterate and episcopate. Our initial task is neither to prove nor disprove each other's position, but to commit ourselves to the more difficult task of asking whether our differences point to a deeper theological division, and whether our differences in theology and practice are sufficiently serious to divide us as churches. We have to ask whether the ordination or non-ordination of women is such a weighty dogmatic issue that it justifies division in the body of Christ.

25. We approach the question of the ordination of women as presbyters and bishops within the context of the lay and diaconal ministries we have outlined above, and in the broader theological context of the earlier sections of this statement, on trinitarian ecclesiology, Christology and Pneumatology, theological anthropology, and the relationship of the Gospel to culture. Within this context our intention is to articulate, and seek to understand, the theological reasons for our respective positions. In the course of our dialogue, it has been our experience that the theological realm is where both Anglicans and Orthodox discover a surprising degree of consensus. Theology may open new avenues for both our traditions, and place our differences on the ordination of women in a healthier perspective.

26. Anglicans have distinguished the ordination of women to the presbyterate from their ordination to the episcopate. This distinction is important from the canonical and pastoral points of view. But we wish to affirm that the theological arguments for and against the inclusion of women in the presbyterate and episcopate are identical. The priestly and eucharistic leadership of the Church is focused on the bishop, from whom presbyters derive their ministry. Theologically therefore they are the same. Both ministries of eucharistic presidency are priestly, and are configured in the same way to the priesthood of Christ.

27. In section VI, 'Priesthood, Christ and the Church', we recorded our agreement on the fundamental nature of priesthood, and on the relationship between the ordained priesthood and the priesthood of Christ and of the Church. Against that background we examine now the arguments for the inclusion of women in the ordained priesthood. The argument of those in favour of the ordination of both women and men to the presbyterate and episcopate begins with the affirmation that the priest is a guarantor of the Church's identity in Christ, in whom there is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female.

28. We have earlier affirmed that the language of 'Father' and 'Son' in Christian theology is not gendered: it refers only to the relations of these two Persons of the Trinity and to the derivation according to existence of the one from the other. It does not refer to their likeness to a male parent and his offspring. To confess Jesus as 'Son of the Father' is to confess that the Son is distinct from the Father; and yet, as the term *homoousion* was intended to signify, he is Son by nature.

29. Christ's priesthood, in which baptised women and men, as well as presbyters and bishops, participate, is integral to his humanity, which

was male. Yet we have agreed (IV.5) that while Christ is the perfect male person, and no androgyne, his saving work extends equally to male and female. To use the maleness of the incarnate Logos as an argument against the ordination of women to the priesthood, however, would run counter to the ways in which the Bible and the Fathers speak of the Incarnation. St John speaks of the Word becoming 'flesh' (John 1.14); St Paul speaks of Christ Jesus 'taking the form of a slave' (Philippians 2.7) and of being 'born of a woman' (Galatians 4.4). The stress is on his assumption of our common humanity, rather than male humanity in particular, in order to share and overcome the fate of all human persons, and so inaugurate the new humanity.

30. We have earlier noted that when the early Fathers referred to the Word of God becoming man they used the Greek word *anthropos*, signifying 'human being' rather than 'male', and the abstract term *anthropotes* meaning humanity, not maleness (IV.11). Christ is the new, life-giving Adam, contrasted not with Eve, but with the old Adam who brought death (cf. Romans 5.12ff; 1 Corinthians 15.20ff). He bears our fate in the sense that he both lives out the new life of obedience to God, and makes it available to all, women and men alike. We share in the life of the new Adam through baptism, and it is sustained in us through eucharistic communion. The Letter to the Hebrews affirms that Christ has 'in every respect been tested as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4.14); he became like us so that 'by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone' (Hebrews 2.9). In St John's Gospel, Jesus' flesh is given 'for the life of the world' (John 6.51).

31. The Church's Tradition strongly upholds this view. St Athanasius writes, 'The Logos who in himself could not die, assumed the body which could die, in order to sacrifice his body as his own for all.' Hippolytus of Rome writes, 'In order to be considered equal to us, he took hardship upon himself, he was willing to hunger, to thirst, to sleep, not to resist suffering, to be obedient to death, to rise visibly'. The same idea is found in the Latin theology of Leo the Great: 'He descended among us to assume not only the substance, but also the condition of our sinful nature'. St Gregory of Nazianzus says, 'Christ saves both (women and men) by his passion. Was he made flesh for the man? So he was also for the woman. Did he die for the man? The woman also is saved by his death. He is called 'seed of David': and so perhaps you think the man is honoured. But he is also born of a virgin, and this is on the woman's side' (*Oratio* 37.7). All patristic teaching on this question may be summed it up in Gregory of Nazianzus' simple phrase: 'For that which

he has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved' (*Epistle* 101. PG 37, 181D).

32. For Gregory of Nazianzus and virtually all the Fathers there is no contradiction in affirming that Jesus Christ as a male was truly and completely human. Although he was born as a particular man at a particular time, Scripture and Tradition are clear that he stands for all and assumes the fate of all, so that all may be saved. There is no suggestion that his maleness, as contrasted with femaleness, is of particular significance. What is significant in Christ's humanity, and what is symbolised by the humanity of the ordained priest, is the human condition which the Son assumes in order to save.

33. The resurrected body of Jesus is wholly continuous with his historical body. His risen body is already eschatologically transformed, transfigured and glorified, as our bodies will be, for Christ's humanity overcomes death (cf. II.29). By his resurrection humanity is restored to wholeness: 'it is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body' (1 Corinthians 15.44). Some of the Fathers, in particular St Gregory of Nyssa and St Maximus the Confessor affirm that, in the risen life in Christ, the distinction between male and female is radically transformed. St Maximus writes: 'Christ brought unity to human existence, mystically removing at the spiritual level the differences of male and female; the true nature of humanity (*ton logon tēs physeōs*) is set free in both male and female from those characteristics that have to do with the passions (Maximus Conf., *Quaestiones ad Thalassum* 48, PG 90, 436A).

34. This equality of women and men is eschatological. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' creeds confession of faith in the resurrection of the dead, or the body, follows confession of faith in the Holy Spirit. This new humanity is associated with Baptism and Eucharist because there the Spirit is at work, opening humanity to the future and to a new quality of human relationship. In this new relationship human persons are not identified on the basis of their past or present: they are granted a future in spite of their past or present (cf. II.35).

