

Commentary and study guide on Growing Together in Unity and Mission: An Agreed Statement by the International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission

PART ONE: The achievements of Anglican – Roman Catholic Theological Dialogue

A. INTRODUCTION (paragraphs 1 to 10)

It is often said that the ecumenical movement has come to a stop and is failing to make any progress. After the exciting days of the 1960s when old prejudices appeared to die and Christians started to talk to each other and pray together it has been hard to see any concrete signs of progress being made. As a result there has been a loss of interest in ecumenism. In many cases attention has shifted from attempting to find schemes for organic union at the institutional level to pursuing local initiatives to bring Christians together in prayer, witness and service at the parish level. In the Church of England the multiplication of Local Ecumenical Projects can be seen as an expression of this. But although it has become common to speak of an ‘ecumenical winter’ we often forget just how much progress has been made in the past forty years and overlook the way in which a growing together of the churches has fostered and encouraged local initiatives. Towards the end of his life, Oliver Tomkins, a former Bishop of Bristol, wrote that ‘All this talk about the ‘winter of ecumenism’ makes me look again at the snow drops in my garden. Perhaps God’s timescale was longer than we reckoned’.

An Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was set up in 1966 and produced reports on the Eucharist, the ministry and authority, claiming that it had reached ‘substantial agreement’ in the first two of these reports. A second commission was set up in 1983 and that examined such other issues as salvation and justification, the nature of the church as communion, morals, authority in the church, and Mary. Taken together these documents give a rich ecumenical theology for Anglicans and Roman Catholics, as well as other Christians, to consider and evaluate. There needs to be a period of what is termed ‘reception’ when ordinary Christians as well as church leaders and theologians ask whether they can recognise the ARCIC documents as expressions of the gospel and learn from them.

But the ecumenical dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics over the past forty years has not been restricted to debate among theologians. Joint commissions and consultations have been established in other parts of the world. The joint consultation in the USA was set up in 1965 and has produced a number of statements, many of which have been published. The Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea have entered into a covenant agreement and the bishops of the two churches have made joint public statements, most recently on family life. There has been a growing recognition in both churches that the pursuit of Christian unity and mission belong together, that we grow closer to each other by co-operating and sharing in a common witness. While the goal remains, as Pope John Paul II and Archbishop George Carey stated in 1996, ‘the restoration of visible unity and full ecclesial communion’, there is also recognition that we will overcome the barriers that separate us by prayer and working together as well as by theological reflection.

Growing Together in Unity and Mission (hereafter referred to as *Growing Together*) describes a meeting of Roman Catholic and Anglican Bishops which was convened in Mississauga, Canada, in 2001 to assess progress already made between the two churches and chart a way forward. At this meeting, as they prayed together and reviewed the relationship between their two churches, the bishops decided that enough progress had already been made to speak of ‘an impressive degree of

agreement in faith’ that provided the basis for a joint action for social justice and in pastoral care and for sharing in a common mission to our fragmented world’. It is important to note that the bishops did not think theological issues were unimportant but that they took the decision that sufficient agreement had already been reached to enable them to speak of Anglicans and Roman Catholics sharing in a ‘rich and life-giving multifaceted communion’. The International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) was set up to implement the mission plan discussed at Mississauga.

As the text of *Growing Together* makes clear, the understanding reached at Mississauga has been overtaken by events as the Anglican Communion has been plunged into debates over sexuality and the ordination of women bishops. Recognising that this is not the time to enter into a new formal stage of relationship, the report tries to see what can still be done by Anglicans and Roman Catholics together to further the mission given to us by Christ.

Growing Together balances realism about the present context with a determination to preserve the enthusiasm shown at Mississauga for shared witness and mission. It also seeks to do justice to both the importance of reaching theological agreement and the value of taking concrete steps forward together. Looking at four decades of theological dialogue, it suggests that while some progress has been made there are still many issues to be faced. It reminds us that we are committed to unity by stages and argues that this may be the time to look at ways in which we can better express our common faith. This is an issue the report will address in the next section. In the second part it will go on to look at ways in which Anglicans and Roman Catholics can take practical steps to deepen their fellowship and mission.

