

# **Growth in Communion**

Report of the  
Anglican - Lutheran  
International Working Group

2000-2002

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## **The nature and status of the present report**

This Report “Growth in Communion” is the outcome of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group which met for the first time in February 2000, appointed by the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation, and concluded its work in May 2002. The background and mandate of the Working Group are described in the Introduction.

The Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation have sponsored this bilateral Working Group. They are not, however, responsible for the content of the report and its recommendations. The descriptions and analyses that the report provides, and the recommendations that are made, are presented to the representative bodies of the two world communions for their consideration and possible action.

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### I. Introduction

- 1 Anglicans and Lutherans began formal conversations at the world level in 1970. While Anglicans and Lutherans had no history of mutual condemnation or recrimination, difficulties in union negotiations involving Lutherans and Anglicans, especially in Asia and Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, indicated the need for such conversations. That first dialogue resulted in the Pullach Report of 1972, which surveyed the range of issues affecting Anglican-Lutheran relations. While discovering extensive agreement, the dialogue also discovered significant differences over apostolicity and episcopal ministry. The Report urged both closer cooperation and continuing dialogue.
- 2 The Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation convened a Joint Working Group in 1975 to review responses to the Pullach Report and to chart further work. The Group suggested that regional dialogues be pursued in Europe, Africa, and North America. Dialogue took place in the first and third of these regions over the next eight years.
- 3 A new Joint Working Group was convened in 1983. Their Cold Ash Report surveyed the state of Lutheran-Anglican relations and explored the concept of 'full communion' (cf. section III, B) as a description of the life together sought in Anglican-Lutheran ecumenical efforts. They also called for the creation of an Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee (ALICC), with a mandate to foster dialogue at the world-wide level and to help make the results of the various national and regional Anglican-Lutheran dialogues contribute to progress elsewhere.
- 4 Between 1986 and 1996, ALICC (later renamed the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission) sponsored consultations on *episcopate* and the

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episcopate, leading to the Niagara Report (1988), and on the diaconate, leading to the Hanover Report (1996). It also sponsored a series of conferences to further Anglican-Lutheran relations in Eastern and Southern Africa. Its work contributed significantly to the breakthroughs in Anglican-Lutheran relations that have recently occurred in Northern Europe (the Porvoo Common Statement), the USA (Called to Common Mission), and Canada (the Waterloo Declaration).

- 5 Following the 1997 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation and the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the present Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group was appointed. It met for the first time in February 2000. Its terms of reference are:
  - a. *To monitor the developments and progress in Anglican-Lutheran relations in the various regions of the world and, where appropriate, encourage steps toward the goal of visible unity.*
  - b. *To review the characteristics and theological rationales of current regional and national dialogues and agreements, particularly with reference to the concept of unity and to the understanding of apostolicity and episcopal ministry. This review would include an evaluation of their consistency and coherence with each other and with Anglican-Lutheran international agreed statements and would take note of issues of wider ecumenical compatibility.*
  - c. *To explore the implications of regional developments for deepening and extending the global relationships between the Anglican and Lutheran Communion.*
  - d. *To propose forms of closer contact and co-operation between the international instruments of both communions, in specific projects and programmes and in addressing practical issues.*
  - e. *To advise whether an Anglican Lutheran International Commission should be appointed and to recommend the issues that require further dialogue.*

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Over three meetings (Virginia, USA 2000; Skálholt, Iceland 2001; Porto Alegre, Brazil 2002), the International Working Group has pursued its work under these terms of reference. This report gives a picture of the present state of Anglican-Lutheran relations, analyses issues raised by the present relations between us, and recommends future action.

## II. Review of Progress

### A. General Factors

#### a) Practical Steps

- 6 *The Niagara Report* sets out four practical steps by which Anglicans and Lutherans can realise full communion.

*Step 1: Regional or national churches recognise each other as sharing the same faith and hence as being a 'true Church of the Gospel'.*

*Step 2: Create provisional structures to express the degree of unity so far achieved and promote further growth. Examples of how to further growth included among other things: eucharistic sharing, regular meetings of church leaders, invitation to speak at each other's synods, creating common agencies, joint theological education and mission programmes, limited interchange of ministers, and the twinning of congregations.*

*Step 3: The exploration of changing particular practices with respect to episcopate and the full recognition of ministries*

*Step 4: Public declaration and celebration of full communion, after which 'joint consecration and installation of bishops and ordinations of new ministers should be possible.'*

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### b) Common Witness and Action

- 7 As the various regions began their mutual dialogues (some having begun long before Niagara), other issues emerged as important. Niagara concentrated on the issue of *episcopate* in relation to the mission of the Church because ALICC had asked it to do so, but regions quickly identified other areas of concern. Picking up the theme of mission from Niagara, some churches shifted the focus more towards common witness and action in the world than on issues of ministry *per se*, although ministry questions have historically been the most neuralgic between the two communions.

### c) Contexts

- 8 Because Lutherans and Anglicans have approached unity on a regional or national basis, the context of their conversations has influenced the style, content and outcome of agreements. The differing patterns of exercising *episcopate* among the Lutheran churches have meant that in some places mutual recognition of ordained ministries is easier than in others. The churches which are signatories to both the Meissen and Reuilly agreements in Europe include Anglican churches on the one hand and Lutheran, United and Reformed churches on the other. The pressing needs of mission have made some churches more interested in getting on with common projects than in addressing questions of order. The differences in demographics and geography have also played a role: for the state churches of Europe, it is possible to imagine one episcopal ministry in each place, but for the churches outside Europe, overlapping jurisdictions will be a reality for the foreseeable future.

### B. Regional Agreements

- 9 The various regional agreements, where agreements have been entered into or where Churches are engaged in active dialogue, will be examined with respect to 8 factors:
  - a. context
  - b. origin of the dialogue
  - c. agreement in faith and ecclesial recognition (Step 1)
  - d. current state of development (Steps 2-4)
  - e. commitment to common mission
  - f. definition of proximate and ultimate goals
  - g. particular issues arising from the context
  - h. mutual accountability within the agreements

Issues of possible anomalies raised by the regional agreements, the particular terminology with respect to the goal of unity and matters of coherence with other dialogues and within the two World Communions are addressed later in the report.

- 10 In the analysis which will follow in Section III, our report focuses in greater depth on the most mature agreements: *The Meissen Agreement* (Church of England and the German Evangelical churches, 1988), *The Porvoo Common Statement* (The British and Irish Anglican churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches in the Nordic and Baltic nations, 1992), *The Reuilly Common Statement* (the British and Irish Anglican churches and the Lutheran and Reformed Church in France, 1997), *Called to Common Mission* (ELCA and ECUSA, 1999), *The Waterloo Declaration* (The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, 1999), and *Covenanting for Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation* (Anglicans and Lutherans in Australia; draft proposal of September, 1999) In addition we took note of earlier documentation dealing with eucharistic sharing in North America, prior to the present agreements (*Agreement on Interim Eucharistic Sharing* 1982).

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### a) AFRICA

#### *Context*

11 In Africa there are around 36.7 million Anglicans and 10.6 million Lutherans. Anglicans and Lutherans find themselves together in places where Anglican and Lutheran missions coincide. Thus there is cooperation between Anglicans and Lutherans in Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and South Africa. The goal of a pan-African agreement is challenged by the geography of a vast continent, the differing histories, and the cost of gathering people.

#### *Origin of Dialogue*

12 Formal dialogue was encouraged by ALIC, beginning with an African Anglican/Lutheran Consultation on Ecclesiology in Harare in 1992. Most recently, the All Africa Anglican Lutheran Commission was established, which held its first meeting in Nairobi in April 2001.

#### *Agreement in Faith/Ecclesial Recognition*

13 'Both Anglicans and Lutherans belong to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which we confess in the Nicene Creed.' Although the Nairobi report states agreement in faith, there has not been a formal commitment to mutual ecclesial recognition (step 1 of Niagara).

#### *Steps to Communion (Steps 2 to 4 in Niagara)*

- 14 The Commission proposes that:
- a. in countries where Anglican-Lutheran cooperation is already experienced this should be intensified and nurtured towards official relationships of communion;
  - b. in countries where Anglicans and Lutherans coexist but where there are no bilateral relationships between the two churches, immediate contact be encouraged between the appropriate authorities at the national level to consider ways of cooperation;
  - c. in both these cases, the following steps be taken by the churches involved:

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- i. to undertake education at grass-roots level to bring about knowledge and understanding of each church as to history, liturgy, doctrine, church order and polity;
- ii. to exchange visits, extend mutual invitations to each other's synods, hold discussions, and engage in other forms of getting to know each other;
- iii. to plan and carry out together joint theological education, lay training, women's and children's programmes as a way of deepening cooperation between the two churches;
- iv. to take formal action in these matters at provincial/synodical level as soon as the time is right.

Some of these projects are envisaged in Step 2 of Niagara, but there is not yet a call to formalise eucharistic sharing which in many cases already occurs informally.

### *Commitment to Common Mission*

- 15 Mission for the sake of the healing of the world, and for justice, is the context of the conversations in Africa. “The tough realities that impact on the daily life of the churches have been central in these discussions. Anglicans and Lutherans in Africa are convinced that it is in taking these realities into account in a common, ecumenical way, that the churches will be strengthened, both in service and in witness to Christian unity.” (Nairobi §4)

### *Definition of Proximate and Ultimate Goals*

- 16 Proximate Goals: “The vision which guides our deliberation is that of a united African Church with an African identity, in which Anglicans and Lutherans are in full communion and visible unity with one another. We look forward to a unique liturgical unity so that we may worship God as one church. We hope for a spirit of generosity, which will accommodate our cultural and regional differences, so that we can celebrate our God-given diversity. We commit ourselves to the proclamation and teaching of the Gospel as our primary task. We hope

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to foster ecumenical fellowship throughout all levels of our churches and to be steadfast in the tasks of evangelism, mission and social activism as imperatives of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ". (Report of the Interim Committee of the African Anglican Lutheran Consultation, Harare, 1999)

- 17 Ultimate Goal: "As there is essentially only one ecumenical movement, an issue at stake in this bilateral dialogue is not only how this particular dialogue can contribute to a closer communion between the churches involved, but also how it can serve the wider cause of Christian unity. The question must be kept alive, therefore, how the positive developments taking place between Anglicans and Lutherans in Africa can contribute to Christian unity in Africa and indeed in the world at large." (Nairobi §5)

### *Particular Issues Arising from the Context*

- 18 The chief commitment is to mutual cooperation and action to meet the pressing social needs of African society. To this end, education about one another's churches is essential. Doctrinal questions, and questions of order, have not emerged at this point as central to the relationship.

### *Mutual Accountability within the Agreements*

- 19 A Commission has been established for all of Africa, which will stimulate action between the churches at the national level. At this stage, cooperation is being encouraged in education, theological education, visits, invitations to each other's synods, and pastoral work. It is premature to speak of mutual accountability.

## b) AUSTRALIA

### *Context*

- 20 In Australia there are around 94,000 Lutherans and 4,000,000 Anglicans.