35. In the Eucharist the community of the baptised, the eschatological people of God, is renewed in its identity as the community of the reign of God, which participates in the mission of Christ to the world (cf. IV.21). Anglican members of the Commission acknowledge that the eschatological understanding of the Eucharist is particularly strong in Orthodox theology and spirituality. The Eucharist is not simply the memorial (*anamnesis*) of the cross and resurrection, but also anticipates the future

reign of God, in which it enables us to participate. We make the memorial of Christ who has died, is risen, and will come again. Paradoxically, we remember in the Eucharist the coming reign of God, and behold what we shall be.

36. In the light of what has been said above about the transformation of gender in the new life of the kingdom, many Anglicans hold that there are compelling theological grounds for ordaining women as well as men to the priestly and presidential ministries of presbyter and bishop, or at the very least that there are no compelling theological reasons against doing so.

37. While the Orthodox subscribe fully to the biblical and patristic teaching that the salvation Christ offers to humanity through the Incarnation is extended equally to male and female, they distinguish this from the ministerial, and especially the eucharistic service of the Church. Faithful to tradition, which consistently from the very beginning of the Church's life has reserved the ministry of eucharistic presidency to male members of the Church, they see no convincing theological reason for the decision of the Anglican and other Western Churches to deviate from this age long tradition by ordaining women to the eucharistic priesthood. Their objection to such a decision is based on the following grounds:

    i. The eucharistic president acts in persona Christi. Although the Christ in whose person the eucharistic president acts is the eschatological Christ, we are not allowed to conclude from this, without a deeper examination of the matter, that maleness is not his specific human nature, and thus part of his identity. In stating that 'in Christ there is neither male nor female' Paul, as the context clearly shows, was referring to the situation which results from baptism, while Maximus the Confessor speaks of the overcoming of the division and conflict between the sexes and not of the ultimate elimination of their difference. This matter, the Orthodox feel, ought to have been taken into deeper consideration before any decision to ordain women was taken and acted on, particularly in the context of ecumenical dialogue.

    ii. Although the Church must listen to society and its expectations of her, sociological considerations are not in themselves sufficient to justify innovations pertaining to the ministry of the Church, particularly in its eucharistic form. Theological and ecclesiological considerations are more decisive. With regard to the ordination of women to the priesthood, the Orthodox do not feel that they are

doing injustice to women by not ordaining them, since ordination does not involve the exercise of some kind of power (potestas), but is a specific service to the community. Women, like many other lay members of the Church, have their own ministry to perform, which is in no way inferior to that of the ordained ministry.

iii. The Orthodox think that in the context of the ongoing ecumenical dialogue, questions of such seriousness and significance as the ordination of women to the priesthood require profound theological examination. The cost of schism or of the perpetuation of division is too high to outweigh any pastoral benefits that may result from such innovation. While appreciating the pastoral motivation that has led the Anglican Communion to ordain women to the priesthood, the Orthodox think that the theological dimension of this matter remains open, and deserves further and deeper consideration and study in ecumenical dialogue.

Issues for further discussion

38. Given the extent of our agreement on the role of women in the Church in general, and on the ordination of women as well as men to the diaconate, we need to reflect further on the issues involved in our disagreement on the priestly ordination of women in particular.

    i. Earlier in our statement we agreed that the issue of Christ and culture is relevant to our dialogue (cf. III.6). In the light of what we said there, we need to consider to what extent our respective decisions to ordain, and not to ordain, women to ministries involving eucharistic presidency are influenced by culture. We need also to ask by what criteria we accept or reject cultural influences in this particular case.

    ii. Further reflection is needed on the theological reasons for our disagreement on the ordination of women, and the place of canon law in this regard.

    iii. Given that there is no conciliar teaching on the priestly ministries of women, we need to consider the extent to which our differences on this matter constitute heresies which justify division among Christians. The Orthodox must tell Anglicans whether or not the priestly ordination of women is heretical, in the sense that the Montanist practice of ordaining women was condemned as heretical. If the Orthodox consider it heretical, they must explain why. We need first, however, to define carefully what we mean by

heresy, what constitutes a heresy, and the consequences of heresy for communion.

iv. If the ordination of women does not constitute a heresy, we need to ask to what extent the ordination, or non-ordination, of women affects our communion with one another. If our differences on this matter can be contained within Christian communion (*koinonia*), then we must ask what might be the next steps along the path to unity between Anglicans and Orthodox.

39. We wish in conclusion to affirm our conviction that our theological differences with regard to the ordination of women do not undermine the agreement we have reached in the previous sections of this statement.

Section VIII: Heresy, Schism and the Church

Introduction

1. In the Creed Anglicans and Orthodox proclaim the Church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic. In our statement on the Mystery of the Church in the *Dublin Agreed Statement* of 1984 we affirmed: 'Catholicity stands in contrast to heresy and schism. If Christians cease to love each other or to respect Church order they are in danger of schism. If they depart from the essentials of the apostolic faith they become guilty of heresy. The catholicity of the Church is shown in the multiplicity of particular local churches, each of which, being in eucharistic communion with all the local churches, manifests in its own place and time the one catholic Church. These local churches, in faithful response to their own particular missionary situation, have developed a wide diversity in their life. As long as their witness to the one faith remains unimpaired, such diversity is seen to be not as a deficiency or cause for division, but as a mark of the fullness of the one Spirit who distributes to each according to his will.'

2. Since there is disagreement between us regarding the ordination of women to the priesthood, we must ask whether such diversity should be seen as a reason for division. This question requires serious reflection on the nature of heresy and the closely related question of schism. Our first task is to define our understanding of the terms heresy and schism; we are well aware that in the present context both terms are too often misused and abused. Our second task is to identify the criteria by which an idea, teaching, practice, person, or community may justly be called heretical, as well as identifying by what authority such a judgement is made. A related task is to identify the criteria by which a person or community may be judged as schismatic. Our third task is to consider the consequences for eucharistic communion of judging a teaching, practice, person or community as heretical or schismatic. This is to raise the question as to when disagreement on an issue justifies division among Christians.