Questions to consider

Do you consider we are living in a time of ‘ecumenical winter’ or do you see signs of spring?

How important do you think it is to solve theological disagreements between churches? Do you think that a common life and witness aid theological understanding or do you believe it is impossible to work together with people with whom you disagree?

In the dispute about same-sex unions Anglicans have looked for positive assistance from other Christians, including Roman Catholics. Do you think we were right to do this or should we seek to solve our disagreement among ourselves?

Growing Together has been prepared by bishops and is primarily addressed to bishops though it expresses the hope that bishops will involve clergy and laity in responding to the challenges set out in the text. What responsibility do you think clergy and laity have to advance ecumenical understanding? Is it the job of bishops to lead or should they also listen?

B THE FAITH WE HOLD IN COMMON

1. Belief in the Trinity and the Church as Communion in Mission (paragraphs 11 to 25)

In the second section of Part One *Growing Together* makes use of past ARCIC documents to summarise a common understanding of the faith reached by Anglicans and Roman Catholics while pointing to differences that remain. This second section is divided into a number of sub-sections. The first two are concerned with belief in the Trinity and the Church as ‘Communion in Mission’. In them it is recognised that both churches already share a great deal, including the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the scriptures, and the sacrament of baptism. Both

churches also recognise the importance of an ordained ministry of oversight (*episcopo*) in preserving the unity of the church and of primacy as a visible link and focus. Roman Catholics, however, hold that the church ‘subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him’. There has been a good deal of debate among Roman Catholic theologians about what Vatican II meant when it used the term ‘subsists’. *Growing Together* appears to accept the interpretation that Vatican II meant to affirm that the church in its fullness is to be found in the Roman Catholic Church but that ‘many elements of sanctity and truth are found outside its visible confines’.

Paragraph 15 is very important. Drawing on the ARCIC document *The Church as Communion*, the report stresses the significance of the New Testament concept of *koinonia* or communion. As Christians we are called to be disciples of Jesus in communion with others. In the church we have union with God through Christ in the power of the Spirit and union with our fellow believers. The communion of the church is not a hidden or secret thing but something which finds visible expression. Baptised Christians are brought together by the apostolic preaching in local churches or dioceses to confess the one faith and celebrate the Eucharist under the leadership of the apostolic ministry. These local churches are linked together by faith, sacraments and a shared ministry with other churches spread around the world. There is room for both diversity but unity is also upheld.

This understanding of the Christian faith contradicts the views of many in the West who belong to what has been termed a ‘generation of seekers’. People who think in this way often see spirituality as a private search for transformation. In other parts of the world there may be concern that the concept of communion used in the report is too restricted and that it fails to recognise the communion between the living and the dead which is surely implied in language about the ‘communion of saints’. In a world where the forces of globalisation are drawing peoples closer together but also making them anxious to preserve a sense of their own identity, the church is called upon to offer a model of unity-in-diversity, of a communion where confession of a common faith does not rule out expressions of faith and worship that are appropriate to the local culture. Surprisingly, this issue receives little attention.

Questions to consider

According to the report, Anglicans are giving renewed attention to the nature and role of their international structures. Are you worried that this will give too much power to the Instruments of Communion (i.e. the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates, the Lambeth Conference, and the Anglican Consultative Council) or do you think that we need to learn to make decisions about important topics together?

Can we learn anything from the way the Petrine ministry serves the universal church in the Roman Catholic Church or do we think there is too much control from the centre?

How would you express the value of the church as communion to someone who thinks he or she can be a follower of Jesus without being linked to any institution?