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### *Origin of Dialogue*

21 Dialogue between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Lutheran Church in Australia began in 1972 and has produced combined statements on the eucharist and on ministry, agreed statements on baptism and on *episcopate* and unity, as well as information and guidance regarding Anglican-Lutheran marriages. Some practical cooperation is already in place, from consultation at the Heads of Churches level to local pastoral arrangements for eucharistic hospitality in special circumstances.

### *Agreement in Faith/Ecclesial Recognition*

22 These churches identify the following areas in which they believe and practice a shared faith: the Bible, God's will and commandment, the Gospel, the creeds, liturgical worship, the church, Baptism, the Lord's Supper (Eucharist), membership in the church, pastoral office and ordained ministry, orders of ministry and the episcopal office, a common hope and mission. Their agreements are set out in Appendix 1 of 'Common Ground'. The Covenant, if adopted, would declare "We recognise each other as churches that, despite our failings, stand in the continuity of apostolic faith and ministry" (Step 1 of Niagara)

### *Steps Toward Communion (Steps 2 to 4 of Niagara)*

23 In January 2001 the Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue in Australia published 'Common Ground: Covenanting for Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation'. It is "a plan for the future on the basis of common confession and practice. It is not a declaration of church union but a solemn pledge to walk together towards that goal." No formal decision has been made by the churches involved to date.

24 Under this covenant each church would be able to invite and welcome the members of the other church in a particular locality to share in Holy Communion and to receive pastoral care according to need (Step 2 of Niagara). Particular local agreements are to be negotiated at the

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level of the diocese and district, and are to be made on the following basis:

- a. Joint public profession, by participating congregations, of the catholic faith as contained in the Nicene Creed.
- b. An undertaking to respect the distinctive traditions enshrined in the Augsburg Confession and the Book of Common Prayer with the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.
- c. Joint commissioning of clergy by the local Anglican bishop and Lutheran president.

### *Commitment to Common Mission*

25 ‘A common hope and mission’ is identified as one of the areas of shared faith believed and practised (Common Ground §3.1). This is articulated in Appendix 2 §19: “We are called to work now for the furtherance of justice, to seek peace and to care for the created world, and to live responsibly in all areas of life. The obligations of the Kingdom are to govern our life in the church and our concern for the world.” In the Covenant, the churches would “pledge to work together to develop joint participation in mission and witness” (§4.1).

### *Definition of Proximate and Ultimate Goals*

26 Proximate Goals: The document has been presented to the churches in the hope that they “can affirm the stated agreement in faith and practice as a sufficient basis for negotiating a national covenant for eucharistic hospitality and a recognition of each Church’s ministry. This agreement would first be implemented at the local level for the pastoral care of our members.” (Foreword to *Common Ground*)

27 Ultimate Goal: The final goal has so far been described as “a concordat for full communion and reconciliation of ministries”. (Foreword to *Common Ground*)

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### *Particular Issues Arising from the Context*

28 There are different emphases in the two churches in Australia on matters of confession, ministry and *episcopate*. The Common Ground statement is a theological document, which provides a basis for further work. It appears to be the basis for negotiating a national covenant, rather than a covenant itself.

### *Mutual Accountability within the Agreement*

29 The document in circulation for study is the basis for the preparation of a covenant between the Churches. It is premature to speak of mutual accountability.

## c) BRAZIL

### *Context*

30 In Brazil there are around 714,000 Lutherans and 103,021 Anglicans. Brazilian Lutherans and Anglicans are both participants in minority churches in a predominantly Roman Catholic country. They have been active participants alongside other churches for many years in the *Conselho Nacional das Igrejas Cristãs* (CONIC, National Council of Christian Churches).

### *Origin of Dialogue*

31 The National Anglican-Lutheran Committee met from 1984 to 1991. They measured their common stance by the Niagara Report of 1987. Steps are presently being taken to reactivate the dialogue.

### *Agreement in Faith/Ecclesial Recognition*

32 The two churches 'accept the authority of the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testament and ... read both liturgically during the ecclesiastical calendar'. They 'accept the Creeds of the Ancient Church ... and confess the same basic Trinitarian and Christological doctrine, for which these Creeds are testimony. So, we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true man and that God is

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authentically identified as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’ (Declaration of the National Anglican-Lutheran Committee). There does not appear at this point to be a call for the churches to recognise each other as churches of the Gospel.

### *Steps Toward Communion (Steps 2 to 4 of Niagara)*

33 The Committee made a ‘Declaration’ in 1991 which identifies agreement on common faith, similar orders of liturgy, baptism, eucharist, the Gospel, justification, the Church, the mission of the Church, baptismal and ordained ministry, the episcopate, and hope for the kingdom of God. No formal decision has been made by either Church involved. A program of joint theological education for Lutherans and Anglicans is to begin next year.

### *Commitment to Common Mission*

34 “This is not only a doctrinal dialogue, but a human dialogue about action on issues. The people of Brazil are not interested in asking for confessions of faith, but about how Christians live the faith. The call is to act for transformation of society.”

### *Definition of Proximate and Ultimate Goals*

35 At this point, there is no definition of either proximate or ultimate goals.

### *Particular Issues Arising from the Context*

36 As the dialogue is in a preliminary stage of development particular issues which will need to be addressed have not yet been identified.

### *Mutual Accountability within the Agreement*

37 The relationship is in an early stage of development. The commitment is to work together in mission, service and education.

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### d) CANADA

#### *Context*

- 38 Lutheran churches in Canada emerged from many different settlements from all the European countries with Lutheran identities. They operated with different ecclesiologies, depending on the tradition of the country of origin, and the influence of pietist movements. After a century of smaller mergers, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was formed in 1986. As part of the merger agreement, the 5 synods and the national church installed persons in oversight with the title of bishop. There are approximately 200,000 Lutherans in the ELCIC. The Lutheran Church, Canada, about one third the size of the ELCIC, is affiliated with The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in the USA and is not party to ecumenical agreements.
- 39 The Anglican Church of Canada has about 3 million adherents according to census identification, but is closer to 800,000 in terms of active members. The difference in size, and geographical distribution of Anglicans and Lutherans, have been factors in the relationship. For example, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, in which 18% of Anglicans live, has no Lutheran congregations, while on the Prairies, both Lutherans and Anglicans are fairly evenly matched in numbers, albeit in small, scattered, and diminishing communities.

#### *Origin of Dialogue*

- 40 Inspired by activity in the U.S., dialogue in Canada began in 1983. The first set of meetings (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue I) issued in a Report and Recommendations which included agreed statements on Justification, the Eucharist, Apostolicity, and the Ordained Ministry and called for an interim sharing of the eucharist. This agreement was entered into in 1989.

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### *Agreement in Faith/Ecclesial Recognition*

- 41 On the basis of the theological work of CLAD I, the two churches ‘acknowledge that both our churches share in the common confession of the apostolic faith’. (Step 1 of Niagara).

### *Steps Toward Communion (Steps 2 to 4 of Niagara)*

- 42 CLAD II engaged in a major study of *The Niagara Report*, called for the removing of any impediments for members to be received into each other’s church, encouraged local congregations to take on joint actions in mission and service, made provision for clergy to serve in each other’s churches in special situations, and called for the preparation of a proposal for full communion. (Step 2 of Niagara)
- 43 *The Waterloo Declaration* was prepared by a Joint Working Group. Waterloo makes a series of acknowledgements and affirmations leading to the recognition and interchangeability of ordained ministries, and a series of commitments to live out the reality of full communion (Step 3 of Niagara). In July 2001 it was overwhelmingly approved by the governing bodies of both churches, and on July 8, 2001 the churches entered full communion by the signing of Waterloo at a joint eucharist (Step 4 of Niagara).

### *Commitment to Common Mission*

- 44 Waterloo §1 begins with a reference to John 17, where Jesus prayed for unity “so that the world may believe”. “Christians have begun to see the fulfilment of Jesus’ words as they unite in action to address the needs of local and global communities.” Commitments 5 and 6 of Waterloo call for the establishment of ‘appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, mission and service’ and ‘regular consultation and collaboration among members of our churches at all levels to promote the formulation and adoption of covenants for common work in mission and ministry, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information on theological, pastoral, and mission matters.’

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### *Definition of Proximate and Ultimate Goals*

- 45 Proximate: Full communion is described as “a relationship between two distinct churches or communions in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognising the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship communicant members of each church would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other and there would be freedom of ordained ministers to officiate sacramentally in either church. Specifically in our context we understand this to include transferability of members; mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries; freedom to use each other's liturgies; freedom to participate in each other's ordinations and installations of clergy, including bishops; and structures for consultation to express, strengthen and enable our common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.”
- 46 Ultimate: Commitment 9 of Waterloo pledges the churches ‘to continue to work together for the full visible unity of the whole Church of God’.

### *Particular Issues Arising from the Context*

- 47 The main issue on which Waterloo focused was episcopal ministry and finding common ground in understanding the relationship of *episcopate* and the apostolicity of the church. There were particular ways in which this issue had been treated in Canada which made it possible for a broader interpretation of the phrase ‘episcopally ordained’ to be applied within the parameters of Anglican Canon Law, thus eliminating any canonical requirement for the re-ordination of ordained Lutheran ministers.

### *Mutual Accountability within the Agreement*

- 48 Commitment 5 of Waterloo commits the churches “to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, mission and service”. Commitment 6 is “to encourage regular consultation and collaboration among members of

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our churches at all levels, to promote the formulation and adoption of covenants for common work in mission and ministry, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information on theological, pastoral, and mission matters”. Commitment 7 is “to hold joint meetings of national, regional and local decision-making bodies wherever practicable”. Commitment 8 establishes “a Joint Commission to nurture our growth in communion, to coordinate the implementation of this Declaration, and report to the decision-making bodies of both our churches”.

### e) EUROPE

- 49 The home territory of both Lutheran and Anglican churches, Europe has 3 different agreements among them. Churches signatory to the Porvoo Agreement “value...the sign of the historic episcopal succession”. (Porvoo §57). The churches signatory to Meissen and Reuilly do not share a common view of the episcopate, and the agreements are further complicated by the presence in these dialogues of Reformed and United churches.
- 50 The Anglican jurisdictions involved in dialogue with Lutherans in Europe are as follows:
- The Church of England (Porvoo, Meissen and Reuilly): 43 dioceses in England and 1 in mainland Europe; 27,000,000 members
  - The Scottish Episcopal Church (Porvoo, Reuilly): 7 Dioceses; 53,000 members
  - The Church of Ireland (Porvoo, Reuilly): 12 dioceses in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; 376,000 members
  - The Church in Wales (Porvoo, Reuilly): 6 dioceses; 90,300 members.
- 51 The Lutheran Churches which have been involved in dialogue with Anglicans in Europe are as follows:

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- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Porvoo): 8 dioceses; 4,600,118 members
  - The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland (Porvoo): 1 diocese with 2 suffragan sees; 247,245 members
  - The Church of Norway (Porvoo): 11 dioceses; 3,800,000 members
  - The Church of Sweden (Porvoo): 13 dioceses; 7,399,915 members
  - The Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church (Porvoo): 1 diocese; 200,000 members
  - The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania (Porvoo): 1 diocese; 30,000 members
  - The Evangelical Church in Germany (Meissen): a communion of 24 member churches, most Landeskirchen or territorial churches, some are Lutheran, some reformed and some united): 26,800,00 members
  - The Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine (Reuilly): 7 inspectorates; 195,000 members
  - The Evangelical Lutheran Church of France (Reuilly): 2 inspectorates; 40,000 members.
- 52 The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia both participated in the Porvoo conversations but have not as yet signed the agreement. The Reuilly Agreement includes two Reformed Churches: The Reformed Church in France and the Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine.
- 53 In Europe there is a major shift from the time of the Reformation when it was assumed that virtually all Christians (apart from dissenters) were members of the state church towards a new pluralist context which is both multi-faith and secular. Anglicans and Lutherans do not share the same territory to any large extent, but there are overlapping jurisdictions. Anglicans have congregations in the Nordic and Baltic countries, and Lutherans – some signatory to agreements and some not – have congregations in Britain and Ireland.