The Meaning of Heresy and Schism

3. The Greek words *hairesis* and *schisma* are found in various places in the New Testament. The original meaning of the word *hairesis* is 'personal choice'. In classical Greek it is a neutral term designating a sect, party, or system of thought. It is in this sense that Justin Martyr uses the term in the mid-second century to describe the parties or systems of thought

within Christianity by analogy with the philosophical schools. At least from the time of Irenaeus, *hairesis* is more precisely used to identify abnormal and false Christian doctrine, with the cognate word *hairetikoi* referring to dissidents from the catholic faith. In its classical sense, heresy is that which denies, distorts or undermines the original witness and teaching of the apostles, as opposed to orthodoxy, which preserves the true sense of this teaching and witness. Whereas the apostolic faith is given to, and received and preserved by the ecclesial community, a heresy finds its origins in a particular individual, who stresses one part of the truth at the expense of other parts, or of the truth as a whole. In short, when Christians depart from the essentials of the apostolic faith they fall into heresy. After Irenaeus, the standard sources from which such dissent is made are the teaching of the apostolic writings found in the canon of scripture, the teaching of the unbroken succession of bishops, and the Rule of Faith which contains the deposit of apostolic teaching. While the Rule of Faith in the second and third centuries is Tradition in the broadest sense, from the fourth century the deposit of apostolic teaching includes more specifically the dogmatic articulations of faith made by the Ecumenical Councils, focussed in a particular way in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. As we have said above (V.6), both Anglicans and Orthodox regard the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils as having gained a normative status as proper interpretations of the Scriptural witness especially in trinitarian and christological doctrine.

4. While heresy begins as a departure from the apostolic faith within the Church, those who believed in heretical teaching have often removed themselves from the wider Christian community, that is, from eucharistic communion. Significantly, the original meaning of *schisma* is ‘a break or tear’. It is commonly accepted that heresy refers to a departure from the faith, while schism refers to a departure from the eucharistic communion of the Church. While there are many instances in early Christianity where schismatic communities shared elements of the common faith of the Church, but became separated for other reasons, such as theological rigidity, moral rigourism, and personal rivalry, schism inevitably involves an ecclesiological anomaly, and may even involve an ecclesiological heresy.

5. Schism, whether it arises from un-Christian behaviour, false teaching or an unwillingness to live under authority, causes the fabric of the Church to be strained until its threads begin to come apart. Schism, which involves physical, bodily separation, is an outward, blatant sign of an

inner disease. Because the disunity of the churches betrays Christ's prayer 'that they may be one' and abrogates the credal proclamation of the 'oneness' of the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, schism was often considered a more serious matter than heresy. For this reason John Chrysostom went so far as to argue that 'nothing angers God so much as division in the Church … not even martyrdom can wipe out that crime' (*On the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Homily X.15). Division, whether in the form of schism, heresy, or simply unreconciled hostility, is a sin that renders the mode of being of the Church in which we live our daily lives an imperfect and distorted image of its true self. It may be that reflection on the existential reality of the Church will turn us from the analysis of heresy to the analysis of schism and division as the foundational sin that we are called to overcome.

The Criteria for Applying the Term 'Heresy'

6. In response to their own particular missionary situation, local churches have developed a wide diversity in their life. Historically, however, certain instances of diversity have impaired their witness to the apostolic faith, distorting it and becoming a cause for division. Current imprecise and imprudent uses of the word 'heresy' may lead to the perception that the word is more of a problem than a help in dealing with emerging theological restatements or reconsideration, and the recovery of certain practices. But the classical sense of the term, and the criteria by which it is applied, may be very helpful to Christians at the present time as they seek to live out the Gospel in new situations, and especially as they work for the recovery of Christian unity.

7. In the classical sense, heresy is a denial of the apostolic faith, and a betrayal of the existential reality of the Church as a community of faith. The self-revelation of God, in the prophets and in Christ, to which the Scriptures and Tradition bear witness, cannot be understood in isolation from the community in which it is received. The ecclesial reality can only be expressed in fidelity to the ways in which it has been expressed from its beginning in the apostolic witness, namely the canonical Scriptures and the Tradition as articulated in the Rule of Faith, culminating in the dogmatic teaching of the Ecumenical Councils. Any teaching or practice which denies the doctrinal truths they express must therefore be considered as heretical. These criteria, then, place significant limits and conditions on the use of the term heresy.

8. Teachings which attack the existential reality of the Church's distinctive life are unequivocally heretical in every sense of the word. The Church's

existential reality can only be expressed in the terms in which it has been articulated from its inauguration: the creative love of God, God's truth, grace and self-revealing action in the history to which the Church belongs, redemption in the crucified and risen Christ, the forgiveness of sin, new life in the Holy Spirit, and the hope of an everlasting inheritance. Because these are the Church's distinctive and fundamental beliefs, any teaching which denies the objective truth they express empties them of their existential meaning. Such teaching distorts, denies and undermines, not the opinions of Christians, whether alone or assembled in council, but the very existence of the Church itself. It may be regarded not as heresy but as unacknowledged apostasy. It is not a deviant way of understanding an article of faith, but a denial of faith itself and a betrayal of the Church as the community of faith.

The Discernment of Heresy

9. Because of the seriousness of heresy, the Church may at times find it unavoidable to disassociate itself publicly from teachings, theological views or practices which it considers to be seriously subversive of essential Christian truths. The need for wisdom, theological acumen, tact, patience, and firmness is obvious. To underline the pastoral rather than simply the juridical significance of such action, any public consideration or judgement of heresy must be undertaken in a positive and constructive manner, accompanied by a convincing explanation of what the Church does believe: the best answer to bad doctrine is good doctrine.

10. Heresy affects the life of the Church, even if it also, rightly or wrongly, affects the theological sensibilities of particular individuals. Individual Christians cannot therefore declare one another, another community, a teaching or practice heretical. Such a judgement properly belongs to the Church as a community, making use of the same canonical mechanisms which declare a particular teaching or practice to be a faithful response to their particular missionary situation or cultural context. Like reception, discernment of heresy does not take place on the level of individuals, but of the community. Such an activity can only occur within a dynamic community that is structured in such a way as to make the spiritual gift (charism) of 'reception' just as important as the charism of 'instruction' and indeed of 'rejection'. The one cannot exist without the other. In this sense, the discernment of heresy is closely linked with the ongoing process of reception, in which innovations, proposed for the sake of actualising the Gospel, are first discerned, and then welcomed or

rejected. An innovation can be rejected as heresy only when it is judged to deny, distort or undermine the apostolic faith.

11. Such discernment properly begins as an exercise of *episcope*, and its various modalities must always include the local bishop. At times, the assistance of other regional local churches and their bishops is required, in the form of a council or synod. Ultimately, however, it is only an Ecumenical Council, whose decisions are received by the whole Church, that can declare a teaching heretical. The whole canonical and synodical tradition of the Church can be understood as a series of attempts in the course of time to set out the forms of Church life and belief that would best enable local churches to live in love and unity. The pastoral role of the bishop as teacher and interpreter of apostolic faith is inseparable from the episcopal ministry as guardian of unity, expressed liturgically in eucharistic presidency. In the eucharistic liturgy, the community's praise and thanksgiving to God, the unity of the Church is given ritual expression. The eucharistic liturgy itself may then be seen as the ecclesial community's criterion for determining orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as correct or incorrect praise (*doxa*) and giving of praise (*doxologia*), the concrete working out of the ancient principle *lex orandi lex credendi*.