2. Scripture and Tradition (paragraphs 26 to 32)

Attempts are still made to set scripture against tradition but it is wrong to think of a clash between them. Both Anglicans and Roman Catholics believe that God spoke to us in Christ, the Word made flesh. Christ is made present by the Spirit in every age to invite all human beings into a life of communion with God. The Spirit works to keep the memory of faith active and alive. As the church passes through different periods of history and comes in contact with new cultures, fresh aspects of the truth revealed in Jesus are disclosed so that tradition can be seen as the fruit of the Spirit living

in the church. The canon of scripture, however, exists as a standard and norm to test the church's memory and keep her faithful to the apostolic testimony. Preaching and teaching always need to be tested by scripture. Authoritative declarations by general councils help us to interpret scripture and give us binding doctrines of Christian faith. Anglicans recognise the first four councils but disagree with Roman Catholics about the status of subsequent councils.

Questions to consider

The report speaks of the revealed Word being received and communicated 'through the whole Christian community'. How do you think this happens?

'Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living' (Jaroslav Pelikan). How would you distinguish between 'tradition' and 'traditionalism'?

How does life in the church help you to interpret the scriptures?

Can you think of ways in which fresh aspects of the gospel have disclosed as the church has come in contact with new cultures?

3. Baptism and Eucharist (paragraphs 33 to 49)

Growing Together reports a common understanding of baptism as a sacrament of initiation by which we are incorporated into the church and begin a life-long process of sanctification in the power of the Holy Spirit. For both churches, baptism is unrepeatable. Each church recognises baptisms performed by the other church and the report speaks of baptism as a 'bond of unity between us'. It also talks of a growing together in understanding of confirmation as 'an empowerment by the Holy Spirit for witness and mission' but it omits to mention that Anglican confirmations are not recognised as valid by Roman Catholics. Even so *Growing Together* is forthright in its declaration that 'our fundamental baptismal communion gives us a shared responsibility to witness as fully as possible before the world and to show forth the new life lived by the body of Christ'.

ARCIC I claimed it had achieved 'substantial agreement' in its discussion of the Eucharist and had found ways of expressing the doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice and the presence of Christ in the sacrament in ways that were acceptable to both churches. *Growing Together* reviews previous statements by ARCIC and agrees that, while there is only one sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, this is made sacramentally present here and now by a process of 'remembering' that is much richer than merely thinking back to something that happened a long time ago but involves the bringing of past events into the present. Christ is sacramentally present in the Eucharist to convey the realities of the new creation: 'bread for this life becomes the bread of eternal life'. At the same time Christ's presence cannot be restricted to the elements: he is also present amidst the worshipping congregation and when the Word is proclaimed. The Eucharist is the 'meal of the Kingdom', an anticipation of the new creation promised in the Resurrection.

Although there is a great deal of agreement in the understanding of the Eucharist, movement towards full communion cannot take place because the Roman Catholic Church does not officially accord full recognition to Anglican orders and because it teaches that those who are not in full communion with it may only receive Holy Communion in exceptional circumstances of spiritual need. Anglicans admit baptised believers who are communicant members of 'other Christian communities' to receive Holy Communion. The failure to use the term 'Christian churches' here probably reflects a Roman Catholic refusal to apply this term to other ecclesial bodies. This is an issue the report should have directly addressed.

Questions to consider

Do you think the understanding of Eucharistic sacrifice and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist outlined in this report and the ARCIC documents is familiar to lay people and is used in Anglican teaching about the sacraments?

How can we seek to emphasise our common understanding of baptism and the obligations that follow from this?

Do you agree with the Roman Catholic view that Eucharistic sharing before full communion is reached would make people less eager to see progress towards union or do you think Eucharistic sharing would lead to a real growth in fellowship that would lead naturally to union?