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54 Further complicating the situation is the existence of several overlapping Anglican jurisdictions – ECUSA and the Church of England both have parishes in Europe, while the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church and the Lusitanian Church, both member churches of the Anglican Communion, are now also signatories to Porvoo. There is discussion of a ‘Communion of Porvoo Churches’ which is composed of member churches of two other Communion – the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation. At the same time, there is a commitment to bring about one episcopal pattern for Europe, and talks are proceeding among the participants and the Old Catholic churches.

### *Origin of Dialogue*

55 **Meissen:** Dialogue was initiated in 1983, the 5<sup>th</sup> centenary of the birth of Martin Luther. At public celebrations, the Archbishop of Canterbury proposed that closer relations be established between the Church of England and the Evangelical Churches in both German republics (GDR and FGR). Formal dialogue began in 1987 and concluded with the Meissen Common Statement in 1988.

56 **Porvoo:** A series of Theological Conversations took place from 1909-1951 between Anglicans and Lutherans in the Nordic and Baltic region. These led to various interim agreements in the 1930s and 1950s. New conversations were held between 1989-1992 on the joint initiative of the Archbishops of Canterbury and Uppsala. The aim was to move forward from the previous existing piecemeal agreements (step 2 of Niagara), to resolve long-standing difficulties about episcopacy and succession, and on the basis of a sufficient consensus on the faith, sacramental life and ministry, to establish communion (step 4 of Niagara) and share a common mission.

57 **Reuilly:** The Lutheran and Reformed Churches in France were excited by the possibilities modelled in Meissen. The different circumstances

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of the churches in France made it difficult for them to simply sign on to Meissen, and a separate dialogue was called for in 1989. Thus in 1992, a dialogue was initiated between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

### *Agreement in Faith/Ecclesial Recognition*

- 58 **Meissen:** Building on *The Niagara Report*, chapter 3, the Meissen Common Statement makes 10 common statements of agreed faith: on the Scriptures, the Creeds and Christology, the liturgy, baptism, eucharist, justification, the Church, mission, *episcopate*, and hope for the kingdom of God. This was largely taken from *The Niagara Report*.
- 59 The Declaration, on the basis of this shared faith, “acknowledges one another’s churches as churches belonging to the One Holy and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God”. (Step 1 of Niagara).
- 60 **Porvoo:** The Porvoo Common Statement makes statements on the same 10 topics as Meissen, although in a slightly rearranged and expanded form. On the basis of this agreement, the Porvoo Declaration makes the same statement of recognition as Meissen (Step 1 of Niagara).
- 61 **Reuilly:** The Reuilly Common Statement makes statements on the same 10 topics as Meissen, in the same order as Porvoo, but somewhat changed in wording. On the basis of this agreement, the Reuilly Declaration, made on July 3, 2001 makes the same statement of recognition as Meissen (Step 1 of Niagara). Some sections are enhanced from Meissen: ‘The Apostolicity of the Church and Ministry’ (section VI) and ‘Wider Ecumenical Commitment’ (section IX, B.)

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### *Steps Towards Communion (Steps 2 to 4 of Niagara)*

- 62 **Meissen:** The agreement was approved in 1991 by the General Synod of the Church of England, by the responsible bodies of the Federation of the Evangelical Churches and its member churches and by the EKD and its member churches. (By the time of the signing of the agreement, Germany had been reunited). The stage which was reached was stage 2 of Niagara, involving the establishment of provisional structures and the commitment to common life and mission. In terms of mutual recognition of ministry Meissen encouraged the ordained ministers of the churches, in accordance with their rules, “to share in the celebration of the eucharist in a way which advances beyond mutual eucharistic hospitality but which falls short of the full interchangeability of ministers.” (Meissen 17 B vi).
- 63 **Porvoo:** This agreement built on earlier dialogues, applied the insights of Niagara, and anchored doctrinal discussions firmly in the mission context of Northern Europe. It broke new ground by spelling out a deeper understanding of apostolicity, of the episcopal office and of historic succession as ‘sign’. Significantly the Porvoo Declaration included an acknowledgement “that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches...”, as well as commitments “to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches... without re-ordination” and “to invite one another’s bishops normally to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops...” (Porvoo §58 a (vi) and b (v) and (vi)). This agreement (step 4 of Niagara) was synodically approved by the British and Irish Anglican Churches and by most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches (not Denmark and Latvia). It was celebrated and formally signed in 1996 at Trondheim, Tallinn and London.
- 64 **Reuilly:** In 1999 the dialogue was concluded and in 2001 the agreement was signed and celebrated, first in Canterbury then in Paris. Again, like Meissen, the stage reached was stage 2 of Niagara,

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involving agreement “to share a common life in mission and service, praying for and with one another and working towards the sharing of spiritual and human resources; to welcome one another’s members to each other’s worship and to receive pastoral ministrations; to welcome one another’s members into the congregational life of each other’s churches”. While Reully encourages shared worship, the nature of the participation of ordained ministers in each other’s worship “still falls short of the full interchangeability of ministers” (Reully §46 b iv).

### *Commitment to Common Mission*

- 65 **Meissen:** “We commit ourselves to share a common life and mission.” (17B). In the acknowledgement of each other as churches it is asserted that they truly participate ‘in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God’. (17Ai)
- 66 **Porvoo:** This report was published under the title *Together in Mission and Ministry* and has a major section on ‘our common mission today’ (§§10-13), concluding ‘our churches are called together to proclaim a duty of service to the wider world and to the societies in which they are set.’ (13) In its portrait of a Church living in the light of the Gospel, Porvoo notes that ‘it is a Church with a mission to all in every race and nation ...’ and ‘it is a Church which manifests through its visible communion the healing and uniting power of God amidst the divisions of humankind’. ‘It is a Church in which the bonds of communion are strong enough to enable it to bear effective witness in the world, ...and to share its goods with those in need.’ (20) In the Declaration itself, Porvoo picks up the theme of Meissen 17ai (58ai) and makes a commitment ‘to establish forms of oversight so that our churches may regularly consult one another on significant matters of faith and order, life and work’ (58bviii).
- 67 **Reully:** “The Church exists for the glory of God and to serve, in obedience to the mission of Christ, the reconciliation of humankind and

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all creation. Therefore the Church is sent into the world as a sign, instrument and foretaste of a reality which comes from beyond history – the kingdom, or reign of God.” (18) The Commitments section begins with a commitment to share a common life and mission, seeking appropriate ways to do this. (46bi)

### *Definition of Proximate and Ultimate Goals*

- 68 **Porvoo:** Proximate Goals: “The aim of these Conversations was to move forward from our existing piecemeal agreements towards the goal of visible unity” (Porvoo §6). Such a level of communion is described as entailing “agreement in faith together with the common celebration of the sacraments, supported by a united ministry and forms of collegial and conciliar consultation in matters of faith, life and witness” (Porvoo §28).
- 69 Ultimate Goal: “Set before the Church is the vision of unity as the goal of all creation (Eph 1) when the whole world will be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5) (Porvoo §27). This agreement is seen as a step towards the visible unity which all churches committed to the ecumenical movement seek to manifest” (Porvoo §60).
- 70 **Meissen:** Proximate Goals: The Churches in the Meissen Agreement are committed “to strive for the ‘full, visible unity’ of the body of Christ on earth” while recognising that the characteristics of that unity will become clearer as the Churches grow together. “That full, visible unity must include: a common confession of the apostolic faith in word and life...The sharing of one baptism, the celebration of one eucharist and the service of a reconciled, common ministry...bonds of communion which enable the Church at every level to guard and interpret the apostolic faith, to take decisions, to teach authoritatively, to share goods and to bear effective witness in the world. The bonds of communion will possess personal, collegial and communal aspects”. (Meissen §§7, 8).

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- 71 Ultimate Goal: “Our growing together is part of a wider movement towards unity within the one Ecumenical Movement (Meissen §13).
- 72 **Reuilly:** Proximate Goals: The Reuilly agreement brings the churches to a stage along the way to full visible unity. It is described as ‘mutual recognition’ which for Lutheran and Reformed Churches “entails full communion, which includes full interchangeability of ministries”. Anglicans see this stage as a recognition or acknowledgement which leads to a further stage as “the reconciliation of churches and ministries” (Reuilly §27).
- 73 Ultimate Goal: The goal of full visible unity described in Reuilly is reminiscent of Meissen. It includes: “A common proclamation and hearing of the gospel, a common confession of the apostolic faith in word and action...The sharing of one Baptism, the celebrating of one eucharist and the service of a common ministry (including the exercise of ministry of oversight, *episcopate*)...Bonds of communion which enable the Church at every level to guard and interpret the apostolic faith, to take decisions, to teach authoritatively, to share goods and to bear effective witness in the world. The bonds of communion will possess personal, collegial and communal aspects.” (Reuilly §23). There is explicit recognition of “wider ecumenical commitment” which involves “deepening relationships within and between our three world communions and supporting efforts towards closer communion between Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe and in those parts of the world where good relations between our church families exist” (Reuilly § 48).

### *Particular Issues Arising from the Context*

- 74 **Porvoo:** All the participating churches were episcopally ordered, although not all the bishops, up to now, were in historic succession. The tiny minority of clergy not episcopally ordained are not covered by the agreement.

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- 75 **Meissen:** The theological conferences have given further attention to disagreement about the nature of the historic episcopate, which has not yet been resolved. The possibility of establishing local ecumenical projects in Germany is seen as a fruitful way forward.
- 76 **Reuilly:** Despite the high degree of theological agreement on the understanding of ministry and ordination, there is work yet to be done on the issue of historic episcopal succession, the understanding of the threefold nature of the one ministry, eucharistic presidency, women in ministry of oversight and the process of formally uniting the ministries. (Reuilly §43).

### *Mutual Accountability within the Agreements*

- 77 The Porvoo Contact group was set up in 1996 to foster implementation of the Porvoo agreement. It holds annual meetings and sponsors a Theological Conference. The Porvoo Panel in England encourages and monitors the development of active Porvoo links by parishes, dioceses and central bodies.
- 78 The Meissen Commission, established in 1991, oversees the implementation of that agreement. It also holds a Theological Conference and sponsors parish links and visits.
- 79 A Contact Group will be established for Reuilly and they may hold joint theological conferences with Meissen counterparts.