12. The discerning and judging of a particular idea, teaching, or practice as heretical is closely related to the process of reception. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has often been the case that such discernment has led to a clearer articulation of the apostolic faith, as in the case of the Ecumenical Councils. In determining the teachings of Arius heretical, for instance, the Church found fresh ways to express the apostolic faith in the conciliar Creed of the Council of Nicea. Openness to the Holy Spirit is essential in the process of discerning heresy today.

Conclusion

13. We are impelled to ask what it means for one church to be out of eucharistic communion with another church, when there is no formal condemnation of heresy and no departure from, or contradiction of, the apostolic faith, and when there is in fact a common recognition of the basic and central dogmas of the Church, and it is possible to proclaim the Scriptures and recite the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed together. As we agreed in the statement on the Mystery of the Church in the *Dublin Agreed Statement*: 'The unity of the Church is expressed in common faith and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; it takes concrete and visible form as the Church, gathered around the bishop in the

common celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Nevertheless, we find ourselves in an abnormal situation. We are a disrupted Christian people seeking to restore our unity. Our divisions do not destroy but they damage the basic unity we have in Christ, and our disunity impedes our mission to the world as well as our relationships with each other.'

Section IX: Reception in Communion

Introduction

1. We do not intend to cover all aspects of the vast and complex topic of reception in the Church, but to touch on some areas which are of particular ecumenical importance. The *Moscow Agreed Statement* of 1976 recognised 'the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, not only in the Scriptures, but also in the Councils, and in the whole process whereby Scriptures and Councils have been received as authoritative' (MAS 13). It also noted that 'theological evaluation is required of processes whereby the teaching of Councils has been recognised and received' (MAS 18.c). Our discussion of the ordination of women to the priesthood has shown the need for a clear common understanding of reception in the Church, and how new forms of church life and ministry should be recognised and received. This question is broader than that of the reception of doctrinal formulations, while being inseparable from it.

2. Reception is part of the ongoing life of the Church. Ever since the time of Christ and the Apostles, the Church has constantly received and re-received the message of her Lord. Jesus Christ himself, in receiving our humanity, received his mission from the Father. He received too the history and Scriptures of the people of Israel to which he belonged as man. Belonging to a particular generation at a particular time, he acted and spoke within the tradition transmitted to him. In the Scriptures themselves, stories, images and ideas in one part are taken up and reworked in other parts. The process of reception precedes the Church, which herself can be seen as a product of reception.

3. Within this general sense of reception, the term acquired in the course of history a specific, technical meaning. In this narrower sense it is mainly associated with the decisions of the Councils of the Church. In canon law reception came to refer to the consent given by the people of God to a particular conciliar or ecclesiastical decision.

4. Reception has become a basic theological concept in the modern ecumenical movement. But whereas the classical idea of reception assumed a united Church with known and agreed organs of reception, Christians now hold different views about how reception operates. Yet the divided churches are being called not only to receive from one another but also to receive one another. This raises fundamental ecclesiological questions, since in this context the highest degree of reception is not doctrinal agreement but mutual ecclesial recognition.

Ecumenically, reception is coming to be seen as a process, guided by the Holy Spirit, in which churches are called to acknowledge elements of sanctification and truth in one another. This implies that they are being called to recognise in one another elements of Christ's Church. Reception in this sense is a difficult and complicated process, which does not replace the classical view of reception but builds on it. Some churches are so deeply bound to their traditions that they cannot act without reference to the classical view of reception. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as well as the Anglican Communion, have certain fixed organs and procedures of reception which they cannot bypass in their ecumenical relations. We believe that the classical view of reception contains many elements that can be helpful in our present situation, if we appreciate them theologically and make proper use of them.

5. Essential to reception of faith and ecclesial structure is that it occurs within communion: it must be understood in the light of a theology of communion. We agree on the importance of a renewed classical model of reception and on its general shape. Anglicans and Orthodox together are aware of participating in a challenging process of discernment in which innovations proposed for the sake of the Gospel are considered, and then received or rejected. This is part of the demand for faithfulness in a rapidly changing world. What the Church believes she should receive, she believes to be also the gift of God. Whether perceived as revelation or God's saving acts, the gift is always that of God's love.

The Theological Significance of Reception

6. Reception is deeply rooted in the origins and very being of the Church. The Church was born out of a process of reception and has continued to exist and grow through reception. Theologically reception has two basic aspects. The first is that the Church receives: the second is that the Church is received. The Church receives from God, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. In Christ the Church is received by God. The Church also receives from the history and culture of the world, including its tragic and sinful experiences and failures, for it is the body of the crucified Lord who takes upon himself the sins of the world. Reception from the world is inextricably linked with the Church's reception by the world. As a distinct community within the world, the Church exists in dialogue with the non-ecclesial realm, in her effort to persuade the world to receive the incarnate Christ. What is called mission should rather be understood as reception. Mission can be misunderstood as the Church

attempting to impose herself on the world, whereas the Church properly offers herself to the world for reception. The prologue of the Fourth Gospel says that when the Son of God came to what was his own, his own people did not receive him (John 1.11). Reception from God and by God, from the world and by the world, is a process rooted in the being of the Church as communion. The Church is both the product of communion and its instrument. From the ecclesial perspective both mission and reception are expressions of communion.

7. A perfect expression of ecclesial reception is that of one church receiving another. In the early Church, such reception stemmed from the basic understanding that the Church, although one, exists as churches, and that these churches exist as one Church by constantly receiving one another as sister churches.

8. What the Church always receives is the love of God the Father, incarnate in his unique and beloved Son, and given to us in the Holy Spirit. The Church exists to give to the world the love of God she has received. Because what is received is God's love in Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, St Paul uses the technical terms *parelabon* and *paralabete* with reference to Jesus Christ. 'As you have received Jesus Christ, continue to live your lives in him', he tells the Colossians (2.6). The Letter to the Hebrews speaks of 'receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken' (12.28). Jesus uses the same word in his promise to the disciples in John 14.3: 'I will come again and take you (*paralepsomai*) to myself'. Paul warns the Romans not to reject one whom God has welcomed (*proselabeto*), so making evident the implications of reception for the Church's life in communion (14.3). Our reception of each other in the community depends on Christ's receiving us, and the doxological dimension of reception in communion is made clear: 'welcome (*proslambanesthe*) one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed (*proselabeto*) you, for the glory of God' (Romans 15.7). Reception is no dry technical term: it goes to the heart of the Christian experience of salvation. To receive the love of God is necessarily an act of communion in which we are received by God. We receive God himself; and we share in the mutual reception of churches and believers in and through the love of God. This love embraces the world God created, and for which he gave his only begotten Son. We cannot receive Christ without receiving the love of God, nor can we receive the love of God for the Church, without receiving and sharing God's love for his world.