4. Ministry (paragraphs 50 to 61)

Growing Together summarises the understanding of ministry presented in past ARCIC documents and the official elucidations of them. It affirms that the Holy Spirit gives gifts or charisms to all the members of the church to be used both in the service of the Christian community and of the world but it emphasises that the ordained ministry is distinctive. It says that the word ‘priesthood’ is used by way of analogy when it is applied to the priestly ministry of the whole people of God and to the ordained ministry. In some ways Vatican II put this more positively in *Lumen Gentium* when it stated that although the ordained priesthood and the priesthood of the laity are distinctive they are nonetheless ordered to each other and each share in their own proper way in the priesthood of Christ (see *Lumen Gentium* 10). Although *Growing Together* sees the apostolic ministry rooted in the call of Christ and teaches that it is a sign of continuity in the church, it recognises that there is no evidence that the present shape of ministry existed in New Testament times and instead speaks of a ‘providential threefold pattern of the ministry of bishop, presbyter (priest) and deacon emerging from the patterns of ministry in the New Testament, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit’ (paragraph 52).

In describing the ministry of bishops the report stresses their importance as signs of unity and continuity in the church and their responsibility to teach the apostolic faith. A stress on the teaching ministry of the bishop is to be welcomed but perhaps more could be said about the need to ensure that the apostolic faith is preserved and taught in language that is meaningful to the present generation and to the diverse cultures of the world. Commentators on current Anglican views of the episcopal office have often lamented that too many bishops seem to have a managerial understanding of their office, seeing it as their job to keep the show on the road rather than to foster a common Christian mind nourished by prayer, worship, scripture, and traditions (for an example of this criticism see Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner: *The Fate of Communion*). *Growing Together* offers an antidote to this.

Official Roman Catholic teaching on Anglican orders was expressed by Leo XIII and maintains that they are invalid. The report correctly states that this is an obstacle to close relations between the two churches but goes on to argue that any future evaluation of the question would have to take account of the common understanding of the ministry shown in ARCIC documents. It does not mention the presence of Old Catholic bishops at episcopal ordinations in parts of the Anglican Communion. The ordination of women to both the priesthood and the episcopate in a number of Anglican provinces has created a fresh ecumenical difficulty. Discussion of this issue with Roman Catholics has probably been made harder by Pope John Paul II’s ruling that this is not a matter for debate in the Roman Catholic Church. The report of the Eames Commission was clear that Anglicans do not consider themselves able to make a final decision by themselves about the ordination of women.

When they have taken this step, they have done so knowing that the question is still open and will remain so until the development has been received by the wider church.

Questions to consider

Do you think that *Growing Together* devotes enough attention to the ministry of the laity? Is your church doing enough to offer training to the laity?

How do you think bishops should seek to exercise their teaching ministry in the church? How does their teaching ministry differ from that of theologians?

How serious an obstacle to closer ecumenical ties is Rome's refusal to recognise the validity of Anglican orders? Can you see a way forward?

Do you agree with the understanding of ordained ministry advanced in this report? Do you think such an understanding rules out lay presidency at the Eucharist?

5. Authority in the Church (sections 62 – 76)

A fresh and interesting point made in this section is that 'authority has a missionary dimension'. When properly exercised it ensures that the gospel is proclaimed 'in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction'. All Christians are agreed that their primary authority is Jesus Christ. Disputes arise about whether Christ continues to exercise his authority in the church to enable his followers to understand the gospel message and to respond to God's purposes and if so how that authority is exercised. Those Christians who argue that the scriptures are clear and can be understood by every believer with the aid of the Holy Spirit do not see the need for any authoritative guide and interpreter. A number of Anglicans accept this position. Many Christians, however, argue that the meaning of scripture is not always clear and straightforward and that the gospel must constantly be expressed afresh as it comes into contact with new world views. If we are to speak of God continuing to reveal himself to us, there must be a recognised mechanism to enable this to happen.