### f) USA

#### *Context*

- 80 The Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are churches contiguous with each other within the USA. There are some exceptions

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to this national contextualisation, *e.g.* the ECUSA includes an extra-national province comprised of Mexico, Central America, Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela, Haiti, & the Dominican Republic; the ELCA similarly includes the Bahamas beyond the borders of the USA.

- 81 Demographically, the ELCA has a membership of 5.1 million, just under twice the size of the ECUSA with 2.5 million, though Episcopalians are more evenly distributed throughout the country, while Lutherans feature in areas of heavy concentration and relative sparsity. In terms of mission both churches face the same problems and opportunities within American culture and its regional variations.
- 82 The ELCA came into constitutional being in 1988 as a merger of the ALC, LCA, and AELC which was both a welcome development and one which provided its own set of issues to the common ecumenical engagement.

### *Origin of Dialogue*

- 83 Official dialogue was authorised in 1969 between the ECUSA and Churches of the Lutheran Council in the USA (ELCA predecessor bodies, and the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod). LED I concluded its work in 1972 and submitted a positive report to the churches which was received without result largely due to the press of issues internal (but at the same time somewhat common, *e.g.* ordination of women, liturgical renewal, civil rights, &c.) to the churches.

### *Agreement in Faith/Ecclesial Recognition*

- 84 A second series of LED was initiated in 1977 and the work of the dialogue submitted to national governing bodies of the churches in 1982 as a *Report & Recommendations*. As a result, with the exception of the LCMS, the churches accepted each other's baptism without exception, mutually recognised each other specifically as churches, and, more specifically, as churches where the Gospel was rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered.

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### *Steps Toward Communion (Steps 2 to 4 of Niagara)*

- 85 On this basis a relationship of ‘interim Sharing of the Eucharist’ was established among ECUSA, on the one hand, and the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and AELC, on the other hand. These churches also authorised a third series of LED (to begin in 1983) to consider other questions that remained to be resolved before full communion could be established between the traditions. LED III was specifically charged with further explication of the “implications of the Gospel” and the “ordering of ministry (bishops, priests, and deacons) within the total context of apostolicity,”
- 86 Two official publications resulted from LED III: *Implications of the Gospel* (1988) and *Toward Full Communion and Concordat of Agreement* (1991). The latter part of the second document contains the actual proposal for full communion to be initiated and specified the actions that would be necessary to both churches. In brief, the ECUSA agreed to suspend the operation of its ‘Preface to the Ordinal’ in the Book of Common Prayer in order immediately to realise the interchangeability of ELCA and ECUSA presbyters while the ELCA agreed to accept ECUSA clergy without requiring subscription to the Augsburg Confession. Mutual future participation in the consecration/installation of new bishops as part of the plan envisioned ultimate reconciliation of the churches respective episcopates.
- 87 After a six-year’s process of reception by both churches under the auspices of a joint co-ordinating committee, the Concordat of Agreement came to a vote in 1997 at the national governing bodies of both the ELCA and ECUSA meeting within two weeks of each other. It was overwhelmingly passed by ECUSA’s General Convention and failed of a required two-thirds majority by only six votes in ELCA’s Churchwide Assembly. Subsequently, at ELCA initiative, a small team of theologians and ecclesial leaders appointed by presiding bishops of both churches met to formulate a revision of the

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‘Concordat’ that was designated ‘Called to Common Mission’. Following a reception process by both churches this document brought a revised proposal for full communion before both churches in the summer of 1999 (ELCA) and 2000 (ECUSA). Having passed both churches’ highest governing bodies, a relationship of full communion was celebrated at the National Cathedral in Washington DC on the Feast of the Epiphany 2001 and regionally in following weeks and months.

### *Commitment to Common Mission*

88 For CCM, unity and mission stand together at the heart of the church’s life. In the final paragraph, for example, the agreement notes that “entering full communion ... will bring new opportunities and levels of shared evangelism, witness, and service.’ It then relates the mission of the church to “the mission of the Son in obedience to the Father through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.” (§ 29)

### *Definition of Proximate and Ultimate Goals*

89 The LED series had presumed that the goal of the dialogue was full communion as defined by agreement in the faith, sharing of worship and especially the sacraments, mutual ecclesial recognition, and interchangeability of ministries. The Concordat and CCM both relied upon the description of full communion in the Cold Ash Report to define the full communion being sought. This description was in line with the official ecumenical policies of the two churches. No distinction was made between proximate and ultimate goals. CCM (§§14, 29) explicitly notes the communion is to be grown into and so the relation is open to deepening as the two churches experience the possibilities and potential limitations of their new relation.

### *Particular issues arising from the Context*

90 The wish to reconcile a continuing minority of Lutheran opposition to CCM led the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2001, at the unanimous urging of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, to unilaterally decide to

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provide a process whereby synodical bishops might permit exceptions “in unusual circumstances” to the rule that a bishop preside at all ordinations. This action was immediately addressed by the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church as materially damaging to CCM and most unfortunate in its unilateral nature. At the time of the writing of this Report, no such exceptions to the rule of episcopal presidency at ordinations have been made. The round of ordinations in the summer of 2002 will be a test of the effects of this provision.

- 91 More positively, there are instances of ECUSA clergy serving Lutheran congregations and *vice-versa* under the authorisations required by the agreement. There are also joint congregations and joint projects in theological education.
- 92 Other issues revolve around establishing effective means at all levels of church life for mutual consultation not only to meet potentially divisive problems, but for the promotion of the means of common life and mission throughout the churches.

### *Mutual Accountability in the Agreement*

- 93 The principal provision for mutual accountability in the relationship of full communion established between the ECUSA and the ELCA is found in §23 of *Called to Common Mission*. By this provision both churches authorised the establishment of a joint commission “fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches.” It is envisioned that this joint commission will not only be consultative, but also, through its “work with the appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and staff,” advise the churches regarding common decision-making “in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future.” The authorization of this body simply enacts the definition of full communion that *CCM* proclaims at the outset, namely, that such full communion “includes the establishment of locally and nationally recognized organs of regular consultation and communication...” (*CCM*, §2) Other aspects of mutual accountability

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relate to the manner over time whereby the episcopates of both churches may be reconciled through conjoint participation in the ordination of bishops (*CCM*. §12) and whereby the office and ministry of bishop can be mutually subjected to periodic review for “evaluation, adaptation, improvement, and continual reform in the service of the gospel.” (*CCM* §17)

### g) OTHER REGIONS

94 Information was received from some regions where contact between Anglicans and Lutherans is at a very preliminary stage. The state of development is summarised below.

#### India

95 Lutherans in India are in dialogue with Anglicans who are not independent, but who form part of ecumenical church expressions (Church of North India, Church of South India). CNI and CSI are also part of a Joint Council, along with the Mar Thoma Church. Both Lutherans and Methodists wanted to be part of this wider dialogue. In order to be members of the Joint Council, churches must be in full communion with each other. Hence, the name of the Council has been changed to ‘Communion of Churches in India’, and constitutional amendments have been made which will allow other churches to join this fellowship. The existence of the ecumenical churches in India for common mission creates a unique context. It would appear that Lutherans (and Methodists) are being invited into a relationship, which has itself been formed over many years of dialogue and sense of common mission. The proximate goal appears to be ‘full communion’. There is no definition of an ultimate goal. At present there is no common statement of the faith involving Lutherans and Anglicans in India.

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### Japan

- 96 There are 5 Lutheran bodies in Japan, which have agreements among each other that require mutual affirmation of new actions by any one of them. This can make theological dialogue difficult. However, there are regular meetings between the Nippon Sei Ko Kei (The Anglican Communion in Japan) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Japan, and there is a desire for dialogue between them. There is no documentation available at present.

### Middle East

- 97 In the 19th century a joint bishopric in Jerusalem was established which was later discontinued. The complexities of the political and social situation in the Middle East make it difficult to have theological dialogue. Both Anglicans and Lutherans are active participants in the Middle East Council of Churches, and share a common approach to their region. There was an attempt in the 1970s to bring Anglicans and Lutherans together. Concelebration at the eucharist by both bishops has occurred. Some clergy have served in interim ministry in each other's churches. Joint services are held in Advent and Lent, and pulpit exchanges take place. At present no work has been done towards a common statement on the faith, nor the definition of proximate or ultimate goals.

### Hong Kong, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, South East Asia

- 98 In addition requests for information were sent to churches in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and South East Asia. Hong Kong was the only one to reply, and it indicated that although there is ecumenical cooperation between Lutherans and Anglicans in the Hong Kong Christian Council, there are no particular bilateral agreements or dialogues.

### III. Evaluation of Consistency and Coherence in the Dialogues

99 The variety of recent national and regional Anglican-Lutheran dialogues and agreements has produced a rich, but potentially confusing network of relations. In line with its terms of reference, the International Working Group has examined two questions raised by this situation. First, are the various relations theologically consistent in their use of foundational documents, their concepts of unity, and their understanding of apostolicity and episcopal ministry? This question is addressed in this section with respect to Meissen, Porvoo, Reuilly, CCM, Waterloo and Covenanting for Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation. Second, what ecclesiological issues are raised by the imperfect character of this web of relations, in which churches, each in communion with some third church, are not in communion with each other? This question is addressed in section V.

#### A. Foundational Documents

100 Among the "issues remaining to be addressed" in the various Anglican-Lutheran regional dialogues, the 1998 Lambeth Conference included "the status of our foundational documents" (Lambeth Conference 1998, 248). The meaning of 'foundational documents' is not elaborated, but can be taken to refer to post-biblical texts, other than the shared ancient creeds, which each tradition appeals to as normative within its life. For Lutherans, confessionally important texts are gathered into the *Book of Concord*. Among the Lutheran churches, the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism occupy a central role. Anglicans have no clearly defined collection of texts, but the *Book of Common Prayer*, in its various national editions, including its Ordinal and Catechism, and the *Thirty-Nine Articles* have at various times played a normative role in Anglican faith and practice.

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- 101 Various Lutheran-Anglican dialogues have noted that Lutherans and Anglicans appeal to such foundational documents in different ways. The 1972 Pullach Report of the first international Anglican-Lutheran dialogue noted that for Lutherans "the confessions of the Reformation still occupy officially a prominent place in theological thinking and training, in catechetical teaching, and in the constitutions of the individual Lutheran churches and at the ordination of pastors" (§29). While the Anglican *Thirty-Nine Articles* are "universally recognised as expressing a significant phase in a formative period of Anglican thought and life," "the significance attached to them today in Anglican circles varies between Anglican churches and between groups within Anglican churches." *The Book of Common Prayer*, however, "has for a long time served as a confessional document in a liturgical setting" (§30). Other dialogues have made similar observations (US 1988 *Implications*, §69; Canada 1986 *Report and Recommendation*, Appendix 1, §6-7).
- 102 No dialogue has seen this difference between Lutherans and Anglicans as a significant obstacle to communion. The Pullach Report stated that "Since confessional formularies are not a mark of the church, their significance lies in their expression of the living confession to the living Lord. Different approaches to the authority of these formularies are possible between communions so long as they share a living confession which is a faithful response to the living word of God as proclaimed in Holy Scripture" (§31).
- 103 Although they are not extensively quoted in the regional texts, the foundational documents of the two traditions were examined thoroughly in the dialogues. References to them in the European *Porvoo*, *Meissen*, and *Reuilly* Common Statements are few. The most extensive appeal to and discussion of foundational documents occur in the US texts (see below, §109).