9. In the context of this broader sense of reception, Paul affirms that the Church has also received the Gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 15.1;

Galatians 1.9-12). This is the good news of God's love for the world in Christ, expressed in the concrete form of a credal statement of the historical events which constitute God's gift of his love to us. In receiving the Gospel, the Church therefore also receives the historical events of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, events pivotal in the history of God's people and the key to the world's salvation. In this way the Church receives a creed which she confesses as a true statement of God's acts in the history of his people and of humanity, an affirmation that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son' to save the world (John 3.16). Receiving this creed in such verbal confessions does not detract from receiving it in a personal and existential way. This is clear in the context of the Eucharist. Paul's use of *paralambanein* in connection with the Eucharist indicates that in the Church we receive a person rather than ideas. Paul speaks of the celebration of the Eucharist as something he had received from the Lord and handed on to the Corinthian Christians (1 Corinthians 11.23). This is of great importance for our understanding of reception.

10. The early Christian kerygma was received and re-received many times in the early Church's writings, among them the gospels and epistles. In order to protect its truth, the Church recognised certain of these writings as canonical and formulated a Rule of Faith as the key to the correct reading of the Scriptures. In her efforts to maintain the purity of the original kerygma, the Church was led to develop a ministry responsible for protecting the kerygma from heretical distortions. The doctrinal decisions of this ministry, particularly in the form of conciliar decisions, become an essential part of what is received only when distortions of the narrative and meaning of the events that constitute the gift of God's love to us can have serious existential consequences. Dogmatic formulations which are not shown to bear such existential consequences should not be proposed for reception as authoritative and essential teaching. The Church does not receive and transmit ideas or doctrines as such, but the very life and love of God for humanity.

11. Since the Church is the body of Christ, the gift of God's love to the world in each place, she is herself the object of reception, both in the sense that she has to be accepted and received by the world, and in the sense that churches have to recognise one another within the communion of the one Church. As long as the world rejects the Church, or the churches reject one another, the need for reception will exist.

Reception: The Classical Concept

12. God gives his Son to us in the Holy Spirit. This fact determines how reception takes place. Of the many aspects of Pneumatology, the most important so far as ecclesiology is concerned is that the Holy Spirit is communion (*koinonia*). Since reception takes place in the Spirit, it always happens in and through an event of communion. When God gives his love to us in his Son, he does not compel us to receive this gift, for the Spirit is freedom. Reception cannot be imposed by authority, since the authority of truth is recognised in and through communion.

13. Communion is realised in the ecclesial community. Reception must take place within the concrete community or communities of the Church. It is important to be clear that not every form of community is an ecclesial community: the Church is specifically a eucharistic community. This has implications for our understanding of the process of reception:

    i. However widely something has been accepted in the Church, it has not been received ecclesially unless it has been received in the context of the Eucharist. The Word of God, together with credal and conciliar formulations, are seen to be received only when they are integrated into the eucharistic community's liturgical celebration. This is the ancient principle of *lex orandi lex credendi*. In the celebration of the Eucharist the Gospel and the existential life of the community are united in the Church's prayer. The doxological expression of belief in the eucharistic celebration is the most accessible and authentic indication of what the Church receives as its authoritative teaching. Equally, participation in the Eucharist, and functions performed in its celebration, indicate whom the Church receives as members and ministers.

    ii. Reception of the Gospel, the creeds, and authoritative teaching is the work not of individuals but of communities. The Church therefore needs a ministry which expresses the unity of the local ecclesial communities. In the classical model of reception this is the function of the ministry of *episcope*, at whose heart is the ministry of memory (*anamnesis*). Focussed in the bishop as eucharistic president, this ministry ensures that the transmission of the Gospel is inseparable from the actualisation of the Gospel, sacramentally in the Eucharist, and visibly in the life and witness of the Church in the world. Each local church receives the Gospel as one body through the one *episcopos* in each place. This one bishop guarantees that what is received is essentially what previous

communities since the time of the apostles, and other contemporary ecclesial communities, have received. This is ascertained through councils and expressed in their decisions. In the classical model, therefore, the episcopal office is essential to the process of reception.

iii. Presupposing that in the Holy Spirit everything takes place as an event of communion, the classical model of reception assumed that every decision taken by bishops in council had to be received by the community. The bishop was the focus of a dynamic community whose charism of reception is no less important than the charism of instruction. If the community could do nothing without the bishop, the bishop had to receive the 'Amen' of the community. This was a profoundly eucharistic approach to reception, since the 'Amen' of the people was always indispensable in the celebration of the Eucharist.

iv. Reception has to be at the universal level as well as the local. For universal communion a ministry of universal reception is essential. This ministry should be episcopal in nature. It should be exercised by the head of a local church, to ensure that universal catholicity does not ignore the catholicity of the local church. In every case the consensus of the whole community should be obtained. This should be transmitted through the local bishops rather than through individuals, so that the personal, communal, and collegial aspects of reception are held together. Granted these conditions, this ministry should be sought in the Bishop of Rome.

v. Reception of the Gospel implies its inculturation: different people receive the Gospel and Christ himself in different ways. Reception therefore requires room for freedom of expression and a variety of cultural forms. This is a further reason why reception must always pass through the local church.

In the classical model of reception each local church receives the Gospel, and constantly re-receives it, through the ministry of *episcope* acting in communion with all the baptised and with all other local churches, through conciliar decisions and a universal ministry. We now examine how applicable this model is today.