In the course of church history two forms of authority have particularly commended themselves to Christians: councils of the universal church and the papacy. While it is tempting to suggest that Anglicans have on the whole preferred the first of these, giving special authority to the first four councils of the church, and Roman Catholics the second, the matter is not quite so straightforward. As the acknowledgement that conciliar decisions have to be received by the wider church makes clear, even councils are not meant to decide issues by themselves but to ask what the Holy Spirit is saying to Christian believers. In other words, they are meant to determine the opinion of the *sensus fidelium*, the common faith and mind of the people of God. In recent years, Roman Catholic theologians have made a similar point about the papacy. When he speaks authoritatively, they argue, the Pope is meant to articulate what the Spirit is saying to the faithful. Before the proclamation of the doctrine of the Assumption in 1950, Pius XII consulted the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. It was announced that 98 per cent of Catholic bishops believed the doctrine was possible and opportune.

Growing Together is quite clear that 'every generation has to translate the gospel prophetically'. What it does not explicitly make clear is how the church as a whole grows in its understanding of the gospel as this process takes place in different parts of the world. Black theology, Pacific theology, African theology, liberation theology, Melanesian theology, and many other forms of theology have produced insights that have deepened the understanding of the universal church. Pluralism can enrich the whole body. At the same time, there is need for careful discernment to ensure that the gospel is not misrepresented or distorted. The theology of the 'German church' in

the 1930s or the support for apartheid by churches in South Africa are examples of local theologies that did distort the gospel. Local churches cannot always provide oversight themselves. They need to consult with fellow believers from outside their context who can help the process of discernment. This is why we need primates, synods, and councils.

While Anglicans and Roman Catholics follow a similar approach, there are considerable differences in emphasis. Anglicans are more prepared than Roman Catholics to allow decisions to be made at the local level and there is considerable reluctance to interfere with the autonomy of provinces. Provincial autonomy was upheld by the Lambeth Conference in the case of decisions about the ordination of women bishops but it is currently argued that it should not apply to decisions about sexuality. Many Roman Catholics feel that their church is too centralised and does not consult with local churches.

As the report points out, there is some division among Anglicans about the role of the papacy. Many Anglicans see the need for a universal ministry of oversight in the church and do not think it would be right to invent a new one when the papacy exists. Other Anglicans do not want a papacy functioning in the way the present one does. Others remain committed to provincial autonomy and to what has been described as ‘ecclesiastical unilateralism’. Infallibility and the universal jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome are issues for Anglicans. It is true that there have been few infallible papal pronouncements but, as Hans Kung has pointed out, there is such a thing as ‘creeping infallibility’ so that papal pronouncements are treated in practice as if they were infallible. *Growing Together* states that while Anglicans reject infallibility they do believe in the ‘indefectibility of the church’ so that it is kept faithful to the gospel and the scriptures without having any organ able to make infallible pronouncements. The report does not address the objection that the concept of indefectibility is not of any great worth if the church cannot make definitive pronouncements of the faith it holds. Another issue not addressed by the report is the development of procedures of consultation in a divided church. If a third Vatican Council were to be convened what role in it would non-Roman Catholic ‘ecclesial communities’ be called upon to play?

Questions to consider

‘The dogma of the infallibility of the Bible is not more self-evident than the infallibility of the popes’ (Thomas Henry Huxley). How do you understand the authority of the scriptures? Do you think the meaning of the scriptures is clear and in no need of authoritative interpretation?

Are you happy with the idea of ‘provincial autonomy’ in the Anglican Communion or would you like to see more consultation across the Communion?

Can you see a positive role for the papacy in the wider church? Could Anglicans embrace a reformed papacy?

How do you see the *sensus fidelium* being expressed in the church?

6. Discipleship and Holiness (sections 77 to 87)

In looking at ethics and Christian discipleship *Growing Together* sees much in common between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in their belief in the dignity and rights of the human person, their affirmation that human beings are made for life in community, their stress on the authority of scripture and the use of the natural law in moral reasoning, and their conviction that marriage is a life-long exclusive commitment by a man and a woman. But it also points to differences in teaching about such issues as the precise moment when life in the womb begins, the possibility of divorce and remarriage, and contraception. Given the fact that both churches use scripture and natural law

in their moral reasoning, it is interesting to ask why the divergence occurs. Could it be because in Anglicanism lay people are usually involved in formulating documents and policy in synods? Opinion polls in Western countries show that large numbers of lay people in the Roman Catholic Church disagree with their church's stand on contraception and even abortion.