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- 104 When they are appealed to the foundational documents play two, seemingly opposite roles in the agreements. On the one hand, they are used as evidence of the common faith shared by the two traditions. On the other, they are cited to establish the specific positions of each tradition in distinction from the other. This twofold use is not contradictory. The foundational documents of each tradition seek both to assert the one faith of the one church and to testify to the particular understanding and appropriation of that one faith within its own tradition.
- 105 First, the foundational documents of both traditions are claimed as testimonies to a common profession of the one faith of the entire church. *Porvoo* cites the explicit affirmations of classical dogma in the Reformation era formularies of the two traditions. In its listing of "the principal beliefs and practices that we have in common" (§32), it states (d): "We accept the faith of the Church through the ages set forth in *the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds* and confess the basic Trinitarian and Christological dogmas to which these creeds testify.... This faith is explicitly confirmed both in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion [reference to Article VIII] and in the Augsburg Confession [reference to Articles I and III]." The Australian 2001 *Common Ground* statement repeats this sentence verbatim, but without the references to particular passages (§11). The Canadian *Waterloo Declaration* (2001, Acknowledgments, 2, Commentary) and the US 1999 *Called to Common Mission* (§4) cite the various foundational texts in general as witnesses to "the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith" (*CCM*) or to "the faith of the Catholic Church" (*Waterloo*).
- 106 The French-British Isles *Reuilly Common Statement* follows this pattern, but, since the Lutherans are joined in this dialogue by Reformed churches, relevant Reformed confessions are noted. *Reuilly* §31b closely resembles *Porvoo* §32d, but instead of citing specific passages in only two confessions, it more generally states: "This faith

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of the Church through the ages [i.e., the Christological and Trinitarian faith of the creeds] is borne witness to in the historic formularies of our churches." In a footnote, it then lists these, adding, however, that "These confessional statements were produced in different circumstances and do not play an identical role in the life of the churches."

- 107 The German-English *Meissen Common Statement* is similar, but subtly different. In *Meissen*, the Lutherans are joined by the United and Reformed member churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany, and so the Reformed *Heidelberg Catechism* is added to its fund of formularies. It treats the formularies of the traditions, however, not as witnesses to the common faith of the Church catholic, but rather as signs of a common "Reformation inheritance expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal, and the Augsburg Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism" (§9).
- 108 Second, but less often, the foundational documents of the two traditions are cited to elaborate the specific position of one or the other tradition on some particular question. The foundational documents are not treated as witnesses to what the traditions have in common, but to what makes each distinctive. For the Australian *Common Ground* statement, "Anglicans are identified by acceptance, as 'agreeable to the Word of God', of the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 and the Articles of Religion (with the Homilies)" (§2.4), while Lutherans are identified by adherence to the Confessional writings contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, "because they are true expositions of Scripture" (§2.5). The European *Porvoo*, *Meissen*, and *Reuilly* statements and the Canadian *Waterloo Declaration* make no use of specific foundational documents to elaborate the specific identities of the two traditions.

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109 The US dialogue makes by far the greatest use of foundational documents to elaborate the differences between the two traditions, especially on the question of episcopacy. The US dialogue appended to its full communion proposal an explanatory text, the length and detail of which is much greater than the common statements that introduced the *Meissen*, *Porvoo*, and *Reuilly* declarations. Its chapter on ‘The Lutheran Churches and Episcopal Ministry’ included a section on ‘The Lutheran Confessional Heritage’ (§§37-47). Normative conclusions for present Lutheran practice are drawn directly from the Confessions: "churches which accept the doctrinal authority of the *Book of Concord* ... are committed in principle to a preference for ‘the ecclesiastical and canonical polity’ with its ‘various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.’” [Apol. 14]" (§44). The parallel chapter on ‘The Episcopal Church and the Ministry of the Historic Episcopate,’ although it contains a section entitled ‘The Prayer Book Teaching on the Episcopate’ (§69), does not derive such normative conclusions directly from particular texts, but rather draws upon the range of Anglican history to portray Anglican attitudes. The specific attitudes to episcopacy portrayed on the basis of the documents of the two traditions are then used to argue that each tradition should be open to the proposal that follows. Alone among these statements, the US agreement commits each church "to encourage its people to study each other's basic documents" (§4).

110 Two conclusions may be drawn from this survey. First, there is no indication that the different ways that Anglicans and Lutherans appeal to and utilise the specific foundational documents of their traditions pose any difficulty for Anglican-Lutheran relations. Neither explicitly nor implicitly has this difference played any role in Anglican-Lutheran separation. Second, the differences among the dialogues in the way they appeal to foundational documents are not significant. All find in these documents a witness to the faith shared by Anglicans and Lutherans. The extensive and unique discussion of foundational documents by the US dialogue represents a decision on its part that

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such a discussion would demonstrate in its context the faithfulness of its full communion proposal to the norms of each tradition. The full communion proposal advanced, however, is consistent with that offered by such other proposals as *Waterloo* and *Porvoo*.

### B. Describing the Goal of Unity

- 111 All the agreements affirm a commitment to the goal of visible unity, even if this goal is sometimes described in the various texts using different terminology. Generally, the divergences which exist between the statements from Anglican-Lutheran dialogues should not be seen as results of varying concepts of unity, but rather as signs that these texts reflect different historical and ecclesiastical contexts and different stages on our mutual journey towards the goal of visible unity.
- 112 The texts agree in their picture of the goal being sought in Anglican-Lutheran relations. Even where the texts use different terms – ‘full communion’, ‘full visible unity’ - we note that they describe a similar reality. Nevertheless ecumenical terminology continues to evolve. Thus, in some texts a term refers to the goal of the particular dialogue process. For others the same term may refer to the ultimate goal of the ecumenical journey. We find that Meissen speaks of the goal of EKD-Church of England relations as ‘full visible unity’. Waterloo understands ‘full communion’ between Anglicans and Lutherans as the goal of the agreement, but helpfully contextualises this goal within the wider goal of the ultimate full visible unity of the whole Church of God. CCM sees the result of its dialogue as ‘full communion’ but does not speculate about any further goal beyond this particular dialogue. The Porvoo agreement does not use the terms ‘full communion’ or ‘full visible unity’ but speaks simply of ‘communion’ “...the unity to which we are summoned has already begun to be manifested in the Church. It demands fuller visible embodiment in structured form, so that the Church may be seen to be, through the

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Holy Spirit, the one body of Christ and the sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom." (Porvoo §22).

- 113 The similarity in these descriptions of the goal stems from a common development of the Cold Ash Statement (1983) of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group:

*By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognises the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith:*

- a. subject to such safeguards as ecclesial discipline may properly require, members of one body may receive the sacraments of the other;*
- b. subject to local invitation, bishops of one church may take part in the consecration of the bishops of the other, thus acknowledging the duty of mutual care and concern;*
- c. subject to church regulation, a bishop, pastor/priest or deacon of one ecclesial body may exercise liturgical functions in a congregation of the other body if invited to do so and also, when requested, pastoral care of the other's members;*
- d. it is also a necessary addition and complement that there should be recognised organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service.*

*Full communion carries implications which go beyond sharing the same eucharist. The eucharist is a common meal, and to share in it together has implications for a sharing of life and of a common concern for the mission of the church. To be in full communion implies a community of life, an exchange and a commitment to one another in respect of major decisions on questions of faith, order and morals. It implies, where churches are in the same*

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*geographical area, common worship, study, witness, evangelism, and promotion of justice, peace and love. It may lead to a uniting of ecclesial bodies if they are, or come to be, immediately adjacent in the same geographical area This should not imply the suppressing of ethnic, cultural or ecclesial characteristics or traditions which may in fact be maintained and developed by diverse institutions within one communion. (Cold Ash §25, 27)*

- 114 The 6 texts examined by ALIWG reflect a basic compatibility in terms of the description of the goal of unity. Nevertheless they represent different stages on our journey and grow out of churches in different contexts, with different shared histories, and to some extent, with different participants in the dialogue. Reuilly and Meissen, for instance, are tri-lateral dialogues with input from Reformed and United as well as Lutheran and Anglican churches. Particularly in those texts which are still working toward ‘full communion’ (Reuilly, Meissen and Common Ground) churches still find themselves struggling with episcopacy and its relation to communion.
- 115 Three of the current texts bring the churches involved into a relationship, which from an Anglican perspective is largely indistinguishable, canonically, from that between churches within the Anglican Communion. These agreements have resolved the issue of episcopacy and its relation to communion and contain agreements on the office of bishop and the historic episcopal succession. In these texts, which establish full communion between the churches involved, full communion is re-described, but in language still reminiscent of Cold Ash. Thus CCM states the following:

*We therefore understand full communion to be a relation between distinct churches in which each recognises the other as a catholic and apostolic church holding the essentials of the Christian faith. Within this new relation, churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous. Full communion includes the establishment*

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*locally and nationally of recognised organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service. Diversity is preserved, but this diversity is not static. Neither church seeks to remake the other in its own image, but each is open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his mission. They are together committed to a visible unity in the church's mission to proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments. (CCM §2)*

116 The Porvoo Common Statement asserts:

*Such a level of communion has a variety of interrelated aspects. It entails agreement in faith together with the common celebration of the sacraments, supported by a united ministry and forms of collegial and conciliar consultation in matters of faith, life and witness. These expressions of communion may need to be embodied in the law and regulations of the Church. For the fullness of communion all these visible aspects of the life of the Church require to be permeated by a profound spiritual communion, a growing together in a common mind, mutual concern and a care for unity (Phil. 2.2). (Porvoo §28).*

117 The Waterloo Declaration uses the following extensive definition of full communion:

*Full communion is understood as a relationship between two distinct churches or communions in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognising the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship, communicant members of each church would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other, and there would be freedom of ordained ministers to officiate sacramentally in either church. Specifically, in our context, we understand this to include*

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*transferability of members; mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries; freedom to use each other's liturgies; freedom to participate in each other's ordinations and installations of clergy, including bishops; and structures for consultation to express, strengthen, and enable our common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.* (Waterloo, §7)

- 118 In the Reuilly statement we detect a possible discrepancy. In the joint statement, the dialogue partners say they “are totally committed to strive for the 'full visible unity' of the body of Christ on earth” (Reuilly §22). Elsewhere, however, the Lutheran and Reformed participants expressed their conviction that “mutual recognition already expresses and signifies the unity of the Church. Mutual recognition for them entails *full* communion, which includes full interchangeability of ministries” (Reuilly §27). While Reuilly may contain this potential inconsistency, nevertheless, this text, like the other 5 we examined, moves beyond the narrow description of the goal as ‘pulpit and altar fellowship’ and understands unity to include the visible expression of the unity of the Church for the credibility of its mission in the world.
- 119 Because communion is a common life in Christ and the Spirit into which churches grow, defining the moment at which the goal of *full* communion is reached may be difficult. Theological differences can also contribute to this difficulty, when churches place differing emphases on certain elements in their common life. Thus, the ELCA and the ECUSA, in CCM §14, agree that full communion “begins” with the adoption of the agreement. The ECUSA adds, however, that full communion in its view will not be fully realised until there is “a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate,” i.e., until all ELCA bishops have been consecrated in historic succession.
- 120 Despite some variations, all our dialogue texts see unity as a dynamic reality. Thus, there is a commitment to further growth in unity -

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between the dialogue partners as well as in a larger ecumenical perspective. This entails an obligation to make our communion ever more visible. Such visibility should be seen as a sign and a witness to a world that clearly lacks, but desperately needs unity.