Reception: The Present Ecumenical Situation

14. In recent decades there has been a growing ecumenical consensus regarding the application of the classical model of reception, although

differences among the churches remain. There is room for hope that a renewed classical model of reception can be helpful at the present time, particularly in situations where innovations proposed by some are held by others to threaten the integrity of the faith and the communion of the churches.

i. There is a growing consensus that reception involves relating the Gospel to the actual needs of humanity, and not simply applying juridical norms to new situations. Anglicans and Orthodox agree that this requires us to receive Scripture and Tradition with attentiveness to contemporary needs and with respect for different cultural backgrounds.

ii. There is also a growing consensus that the Eucharist is the proper context of reception, and that reception is not complete without eucharistic communion. This is the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement. Although it is difficult to achieve, the universal admission that the Eucharist occupies a central place in the process of reception is an important step forward. Although the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church have not yet reached this goal, they are committed to the journey towards it. Both agree that the Eucharist is the proper context of reception.

iii. There are still differences among the churches, as well as within them, regarding the authority to be given to the past. Some churches appear to attach little or no importance to the doctrines and practices of the Church in past centuries. Others believe that there is a historical continuity that reception cannot ignore. But that raises crucial questions regarding which aspects of this continuity are essential, what should be received, whether the churches are able to be selective, whether there is a hierarchy of truths, a difference between dogma and theologoumena, and between the essence of faith as such and its expression by schools of theology. If reception is not merely a passive process, we must ask what part hermeneutics plays in the process of reception in new contexts and cultures. These are crucial questions whose answers affect the problem of reception. It is a hopeful sign that they are now acknowledged and discussed so widely and profoundly. We Orthodox and Anglicans address these questions together in our dialogue.

iv. In the wider ecumenical movement, the greatest immediate difficulty concerns the office of bishop. On this point two hopeful

signs are emerging. First, those churches in which episcopacy is an essential ministry realise that it should be exercised in the sense of *episcope*, in union with the whole community. Second, some churches which traditionally have rejected episcopacy are considering the need for a ministry of *episcope* as an essential instrument of ecclesial unity. On this issue we have already recorded our agreement (V.15). A related issue is that of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. This difficult issue may be resolved if it is put in the right theological perspective.

15. In the light of this continuing ecumenical search for clear agreement, we may establish some basic features of a renewed classical model of reception.

    i. Reception is a matter not only of texts but of churches and people. In reacting to texts, the churches begin a process of receiving one another as churches.

    ii. All churches need to question their own tradition and re-receive it, re-aligning themselves with the original apostolic community. Re-reception requires careful discernment, which should be a common discernment in communion with one another.

    iii. The final decision is made by churches, and not by individuals, however great their theological expertise and influence in their community might be. 'Churches' in this context means communities structured for the sake of communion. Reception cannot be accomplished by individuals or authorities in isolation: it must be an act of communion. Ecclesial reception happens within ecclesial communion and is itself a constitutive element of such communion.

    iv. Scripture and Tradition have to be received. In specific instances that process may be completed. But in general transmitting what is handed on is a continuous process: receiving and re-receiving is a process which is never finished. To speak of an open process of reception is to acknowledge the exigencies of historical existence.

The Reception of the Faith in Communion

16. When the Church receives a particular truth, she inevitably adjusts it to its own historical context, which includes the particular culture and language in which she receives that truth. This is well illustrated by the spread of the Gospel among the Greeks. The Christian faith sprang from Judaism, and from the beginning was stamped by Hebrew thought.

Although by the time of Jesus Greek thought had already penetrated Judaism, it was difficult for the Greek mind to receive the biblical message. This became particularly clear when in the second century the Greek intelligentsia began to accept biblical faith. The Apologists, notably St Justin Martyr, inevitably received the Gospel in and through platonic philosophy. This was even more the case with Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Some biblical scholars and historians have accused the whole patristic period of an acute hellenization of the Gospel. Yet there never has been and never can be reception of the Christian faith without inculturation.

17. The Church is called to actualise the Gospel in every age and culture. From the beginning the Gospel has been expressed in particular cultures; and its spread has involved a meeting of cultures. Authentic evangelisation requires respect for the culture it seeks to win over. But however much that culture may be respected and affirmed, it must be transformed as well as accepted. As the Church has sought in the Spirit to witness to the truth of the Gospel and teach it, she has engaged with many different cultures. They have been transformed by the Gospel, as it has given appropriate expression to divine revelation. In this the Church manifests the freedom with which Christ has set it free (Galatians 5.1). As Christ in his humanity engaged with the culture and beliefs of his first century Jewish compatriots, so in Christ we have the freedom to engage in dialogue with the cultures in which we live, and which in part shape our humanity.

18. The inculturation of the Gospel inevitably involves some kind of change in the original expression of faith. We should expect considerable diversity of forms of new life and teaching in the Church. As the community of members of Christ's body, who have died to self and been made God's children in the Spirit, the Church participates in the new creation in Christ. The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit's indwelling (*enoikesis*) in the body of the Church ensures both the preservation of the truth and new life. Indeed, the life of the Spirit in the Church is the essence of Tradition (*paradosis*). The Church is alive because truth and new life have been given to her, and her existence depends on the gift of revelation that she has received from God. Revelation is Tradition and becomes Tradition within the Church. It is so precisely because it was transmitted (*paredothe*) in Christ and the Holy Spirit. It becomes Tradition because the Church preserves it throughout her history, as the power of her life. The preservation of the truth in the midst of the diversity of the new life

in the Spirit should not however be understood in a narrowly conservative way. Tradition is not a principle which strives to restore the past: it is not only the memory of words, but the constant abiding of the Spirit. It is a charismatic, not a historical, principle.

19. Such an approach raises many questions, regarding the continuity of Tradition, respect for both change and continuity in the Church's application of reception, and the basis on which Tradition and innovation can be reconciled. It is the problem of reaching a proper synthesis between Christology and Pneumatology. Christology represents historical facticity: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Hebrews 13.8). The Spirit is freedom and change. Innovators appeal to the Spirit in support of their innovations, yet the ancient Church often identified innovation with heresy. We may ask how the Gospel could be received in a fresh culture if all innovation were to be condemned as heresy. If we follow the Fathers of the Church, we may come to the following conclusions:

    i. In defining a new dogma the Church has always built upon an already existing one. There can never be innovation in an absolute sense: there must always be some continuity with what has been received by previous generations. That is why, in the doctrinal disputes of the patristic period, all parties sought support for their views in the Scriptures: they were concerned to demonstrate continuity. The Fathers made no distinction between the binding nature of the authority of Scripture and that of the Tradition expressed through the Councils: for them both were equally inspired by the Spirit. What mattered was continuity as the ground on which innovation or change could be acceptable in formulating a new dogma. The Council of Chalcedon built upon Nicea's Christology in order to extend Christ's consubstantiality with the Father to his consubstantiality with humanity, while the Sixth Ecumenical Council appealed to Chalcedon's two natures Christology in order to teach the doctrine of two energies and two wills in Christ. In this way the Church's authoritative teaching was extended, while its new articulation was consistent with what had already been received. New definitions could only be received by the Church if they were in conformity with accepted dogmas.