Growing Together points to a wide measure of agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics on social teaching. The publication of the *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine* has made available an important summary of Roman Catholic social teaching. The use of the term 'social doctrine' suggests that such teaching is meant to have authority and to be taken seriously by church members.

Recently there has been debate in the Roman Catholic Church in the US about a matter not mentioned in *Growing Together*: the extent to which elected representatives who are Roman Catholics are obliged to follow their church's teaching when voting on such matters as abortion or civil partnerships. Depending on the decision of local bishops, some politicians have faced excommunication. Anglicans are likely to feel such a policy violates the conscience of the elected representative and runs the danger that the church will be seen to be trying to force them to do its bidding. Most Christians agree that faith should influence political decisions and that religion cannot be banned from the public square but more thought needs to be given about how Christians should allow their beliefs to influence their views on social and political questions. Catholic bishops have used appeals to the natural law as binding on all people to justify political interventions designed to prevent stem cell research or recognition of same-sex partnerships. Against them it has been objected that reasonable people can disagree about what the natural law actually requires.

The rather loose statement in paragraph 84 that 'war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ' could give the impression that Christians are committed to pacifism. Many Christians believe that in a fallen world wars are sometimes unavoidable either in self-defence or to uphold justice.

Questions to consider

Do you think it is possible to speak of a 'natural law' when people who believe in the concept come to different conclusions about such issues as birth control?

Do you think there is sufficient agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics for them to make a common stand on social and moral issues?

Are you familiar with the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church expressed in such documents as *Rerum Novarum* (1891), *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), *Pacem in Terris* (1963), *Laborem Exercens* (1981), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991)?

Do you see the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches offering a prophetic witness in your society? How often are they able to do this together?

7 The Blessed Virgin Mary (paragraphs 88 to 92)

Anglican attitudes to Mary vary a good deal. As the report clearly states 'Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that there is only one mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ, and reject any interpretation of the role of Mary that obscures this affirmation' (paragraph 89). It summarises an understanding of the controversial doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption reached in the ARCIC document *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*. Many Anglicans will be disappointed in what is said about the practice of asking Mary and the saints for their intercession.

Although it is acknowledged some Anglicans do this and it is said not to be ‘communion-dividing’ no positive explanation of the practice is provided. Anglicans who ask Mary and the saints for their prayers do so because they believe the church is a communion which embraces the living and the dead. God wants us to pray for each other and to ask each other for prayer because this is a way of binding us all together in love. This is part of the mystery of intercessory prayer. We do not ask Mary and the saints for their prayers because we fear to go directly to God any more that we ask our friends to pray for us for a similar reason. We ask them to pray for us because this links us closer together in fellowship and communion. God wills to help us through the petitions of other people. Mary and the saints are examples and role models, sources of inspiration and encouragement. They are also friends who stand beside us, fellow disciples who support us on our pilgrimage. No Christian is obliged to ask Mary and the saints for their prayers but the custom is a powerful reminder of the nature of the church as communion.

Questions for consideration

The report says that devotion to Mary and invocation of the saints is ‘unfamiliar’ or ‘alien’ to many Anglicans. Do you think we have anything to learn from such devotion?

Could you conceive of joint devotions to Mary and the saints between your congregation and a neighbouring Catholic congregation?

Do you think that *Growing Together* does justice to the idea of Mary as a disciple? What does the New Testament tell us about this?

PART TWO: Towards Unity and Common Mission

After summarising the faith Anglicans and Roman Catholics hold in common and being honest about continuing difference, the bishops of IARCCUM go on to ask how their common faith can be expressed in action. Suggestions are made under four headings.