- 121 As noted in section II A above, our dialogue texts consistently, but in varying ways, emphasise the church's mission as the context and the goal of unity. Unity, in other words, is not merely a means employed to achieve the end of mission. The unity of the church and faithfulness to its apostolic mission of self-offering and witness to the Kingdom of God belong together as two sides of the same reality. Since the consultation in Niagara, which described the apostolicity of the church as the mission of self-offering for the life of the world, Anglicans and Lutherans have together recognized the call to serve the mission of God's suffering and vulnerable love as an expression of "Christ's way of being in the world." (§23) Our agreements speak concretely of mission as concerned with the healing of the world and justice; transforming society; addressing the needs of local and global communities; and sharing evangelism, witness and service. The unity of the church thus bears witness, in the words of Porvoo, to "the healing and uniting power of God amidst the divisions of humankind." (§20)

### C. Apostolicity and Episcopal Ministry

- 122 Just as the Cold Ash report was significant in shaping the conversations around the theme of full communion, the Niagara Report was significant for all the regional dialogues in laying out Anglican and Lutheran agreement and divergence on *episcopate* and episcopacy. Indeed, the most significant aspect of the reception of Niagara has been the incorporation of its insights on episcopacy and *episcopate* into the regional agreements.

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- 123 The Niagara Report has been particularly important as the regional dialogues addressed issues of episcopacy and succession within the total apostolicity of the Church. (Niagara was itself influenced by BEM and prior Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue on the ministry). "Apostolic succession in the episcopal office does not consist primarily in an unbroken chain of those ordaining to those ordained, but in a succession in the presiding ministry of a church, which stands in the continuity of apostolic faith and which is overseen by the bishop in order to keep it in the communion of the Catholic and Apostolic Church." (Niagara §53, cf BEM Ministry §38, LRCJC, *The Ministry in the Church*, §62).
- 124 Just as in the understanding of full communion, the type of agreement reached on *episcopate* and episcopacy was influenced by different historical, geographical and cultural contexts. For example, in the United States of America, Canada and Australia relations are between churches in the same country with members of both traditions frequently living in close proximity. In Europe relations are primarily between Anglicans and Lutherans separated in different countries. Additionally, in the United States of America, the Lutheran Church involved, the ELCA, was itself the result of a recent merger of three distinct Lutheran Churches with a diversity of traditions regarding the episcopate. In Canada, an uneven geographic overlap of Lutherans and Anglicans and a discrepancy in the size of the two churches involved affected the character of the agreement.
- 125 Among the agreements examined by the ALIWG, the same two categories emerged with regard to the treatment of episcopacy and succession as emerged with regard to the treatment of the goal of unity. Those which have come to an agreement about full communion have each found ways, slightly different, but all drawing on Niagara, to recognise each other's expression of episcopal ministry as a sign of continuity and unity in apostolic faith. Those texts which are still working toward 'full communion' (Reuilly, Meissen and Common

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Ground) have not reached consensus on episcopal ministry and succession.

- 126 The Meissen statement records this disagreement, reflected in the Pullach report (1973), concerning the historical Anglican position and the historical Lutheran position on episcopacy and succession, and does not try to bring them together:

*Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches, though being increasingly prepared to appreciate episcopal succession "as a sign of the apostolicity of the life of the whole Church", hold that this particular form of episcopate should not become a necessary condition for 'full, visible unity'. The Anglican understanding of full, visible unity includes the historic episcopate and full interchangeability of ministers. "Yet even this remaining difference, when seen in the light of our agreements and convergences, cannot be regarded as a hindrance to closer fellowship between our Churches." (Meissen §16).*

- 127 The Reuilly Statement similarly makes an honest statement of the two positions that cannot be reconciled at present.

*Anglicans believe that the historic episcopate is a sign of the apostolicity of the whole Church. The ordination of a bishop in historic succession (that is, in intended continuity with the apostles themselves) is a sign of God's promise to be with the Church, and also the way the Church communicates its care for continuity in the whole of its faith, life and mission, and renews its intention and determination to manifest the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles. Anglicans hold that the full visible unity of the Church includes the historic episcopal succession.*

*Lutherans and Reformed also believe that their ministries are in apostolic succession. In their ordination rites they emphasise the*

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*continuity of the Church and its ministry. They can recognise in the historic episcopal succession a sign of the apostolicity of the Church. They do not, however, consider it a necessary condition for full visible unity. (Reuilly §37, 38)*

128 The Common Ground statement from Australia is at a more preliminary stage than any of the other agreements. Although unable at present to find a way of mutually recognising the ministries of Anglicans and Lutherans, nevertheless it is able to affirm "that the historic pattern of ministry, in which the bishop exercises a regional ministry of oversight with presbyters exercising a local ministry, can continue to serve the unity and apostolicity of the church in every age and place" and that "the episcopal office in succession as one sign of the church's intention to ensure the continuity of the church in apostolic life and witness". (Common Ground, appendix 1, §18). The Lutheran Church is challenged to receive this by accepting "the episcopal office as a sign of the apostolicity and catholicity of the church" and affirming "the value of the historic episcopate within the orderly succession of the ministry of Christ through the ages, without implying the episcopal office is necessary for salvation or that it guarantees, by itself, the orthodoxy of the church's faith" (Common Ground, Appendix 2, §24.2). Anglicans are challenged to "recognise the intention of the Lutheran church to be nothing other than apostolic and truly catholic in its faith and practice" (Common Ground, Appendix 2, §24.3).

129 On the other hand, the Porvoo Common Statement is able to affirm that:

*Faithfulness to the apostolic calling of the whole Church is carried by more than one means of continuity. Therefore a church which has preserved the sign of historic episcopal succession is free to acknowledge an authentic episcopal ministry in a church which has preserved continuity in the episcopal office by an occasional*

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*priestly/presbyteral ordination at the time of the Reformation. Similarly, a church, which has preserved continuity through such a succession, is free to enter a relationship of mutual participation in episcopal ordinations with a church which has retained the historical episcopal succession, and to embrace this sign, without denying its past apostolic continuity. (Porvoo §52)*

- 130 In Canada, each of the churches was able to respond clearly to Niagara and incorporate its insights. Thus, the Anglican Church of Canada agreed to view "the historic episcopate in the context of apostolicity articulated in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*", (Waterloo § 8) and the ELCIC agreed "to take the constitutional steps necessary to understand the installation of bishops as ordination", (Waterloo §9).
- 131 In CCM, the ELCA and ECUSA are able to assert that they "value and maintain a ministry of *episcopo* as one of the ways, in the context of ordained ministries and of the whole people of God, in which the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolised in fidelity to the gospel through the ages" (CCM §12).
- 132 Despite these agreements being at different stages and in different contexts and therefore having different questions to resolve, nevertheless we see a consensus emerging and a general compatibility.
- 133 Increasingly Lutherans around the world are prepared to appreciate the significance of the episcopate in apostolic succession as a sign and servant of the apostolic continuity and unity of the church. The agreements show a growing readiness to become part of this succession by inviting Anglican and Lutheran bishops who belong to churches that share in the historical episcopal succession to actively participate in the ordinations or installations of Lutheran bishops in churches which have not so shared. Lutherans are free to take up the historic episcopal succession when (1) this integration of Lutheran bishops into historic episcopal succession occurs after mutual recognition of churches and

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ministries and declaration of church fellowship/full communion have been expressed, (2) this integration does not imply an adverse judgement on the Lutheran ministries in the past nor an increase of their ecclesiastical power in the future, (3) there is the continuing liberty for different interpretations of the office of bishop and its ecumenical significance.

- 134 On the Anglican side, the following three features are understood to be crucial: (1) an awareness that the threefold ministry should not be seen as the only theologically possible ministerial form, but rather comes through as the structure which benefits the mission and service of the church in the best way, (2) a realisation that the church's apostolicity can be kept up also in times when some of its signs have been lost; (3) an understanding of the historic episcopate as 'a sign, though not a guarantee' without reducing this sign to a mere 'optional extra' in the life of the church.
- 135 A feature which is evident to a greater or lesser extent in the agreements, which ALIWG observes as offering a constructive approach to the thorny issue of episcopal succession and apostolicity, is an approach where the different signs of apostolicity are seen less as juridical requirements than as gifts which the churches share within the framework of community. According to Porvoo:

*To the degree to which our ministries have been separated, all our churches have lacked something of that fullness which God desires for his people (Eph. 1. 23 and 3.17-19). By moving together, and by being served by a reconciled and mutually recognised episcopal ministry, our churches will be both more faithful to their calling and also more conscious of their need for renewal. By the sharing of our life and ministries in closer visible unity, we shall be strengthened for the continuation of Christ's mission in the world (Porvoo §54).*

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This approach is evident or implicit in the reports we have examined, a factor, which contributes significantly to the reality that Anglican-Lutheran dialogue remains among the most constructive dialogues in the ecumenical scene today.

### IV. Diversities, Bearable Anomalies and Potentially Church-Dividing Issues

#### A. The Issue Identified

- 136 Anglicans and Lutherans affirm that in Christ's Body there exists a variety of charisms and that the Church seeks to use them faithfully, both for the building up of the body "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ" and "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12-13). From the first meeting at Virginia Theological Seminary in 2000 the members of the ALIWG have stressed, in monitoring the ongoing development of relations between Churches of our two Communion, the important distinctions between: genuine and beneficial diversity; anomalies, bearable and unbearable; and issues which threaten unity or further divide Churches. The purpose of ecumenical dialogue is not to seek a uniformity in Christian expression. It is essential, however, to seek assurance that diversity is a genuine expression of the life of Christ and the kingdom. Thus, the ALIWG has come to review differences between Churches in Communion in the light of the following categories:
- a. legitimate diversity on secondary or non-essential matters.
  - b. bearable anomalies
  - c. potentially church-dividing issues.