    ii. In such circumstances innovation is not heresy. This is not to affirm the notion of the development of doctrine as some have understood it. There is no growth from smaller to greater, as if the truth of the Gospel needed to progress and improve. At each stage of reception

the whole truth is being received, albeit in new forms in response to new challenges from within a culture or from a different culture. Two attitudes to reception are equally wrong and dangerous. One is that of the revolutionary innovator who, by appealing to the freedom of the Spirit or the demands of inculturation, refuses to consider whether the new stands in continuity with the old. The other is that of the conservative formalist who rejects the inculturation of the Gospel and its application to the contemporary needs of humanity. True and proper reception avoids both these dangers and, in a balanced synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology, seeks to respond to new demands of human culture in faithfulness to what has been transmitted from the past.

iii. Faithfulness to the past can be both formal and essential. By formal we mean adherence to the letter of what has been transmitted, such as the definitions of Ecumenical Councils. By essential we understand the intention and soteriological concern underlying such definitions. At all costs we should be faithful to the latter, while when necessary exercising discretion with regard to the former. We recall that St Basil deliberately avoided calling the Holy Spirit one in essence (*homoousios*) with the Father and the Son, because this term would have been an obstacle to the Church's reconciliation with the Pneumatomachi. What mattered for him was accepting that the Spirit is not a creature.

iv. In receiving the truth the Church is called to discern the spirits and exercise a prophetic ministry, which will enable her to see whether the demands of inculturation can be satisfied without prejudice to the soteriological content of what has already been received. This ministry is exercised with the help of theology, though not necessarily academic theology. Its conclusions are finally expressed by the heads of the local churches as the common faith which, in accordance with the well-known rule of St Vincent of Lerins, has 'been believed everywhere and always and by all'. Until this point has been reached, the process of reception is not completed; we can speak neither of dogma nor of heresy, in the sense of a deviation from the truth which would justify or even necessitate the rupture of communion. On a sharply controverted issue touching salvation, it may be that only an Ecumenical Council, as the voice of all the local churches, could determine what has been held 'everywhere and always and by all'. Only then could it be said that the process of reception had been completed.

v. While the process of reception continues, the theological debate remains open. In this process critique, affirmation or rejection are all possible. Discussion of proposed new doctrine or practice will address two concerns. One is whether what is being proposed in response to the demands of culture contradicts what has already been received as the rule of faith. The other is whether the challenges posed by culture relate to genuine existential human needs, or spring from motives which are not in accord with the Gospel. Reception is a complex and creative process, which can be completed successfully only by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

vi. During the process of reception two further things must be kept in mind. First, all must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and submit to it. Secondly, no one should claim the authority of the Holy Spirit for accepting or rejecting any new doctrine or practice until the process of reception is completed. Only then is it legitimate to say with St James, '…it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us…' (Acts 15.28).

20. In fresh articulations of the faith, Anglicans and Orthodox are equally concerned to preserve the underlying soteriological intention of doctrinal expressions. At the same time they expect some variety of interpretation of doctrines, in order to be faithful to their original meaning and to make them comprehensible. The Church is a hermeneutic community, in which flexibility of interpretation in the service of an effective proclamation of the Gospel is balanced by the hermeneutics of coherence in the service of unity. In order to be faithful, the Church must distinguish, within the rich diversity of forms of Christian teaching and life, between what is consistent with revelation and what is not. When disputed issues threaten life in communion, the classical process of reception may need to be activated. Developments in the life and teaching of the Church have to be gradually tested, and in time either accepted or rejected. The reception of an ecclesial decision will be an act of communion, articulated by the Church's designated leadership and recognised by the People of God. Experience however shows that the Church can maintain its worship and witness while there are competing theological expressions of its faith. Such a situation does not necessarily destroy or even impair life in communion. No matter how authoritative, teaching is always accompanied by interpretation. Both Scripture and Tradition require interpretation if they are to be integrated into the faith and life of local churches.

21. Two senses of reception must be distinguished carefully. The first concerns specific formal processes by which the Church assesses the orthodoxy of new doctrines or developments in church order. The second concerns the process by which the Church constantly receives Scripture and Tradition in its life and worship. This latter process is essentially open-ended. As church communities read and reflect on Scripture, and as Scripture shapes their life and culture, so their understanding and practice of the faith grows. This in turn may lead them to a deeper understanding of the truths of Scripture and Tradition. This is the process which above all nourishes the Church's Tradition in its fullness and diversity. Diversity of interpretation may occasionally give rise to views and practices which need to be submitted to the more formal ('classical') process of ecclesial reception. More often such diversity manifests the inexhaustible fullness of revelation, which enriches the life of believers, and challenges them to deepen their faith and intensify their practice of the Christian life.

22. The legitimacy of quite different interpretations co-existing within communion can be illustrated by the variety of meanings which interpreters have given to Galatians 5.17: 'For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.' For Chrysostom, this refers to the logical distinction between opposed moral choices. The Spirit imparts knowledge of this distinction, and so enables believers not to do the sinful things which they want to do. For others, this text refers to an interior spiritual conflict between good and evil desires, such that the believer is unable to do the good, unable to act at all, or at least unable ever entirely to do the good. The desires of the flesh may be seen as essentially opposed to the good which the Spirit teaches, or they may, as in Aquinas' interpretation, be seen as natural, necessary for human well-being, and therefore good so long as they are not taken to excess. They are however less than wholly good, for they are also liable to distract the human spirit from far more valuable supernatural goals. It is instructive to reflect that within a twenty year period at the turn of the 4th-5th centuries, and within a few days' journey of each other, Chrysostom, Augustine and Jerome were all producing significantly different interpretations of Galatians, whilst remaining in communion. Indeed, the two last engaged in prolonged correspondence over the nature of Paul and Peter's dispute at Antioch. The literary historical study of the reception of Galatians shows with great power how such a text admits of varied interpretation. These three figures were all fine readers of texts, and neither they nor their interpretations were regarded as heterodox or heretical.

23. Chrysostom, Augustine and Jerome all agree on central points of interpretation: God's justification of those who believe; the contrast between the old life of bondage under the Law and the new life in Christ of spiritual freedom from the Law. They all grasp the central insights of the text, and draw from it deep strength and wisdom which become embodied in their communities. The Church bears witness to the truth not by reminiscence or from the words of others, but from its own living, unceasing experience of its catholic fullness.