1. Visible Expressions of our Shared Faith (paragraphs 100 to 103)

All of these suggestions are extremely valuable. There is much merit in the suggestion of joint programmes for baptism preparation and the production of shared catechetical material. No mention is made of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RICA) which is more common in Roman Catholic than Anglican churches though some Anglican parishes have adopted this kind of programme. This is an area where Anglicans might usefully learn from Roman Catholics. The issue of conversions from one church to another is not touched upon but there are ways in which these could be seen in a positive light. Very often converts will say that their life in the church they are leaving has prepared them to take the new step. It is important that conversions are not seen as ‘betrayals’ or causes of bitterness.

The report is right to commend various forms of ‘spiritual ecumenism’ such as joint celebrations of daily prayer and non-communicating attendance at each other’s Eucharists as well as public prayer in both churches for Catholic and Anglican bishops and church leaders, including the Pope. Joint retreats could be encouraged. As the practice has grown in the Anglican Communion of twinning dioceses in different parts of the world, it would be good if local Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses could develop twinned relationships, perhaps expressed in some form of covenant.

2. Joint Study of our Shared Faith (paragraphs 104 to 107)

The report makes suggestions about shared study, including bible studies, joint workshops for preachers, and study of the ARCIC documents. The increased use of sabbaticals by clergy in parts of the Anglican Communion opens the possibility of using such periods for ecumenical study and staying in a Roman Catholic monastery or seminary. There are already many parts of the world where Anglican seminaries and theological colleges work closely with Roman Catholic seminaries but more could be done to foster co-operation between local, diocesan training programmes. Common Lent courses could be devised. Anglicans ought not to be afraid to recognise those areas where they can learn from Roman Catholics. In many parts of the world, the Roman Catholic Church has been at the forefront in promoting inculturation, particularly inculturation of the liturgy. Anglicans have sometimes lagged behind in this area though they often have more freedom to implement change than Roman Catholics. Joint discussions of inculturation and local theologies could be fruitful.

3. Co-operation in Ministry (paragraphs 108 to 117)

It has to be said that when it comes to proposals for co-operation in ministry the proposals made in this report are not very far-reaching and may fall short of what is already happening. Among the suggestions are the inclusion of Anglican bishops in *ad limina* visits to Rome, co-operation in training, strengthening ties between religious orders, sharing of skills by lay ministers, and more consultation about pastoral measures. In many hospital chaplaincies in Britain, Anglicans and Roman Catholics already work together in teams. Could this model of joint pastoral work, which respects norms for Eucharistic sharing, be capable of wider application?

4. Shared Witness in the World (paragraphs 118 to 125)

The report makes the important suggestion that where Anglicans and Roman Catholics have been guilty of contributing to communal strife there should be demonstrations of repentance and of a determination to work together. Although the deep causes of so-called 'religious strife' are often ethnic, cultural or economic, churches do wrong when they allow religious affiliation to be used as a badge of tribal identity in a conflict and all religious leaders need to be aware of the danger of this happening. There is considerable danger of this happening at the present time between Christians and the followers of other faiths. Joint action to promote interfaith dialogue by Roman Catholics and Anglicans is not mentioned in the report but it could be a fruitful field of activity. Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians are not divided by denominational allegiance on this question. There is a similar spectrum of views in both churches and it should be possible for leaders from the two churches to forge a common approach. As in all areas of common witness in the world, attempts should be made to involve other churches and denominations where this is possible.

In Europe the end of Christendom and the growing realisation that Christian values will not shape public policy unless Christians speak up for them is likely to foster greater co-operation between Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic churches. The days of church establishment and privileged access to the corridors of power are passing. But it is important that scope is not given to extremists and that the mainline churches contribute to public debate in a sensitive and responsible manner. In the US there is concern about the influence of the Religious Right. On certain issues such as abortion and the blessing of same-sex unions Roman Catholic bishops have appeared to side with the Right. Other Christian groups may need to keep pushing the bishops to consider a wider social and political agenda. In Africa Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops can work together to promote good governance. However there may need to be further dialogue about the appropriate form of Christian witness in politics (see comments in Part One B section 6). Critics say it is easy for church leaders to issue statements or press releases. Perhaps more thought needs to be given to

joint practical initiatives to tackle important issues such as youth crime, ethnic tension, AIDS, or deprivation.