### **B. Diversity in the Body of Christ**

137 The report of the 1998 Lambeth Conference reminded us that our communion is grounded in the Trinitarian life of God. This is to understand something of fundamental significance in the search for deeper unity among Christians: that at the centre of the communion of the Church is life with the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit. The Church, in her unity, will therefore rejoice in and celebrate the richness of diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are given so that the Gospel can be lived out in the specificity of cultural and historical contexts. Thus, within the Church of Christ, there are differences from place to place and from local community to local community which, arising from particular cultural and historical contexts, place the accent on different aspects of the one faith. Such complementary insights into that one faith equip the Church to carry out the mission of Christ in a particular place, and enrich the totality of Christian witness.

138 Within each Communion, there are diverse traditions of theological method and of spirituality and liturgy. Such diversity is understood to be a desirable dimension of the catholicity of the Church, where judged to be genuine expressions of a faith held in common. Anglicans and Lutherans can enjoy such a diversity within the Body of Christ. A sufficient agreement in faith does not require us “to accept every doctrinal formulation characteristic of our distinctive traditions” (PCS §33). This is similar to the diversity, which was agreed to be acceptable between Anglican and Old Catholic Churches, according to the Bonn Agreement of 1931.

### **C. Bearable Anomalies**

139 The 1998 Lambeth Conference further noted (p.260) that “in moving towards visible unity we recognise that temporary anomalies are likely to arise”. This issue was explored in the section IV report entitled

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*Called to Be One* and was pinpointed in the following resolution of the whole conference:

*[This conference] recognises that the process of moving towards full, visible unity may entail temporary anomalies, and believes that some anomalies may be bearable when there is an agreed goal of visible unity, but that there should always be an impetus towards their resolution and, thus, towards the removal of the principal anomaly of disunity. (Resolution IV.1 (c))*

- 140 Similarly, the 1991 LWF review of their bilateral dialogues (Communion and Dialogue: Compatibility - Convergence - Consensus) addressed the issues raised by a church being in communion with two churches which are not in communion with one another. While noting the "inherently anomalous" character of such a situation, it also noted that "as ecumenical progress is made in a tentative, stepwise fashion, such anomalies cannot be avoided." It emphasised the practical questions that arise from this situation. How does a church live up to its responsibilities to the differing churches with which it is in communion?
- 141 Variance and even a certain inconsistency in faith and order among Christians can be tolerated, temporarily, when our communities, attentive to the high priestly prayer of Christ, are committed to manifest their unity in him, and thus seek to remove all which may hinder the building up of the One Body. Such bearable anomalies are understood to be a provisional untidiness, which has good prospect of resolution in view of an agreed goal of visible unity.

### **D. Potentially Church Dividing Issues**

- 142 In one of the eucharistic prayers shared by many Anglicans and Lutherans, there is a prayer for the Church that God might "guard its unity and preserve it in peace". It is clear that the unity and peace of

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the Church are somehow constantly vulnerable. Indeed, the ALIWG has signalled at its meetings the possibility that there might be issues arising within each Communion that could potentially disrupt existing relations between Churches of both Communion (as well as between Churches of the *same Communion*). An anomaly may be unbearable if it threatens to disrupt the measure of unity already achieved, impede the development of closer fellowship or indeed cause further division. It follows that such divisions within and between churches are a hindrance to the Church's mission of reconciliation in the world, and as such are an affront to its very nature. In other words, they are limitations of communion.

- 143 Some divisions arise within and between churches when they, in their life, witness and teaching, come to uphold distinctions that keep them apart from others rather than uphold their common faith and common calling. Sensitivity and generosity of spirit is required in such situations where different pastoral approaches, details of church order and teaching are understood by members of one Church to be faithful and appropriate responses to Gospel witness in a particular time and place. Where such divisions hinder relations of communion, dialogue is necessary to determine whether the distinctions are within the one tradition received from the Apostles and are perhaps complementary aspects of one truth and therefore have their place within the life of the whole Church.
- 144 The difficulty is that when differences, whether by anomaly in practice or by developments which depart from the Gospel or from Apostolic Tradition, result in ecclesial separation. It then becomes difficult for joint judgement and discernment to take place, and the sin of division can be perpetuated and the Church's mission and witness weakened. For this reason Anglicans and Lutherans are not content to live with anomalies that may be unbearable, and which could more permanently threaten closer sacramental and ecclesial communion.

## E. The Task and Context of Discernment

145 Within each Communion mechanisms are evolving which can assist with the task of discernment of legitimate diversity, bearable anomaly and potentially church-dividing issues which arise in ecumenical dialogue. Which issues fall into which of the above categories, and what are the boundaries between categories? It is precisely these questions that require discernment.

146 The Anglican Communion, following the Lambeth Conference of 1998, set up the Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (IASCER) and specifically charged this new body with a task of discernment in this area:

*to give particular attention to anomalies which arise in the context of ecumenical proposals with a view to discerning those anomalies which may be bearable in the light of progress towards an agreed goal of visible unity, and to suggest ways for resolving them.  
(Resolution IV.3 (b) iv)*

147 Within the Lutheran World Federation, since 1993, there has been an acknowledgement of the desirability for member Churches to seek the counsel and advice of other member Churches when seeking to enter a new relation of communion with an ecumenical partner, with a view to enhancing the fellowship and avoid inadvertently creating new barriers within the Lutheran Communion. The Standing Committee on Ecumenical Affairs of the LWF, although not specifically mandated in this area, has the competence to take part in this discernment, if so desired.

148 The ALIWG understands it has a role in assisting the Churches of both Communions to discern jointly the criteria, which may help to distinguish between bearable and unbearable anomalies on the way to

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greater unity as well as issues arising within each communion that might disrupt existing relations.

- 149 Three basic criteria provide a context for assessing how far the differences between Anglicans and Lutherans, as seen in particular agreements, are legitimate or anomalous:
- a. The articulation of a common vision of the goal of visible unity.
  - b. The extent to which unity in diversity is understood to be much more than mere concession to theological pluralism, but something of fundamental ecclesial importance that is grounded in the Holy Trinity (see PCS, §23). This is akin to the ‘comprehensiveness’ Anglicans prize within the Anglican Communion, which is set within the context of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. Although originally a brief, shorthand expression of the features necessary for visible unity, the Quadrilateral is increasingly helping Anglicans to understand their own unity and identity. Similarly, we see the Lutheran emphasis on the diversity permitted in ‘human rites and ceremonies’, providing there is agreement in the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments (CA 7). Clearly, diversity is not without limits. (see *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, pp 227-228 on ‘living with difference’).
  - c. The extent to which Anglicans and Lutherans express sufficient agreement in faith which would not require them “to accept every doctrinal formulation characteristic of our distinctive traditions”. (see PCS, §33).

## F. Some Comments on Actual Issues

- 150 This Working Group did not attempt to construct a comprehensive list of issues which have arisen, or which may arise in the context of

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Anglican-Lutheran dialogue. There were, however, three main areas referred to it by the Communion for study:

- a. the status of foundational documents
- b. the articulation of the goal of unity
- c. the historic succession of bishops as sign of the apostolicity of the Church.

In a previous section of this report the Working Group has concluded that any anomalies in the expression and formulation of agreement in these areas have been understood to be bearable, indeed with a clear consensus emerging.

151 In addition to these major areas, we suggest that some other issues of difference may be seen to be expressions of legitimate diversity which have been observed in different times and places throughout the whole Church:

- a. the minister of Confirmation
- b. the admission of children to Holy Communion before Confirmation
- c. the relations between Church and State and between Church and Nation

152 Certain differences in ordained ministry may be understood by some to be anomalies, which are bearable in the light of basic agreement on the nature of the ordained ministry in the Church. Many others, however, see these as anomalies which may be temporarily bearable but nevertheless ought to be addressed with some urgency, as different approaches in these particulars raise questions as to the real meaning of recognition and reconciliation of ministries:

- a. the meaning of reconciliation of three-fold and non-threefold ministries
- b. the ordained diaconate and non-ordained diaconal ministries
- c. the tenure and jurisdiction of bishops

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153 Some differences cause strains within each Communion as well as between Churches of the two Communions. They are potentially or presently Church-dividing and require ongoing dialogue. Some different emphases and practices related to the ordained ministry among Anglican and Lutheran Churches are at present barriers to the development of fuller relations between Anglicans and Lutherans in certain places, or risk impairing the relation of communion already established:

- a. the ordination or non-ordination of women as deacons, priests / pastors and bishops
- b. the acceptability of historical episcopal succession in the service of the apostolicity of the Church
- c. the delegation of ordination by bishops
- d. lay presidency of the Eucharist

154 In addition there are developments currently being discussed in parts of both communions in the area of church teaching and practice concerning moral life. Examples of such issues are:

- a. issues related to the beginning and end of life
- b. the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions

These issues might in some cases have a divisive effect among provinces/ churches from each communion seeking mutual relations. Regarding these issues, the two world communions might consult and learn from each other about substantive as well as procedural aspects.

## G. Conclusions

155 Legitimate diversity, temporary anomalies and potentially church-dividing issues are simple ways to categorise differences among Anglicans and Lutherans and between churches of the same ecclesial family. Diversity does not lead to division where it is a necessary feature of the Church's catholicity. Temporary anomalies occur in the stages along the way to the Church's full visible unity, but mechanisms

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to discuss and address such anomalies are desirable between churches that are in a relation of communion. Potentially church dividing issues between Anglicans and Lutherans may be referred to a Commission that is competent to address the theological issues involved, with a view to seeking deeper agreement in these areas.

### **V. The Imperfect Web of Communion**

#### **A. Introduction**

156 When an Anglican church and a Lutheran church enter a new relation of full communion, is the Anglican church involved also in a new relation with the other Lutheran churches with which the this Lutheran church is in communion? Is the Lutheran church involved in a new relation with the other Anglican churches with which the Anglican church involved is in communion? If other Anglican or Lutheran churches wish to do so, could they attach themselves to the new relation? If so, how? These questions are the occasion for the discussion of what we have called the ‘transitivity’ of communion.

#### **B. Transitivity and Communion.**

##### **Instruments of Decision Making**

157 The issue is rooted in the way our two traditions make decisions. In each case, although our churches understand themselves to be parts of a worldwide communion of Anglican or Lutheran churches, binding decision making on ecumenical matters occurs at the level of national churches (or, in the Anglican communion, provinces). This structure of decision making is in accord with the ecclesiology of a communion of interdependent churches. This structure of decision making leaves us with the questions, however, both of the immediate impact of these decisions on the ecumenical relations of the other churches in the respective communions and of the possibility that such decisions might

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be easily extended to other churches of the communion. The question is thus raised by our similar organisation as national churches within worldwide communions. For an outline of the present organs of accountability and decision-making in both Communion, see appendix I.