24. We need to ask how the Church decides what belongs to her catholic fullness. Proposed innovations in Christian teaching and church life all claim the support of Scripture. Within the rich diversity of interpretations, we have to distinguish between what is continuous or consistent with revelation and what is not, between the fruits of divine creativity in the Spirit-filled community, and the mere consequence of the amazingly fertile human imagination. Our study of different interpretations of Galatians 5.17 brings this question into clear focus. Within the communion of the believing community, careful attention to what Paul writes does not in fact generate unlimited interpretation. Significantly varied interpretations are possible, but there nevertheless remain greater common understandings which can hold us together. These we should recognise and receive as of central importance for the faith. They are guiding principles whose contemplation shapes our faith and our communal life. Reception can be conceived as a process of appropriating the biblical texts, reading them in the Spirit in the light of the Church's faith and her experience of membership in the body of Christ. This does not require the special intervention of councils, but can be conducted precisely on the basis of an existing consensus within the Church.

25. Some differences of interpretation may arise from human sinfulness. But the history of the Church and of reception suggests that varying interpretations of texts as well as theological debate are integral to Christian life in the Spirit. The Church's life in the Spirit is not focussed on the propagation of an ideology but is rather deeply dialogical; and true dialogue requires the expression of contrary views for its progress and development. Yet the question remains, at what point partners to such dialogue might cease to engage with each other. The fact that different parties to the debate about the ordination of women are still in dialogue is itself a hopeful sign. It leaves open the question as to what kind of issue this is: one which involves a denial of essential Christian wisdom, or one where in time the accumulation of historical precedent

may help to shape a new consensus. Meanwhile we cannot avoid the need for careful theological investigation of the issue, in order at least to see whether there are convincing arguments for or against the ordination of women. Until this point has been reached, and there is broad agreement on the resolution of the question, we should not seek to close the debate.

The Reception of Ministry in Communion

26. Questions concerning the reception of ecclesial structure cannot be divorced from reception of the faith. It is however clearly easier for the Church to tolerate conflicting doctrinal opinions than to embrace divergent structures of ministry. We must now ask how much flexibility is acceptable in matters of ministry and structure. We have already noted that reception includes the reception of churches as well as the reception of faith and doctrine. Churches receive each other as communities with a particular structure and ministry, as well as a sacramental and liturgical life which they give to one another and receive from one another. In order to receive one another and be together in communion, they must recognise in one another the essential constitutive elements of ecclesial communion. Discerning the necessary elements of sanctification and truth in another church requires attention to structure as well as doctrine. We must ask under what conditions one church can receive another church's ministry. It is from this angle, rather than only that of the interpretation and reception of faith, that we must approach the issue of the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate.

27. In the ancient Church, the reception of one local church by another presupposed unity and identity of structure. At least since the time of St Ignatius of Antioch, one local church could only receive another through its bishop. Receiving a bishop meant also receiving the ecclesial structure, including presbyters, deacons and laity, of which the bishop was the head. The communion of the churches was realised through such mutual recognition until at least the time of the Reformation, when the structure of many communities was significantly altered.

28. This observation, if taken seriously, obliges us to consider carefully any innovation regarding the structure of the Church and her ministry. Innovations with regard to ministry can be of two kinds:

    i. There are those which do not affect the basic structure of the Church. These may or may not be received by the rest of the churches. Monasticism is an example of this kind of innovation. We must distinguish clearly between asceticism and monasticism.

Asceticism has always been part of the Christian life, since it is linked with the cross and with repentance. The Church as a community, and each Christian personally, is called through baptism to practise asceticism in the continual struggle against sin and evil. But asceticism became institutionalised in monasticism in almost every region of the ancient Church not earlier than the late third or early fourth century. It is not necessary for all the churches to receive this institution for them to accept and receive one another. A community can be a church, fully accepted and recognised as such by all the other churches, without this particular institution. From the point of view of church structure, monks and nuns belong to the order of laity. They do not affect the Church's basic structure. The same applies to minor orders such as sub-deacons and readers, and to any other ministries that the Church may find it necessary to introduce, in order to fulfil her mission to the world or within her own community. Innovation in such cases does not affect reception.

ii. Other innovations, however, do affect the basic structure of the Church. They present serious problems to mutual reception among ecclesial communities. The papal ministry, for example, creates problems which are not theoretical but practical and immediate, since this ministry relates to the way in which reception itself takes place. Those communities which include the papacy in their structure inevitably receive communities which do not through the papal ministry. Such reception would in practice oblige non-papal communities to bring their structure into line with that the Roman Catholic Church by accepting the papal ministry. The reverse would be the case should a Roman Catholic community be received by another church. The same situation would obtain in the case of episcopal and non-episcopal communities. Even if these communities were in doctrinal agreement, their mutual reception as ecclesial communities would be impossible. Ecclesial reception presupposes identity of basic ecclesial structures. Innovations that affect the basic structure of a church create obstacles to reception and so to communion. They therefore require broad consultation, and a clear process for receiving or rejecting them. There is a difference between receiving doctrine and receiving structures. In the former case, there can be a period of discussion, during which opposed views can be held with integrity. The latter case involves immediate change of practice, and the choice between reception and non-reception has to be made at once.

Conclusion

29. We have discussed reception with regard to doctrine and to ecclesial structures. Reception applies to other areas of church life, such as liturgy, the official recognition of saints, and sacraments. These too must be mutually received by the churches, if unity among them is to become a reality. We have concentrated on doctrine and structures partly because the subject is usually discussed in connection with faith, to the detriment of the issue of the Church's structure and ministry, but chiefly because the particular problems facing our dialogue are more concerned with structure and ministry than with faith. It is easy to become pre-occupied with the question whether the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate is a heresy or not, forgetting that the problem mainly concerns the Church's ministry. Whether or not such ordination contradicts the dogmatic teaching of the Church already transmitted and received, and so is heretical, can remain open to discussion and to an open process of reception. But the recognition and reception of the ministry of women presbyters and bishops is a question which concerns the practical life of the ecclesial communities involved, including sacramental communion. While questions of faith can be the subject of lengthy discussion, issues of order and ministry are matters of practice, and so they affect reception in an immediate way. From this point of view the ordination of women to the episcopate is more problematic with regard to reception than their ordination to the presbyterate, for the churches receive one another at the level of structure through the bishop. The ultimate goal of all official theological dialogues, including our own, is the reception of our churches by one another, in ministry and church structure as well as in faith. In all their discussions, decisions and actions, our churches must keep this goal constantly in mind.

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