The report encourages joint participation in evangelism, co-operation in youth ministry and shared Roman Catholic and Anglican schools. It also refers to the possibility of learning from new groups and movements. Some of the new groups operating in the Roman Catholic Church such as *Opus Dei* have a reputation for conservatism (though not all of them). But it is important that secular institutes and other bodies that attempt to equip lay people for witness and service in the world be drawn into the ecumenical dialogue with Anglicans. Anglicans should be ready to learn from them. Some may be ready to follow Cursillo and open their ranks to Anglicans. Nothing is said in the report about co-operation in the use of the internet and the mass media. In parts of Africa there is a big demand for religious videos and cassettes and the expansion of television opens up opportunities for the churches. In Papua New Guinea the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches have been major players in the establishment of the Religious Television Association to make programmes for local television.

Questions for consideration

How far-reaching do you consider the suggestion made in the four sections of Part Two? Where would you like to see further progress?

What guidelines do you think would be appropriate for a shared Roman Catholic – Anglican School?

How far have Anglican and Roman Catholic leaders been able to offer a common witness in the society in which you live? On which issues do you think it is important for them to speak out?

What problems and opportunities can you see in developing shared pastoral ministry?

C. CONCLUSION (paragraphs 126 to 135)

David Bosch, a well-known Presbyterian theologian from South Africa, described mission as having to do with the ‘crossing of frontiers’. ‘It describes the total task God has set for the salvation of the world’, he wrote. ‘It is the task of the Church in movement, the Church that lives for others, the Church that is concerned not only for herself, that turns herself ‘inside out’ towards the world.’ (David Bosch: *Witness to the World*, London, 1980, page 17). He went on to write that

Mission takes place where the Church, in her total involvement in the world and the comprehensiveness of her message, bears testimony in the form of a servant, with reference to unbelief, exploitation, discrimination, and violence, but also with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation, and righteousness. (ibid page 18)

In Appendix I we are given references to both Anglican and Roman Catholic perspectives on mission. Both churches see that unity is important for mission. It is not only co-operation and working together that are important. The unity of the church should, in the words of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, ‘point to the sort of life God intends for the whole of humanity’. It should be a ‘foretaste of God’s kingdom’. This makes the search for organic unity and the restoration of full communion a pressing one. It will take place in a number of ways, including dialogue on theological issues that are dispute. But Christians can also grow closer by offering a common witness to the world and learning to work together over a range of areas. The dilemma confronting IARCCUM is to know how far we can go in this direction without compromising our basic beliefs.

The refusal of the Roman Catholic Church to recognise Anglican orders is undoubtedly a major stumbling block.

Perhaps both churches need to reflect on the fact that although there are serious divisions within their own ranks they have nonetheless so far managed to remain united despite some minor schisms. Anglicans are learning to stay together despite divisions about the ordination of women and sexuality, and Roman Catholic ranks are split by the same issues. It is sometimes said that the main divisions are no longer between the churches but within the churches. Church leaders, ecumenists, and theologians should reflect more seriously on this and ask what lessons it has to teach us.

The Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches referred to ecumenism as a 'gift and calling'. Those who despair of an ecumenical winter need to remember this. Unity is something we are called to pursue but it is also God's gift to his church. The Holy Spirit takes us by surprise. The changes that began to influence the Church in the 1960s were not widely expected. Instead of despairing about ecumenism, we ought to keep up our efforts to work with Christians of other churches, both Roman Catholics and other denominations, confident that the Holy Spirit is at work to bring Our Lord's wish that his followers may be one to fulfilment. In John 17 Jesus prays that his followers may all be one. 'As you, Father, 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' (John 17.21, NRSV). Christ asks that the communion of the church on earth may be a reflection of the life of the Trinity. When that prayer is answered, the church truly will be 'communion in mission'.