### Transitivity: Definition

- 158 We have found the concept of transitivity, borrowed from mathematics and logic, helpful in addressing this problem. In logic and mathematics, a transitive relation is any relation  $x$  for which if  $a$  and  $b$  stand in relation  $x$  and if  $b$  and  $c$  stand in relation  $x$ , then  $a$  and  $c$  stand in relation  $x$  also. For example, if Jane and Allison are sisters and if Allison and Sarah are sisters, then Jane and Sarah must be sisters also. Friendship, however, is not transitive. That Mary and Ann are friends and Ann and Fred are friends does not necessarily imply that Mary and Fred are friends. My brother's brother must also be my brother, but my friend's friend is not necessarily my friend.
- 159 There are good theological reasons to think that communion between churches should be transitive, i.e., that if two churches are in communion, they ought in principle to both be in communion with all churches with which either is in communion. All communion is communion within Christ's one body, which cannot be divided. If communion is the realisation of a common life in Christ, then how can one church truly realise a common life in Christ with two churches who themselves refuse such a common life with each other? Both a 1991 consultation of Lutherans involved in international ecumenical dialogues and the 1998 Lambeth Conference used the word 'anomalous' to describe situations where relations of communion are not transitive.

### Organisational Reasons for Intransitivity

- 160 Within our present structures of decision making, relations of communion established by new ecumenical agreements cannot be

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automatically transitive. If they were so, then a pair of Anglican and Lutheran churches would each be able to bring the other into communion with all the churches of their own world family without the consent of these other churches. The consequence would be to delay any new ecumenical relation until it had been approved by all churches with which any of the involved churches share communion. Such a requirement would lead to ecumenical paralysis.

- 161 In addition, many ecumenical texts and proposals are rightly contextual in nature. The new relation depends both upon agreements formulated in line with the specific theological and ecclesiastical realities of the churches involved and upon the shared history of these churches. Beyond this context, the agreement may take on a different character.
- 162 Action simply at the level of the entire Anglican or Lutheran world communions would not solve the problem. On the one hand, neither communion appears ready to grant the necessary authority to its world organs to make such a decision. On the other hand, churches in both communions share communion with churches outside either communion (e.g., Lutheran communion with United and Reformed churches and Anglican communion with the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar). Even if communion wide action were possible, it would not remove the anomaly that our communion with one another is not transitive with such churches. The Working Group attempted to take some account of existing relations of Communion, in this case between Anglicans and Old Catholics, by inviting an Old Catholic Observer to participate fully in the discussions, which led to the production of this report.
- 163 An additional complication arises through the definition of the Anglican communion as communion with the See of Canterbury. Thus any regional agreement of full communion with the Church of England raises questions about the relation of those churches with Anglican

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Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury. The bishops of these churches were described at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 as ‘bishops in communion’, even though other Anglican provinces have not had the opportunity of agreeing to the relationships. Some differentiation of the regional and global roles of the Archbishop of Canterbury might alleviate this anomaly.

### Theological Reasons for Intransitivity

164 Most Lutheran-Anglican full communion agreements have involved theological and ecclesiastical actions by both partners: actions by the Anglican churches to recognise ordained ministries usually seen previously as non-episcopal, and actions by Lutheran churches to take on the sign of episcopal succession. Such actions, though not preconditions of the agreements, are integral parts of the new relations. Other Anglican and Lutheran churches could participate in these new relations only if they are willing to take the same or similar actions. Such actions cannot be forced upon them or be presumed. The individual churches would need to take the required action.

### Intransitivity as Anomaly: The Thorn in the Side

165 The intransitivity of our ecumenical relations remains, however, anomalous. It is a presence even within our steps toward unity of the larger context of disunity, reminding us that true unity perhaps cannot be achieved in just one bilateral relation. The transitivity problem is the thorn in the side of any bilateral relation, keeping us “from being too elated” (II Cor 12:7). It is the sign, the intrusive mark, within any relation of communion of the larger reality of non-communion that forms its context. It reminds us that the ecumenical goal must be the full, visible unity of all in each place. Nevertheless, the anomaly caused by intransitive relations of communion is less serious than the principal anomaly of division. Partial movements toward the ultimate goal of full, visible unity must not be condemned simply because they are partial.

### C. Patterns of Further Development

- 166 Even if the anomaly of intransitive relations of communion between individual churches in our two communions cannot be simply eliminated, creative thought needs to be given to how these particular relations of communion might more easily be extended to a wider range of churches in our communions. We now have an increasing number of such relationships. If new relations can be modelled on these, the possibility of such relations at least coming to be transitive among themselves (i.e., all Lutheran and Anglican churches which have committed themselves to theologically and structurally similar relations might be in communion with one another) would be increased.
- 167 Might it be possible for some decision-making body within a communion to formulate guidelines indicating what sort of agreement would be widely acceptable within the communion? For example, would an Anglican or LWF body be able to specify what sorts of contents would need to be found in a Lutheran-Anglican agreement if that agreement were likely to find wide affirmation throughout the Anglican or Lutheran communion? Such guidelines could have no juridical authority, but if they came to be widely affirmed, they would indicate that a particular relation is apt to be affirmed by others churches of the communion if the guidelines are met. Such guidelines might even indicate a recommendation that certain relations should be affirmed as far as possible by the other churches of the communion and indicate possible means by which this might be done. The question of authority and its structures are under serious discussion within both of our communions. The problem of the intransitivity of our present ecumenical relations may be an area in which creative thinking could contribute not just to our ecumenical life, but also to the internal lives of our two communions. We draw attention to recommendations 4 and 5 below as examples of the application of guidelines, which the authorities of the Communions may care to consider.

## VI. Mutual Accountability and Common Life

### A. Mutual Accountability in the Regional Agreements

168 All the agreements which are in a mature state of development have made provision for a contact group or continuation committee to oversee the implication of the agreements. These report to the respective authorities of the Churches involved. The different agreements have kept in contact through the agency of this Working Group, and it is recommended below that such contact be made more formal and regular through its successor body, ALIC.

### B. Common life and action between the Anglican and the Lutheran communions

169 The fact that several Anglican and Lutheran churches have entered into binding relations of communion, coupled with the fact that all the churches of the Anglican and Lutheran communions respectively maintain communion among themselves, represents a call to the Anglican Communion and the LWF to explore how their life might develop in ways representing rapprochement on the global level, expressed through common actions and programs.

#### a. An Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC)

170 The Working Group finds that Anglican-Lutheran relations around the world are developing to such an extent that the establishment of an Anglican Lutheran International Commission needs to be considered. The mandate of such a commission, consisting of church leaders, representatives of governing bodies and staff, could include:

- a. to monitor the continued development of Anglican-Lutheran relations around the world
- b. to consider issues of compatibility regarding further Anglican-Lutheran developments

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- c. to promote joint study projects of issues relevant to Anglican-Lutheran relations
- d. to explore possibilities of common actions and declarations
- e. to discuss ways to promote the role and contribution of the CWCs in the wider ecumenical movement
- f. to participate, together with the central staffs of the two communions, in the initiation of meetings of the top leadership of the two communions, particularly as pertains to agenda items and their preparation.

### **b. Joint Staff Meetings**

171 The Working Group welcomes the establishment of joint staff meetings between the ACC Secretary General and the LWF General Secretary and their assisting staff. A proposal in this regard was set forth by the Working Group in the course of its work. First meetings of preliminary kind were held in 2001 in connection with the celebrations of Called to Common Mission in the USA and of the Waterloo Declaration in Canada. The first full joint staff meeting took place in Geneva in January 2002.

172 The purpose of joint staff meetings would be similar to that of equivalent meetings involving the Anglican Communion and the LWF respectively in their relationship to other ecumenical partners, and would have a directly operational character. Among the areas where joint action would be relevant, the following can be mentioned:

- a. General information sharing
- b. Programme coordination in areas of common concern
- c. Common, specific consideration of the way in which programmes of the two communions contribute to the goal of Christian unity
- d. Discussion of specific Anglican and Lutheran ecumenical initiatives and processes in other relations and contexts beyond their bilateral relationship

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- e. Preparation of items to be presented to ALIC and appropriate implementation of agreements reached in the framework of this commission.

### VII. Communion of all the Churches

173 Lutheran-Anglican relations do not exist in isolation, but are one aspect of the wider movement toward the visible unity of the church among all who follow Christ. As Porvoo (§60) states: “we do not regard our move to closer communion as an end in itself, but as part of the pursuit of a wider unity” (cf. Reuilly, §48; Waterloo, Conclusion/Commentary).

Anglicans and Lutherans are thus in their relations to one another accountable to their other ecumenical partners and to the church universal. A criterion of any truly ecumenical development is that it contributes to and not hinder the wider quest for unity.

174 Anglicans and Lutherans tend to focus on the local and national church and sometimes need to be reminded of the universal church and its mission. Our ecumenical efforts need to be aware of and contribute to the tasks of the world wide church. Again to quote Porvoo: “Together with [other churches] we are ready to be used by God as instruments of his saving and reconciling purpose for all humanity and creation” (§61). Our regional agreements commit us to continue to work together for the full visible unity of the whole church.

175 Anglican-Lutheran discussions and agreements have taken place in the context of the larger ecumenical movement and have profited from its results. The Niagara Report in particular manifests its dependence on a range of earlier work, citing BEM (§§3, 17, 19, 20), the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue (§§3, 45, 53, 91, 94), the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (§§42, 52), and the international Anglican-Reformed dialogue (§70). The recent

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breakthroughs in Lutheran-Anglican agreements on episcopacy can be seen as specific responses to the proposal in the Ministry section of BEM for a reconciliation of ministries with and without particular forms of episcopal succession.

- 176 As Anglicans and Lutherans have received from other dialogues, so they offer their results for the potential enrichment of other discussions. CCM is most explicit in this regard, offering itself “for serious consideration among the churches of the Reformation and among the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches” (§24).
- 177 As the discussion above of transitivity and the imperfect web of communion shows, however, the interrelation of various bilateral relations and the interweaving of bilateral and multilateral relations is complex. The Canadian and US agreements (Waterloo §D9, Commentary; CCM §25) explicitly note that the existing relations of the signatory Anglican and Lutheran churches with other churches will continue. The situation in continental Europe is especially complex, where the Anglican churches of the British Isles have entered into interim agreements with Lutheran churches acting in partnership with Reformed and United churches. The coexistence of multiple bilateral relations calls both for careful theological reflection on the compatibility of such relations and for creative institutional action that will make this multiplicity fruitful for the pursuit of wider unity. Work on these issues has already begun (Ecclesiology Consultation, Riverdale, 1993; Leuenberg, Meissen and Porvoo Consultation, Liebfrauenberg, 1995).
- 178 While the present situation of partially overlapping networks of communion is theologically anomalous, it also keeps both of our traditions alive to our accountability to the wider church and provides an opportunity for the insights and experiences of one bilateral relation to enter and affect another. The lack of organisational and theological

tidiness perhaps can prevent us from becoming closed to the disturbing work of the Spirit and keep us open to new partnerships.

### VIII. The Ultimate Goal of Unity

179 From its beginnings, the ecumenical movement has debated the nature of the unity we seek. This debate has also taken place within our two traditions. Nevertheless, each of our traditions has been able to affirm generally similar pictures of the ultimate ecumenical goal. In 1984, the Budapest Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation adopted a comprehensive statement on ‘The Unity We Seek.’ Such a unity will be “a communion in the common and, at the same time, multiform confession of one and the same apostolic faith. It is a communion in holy baptism and in the eucharistic meal, a communion in which the ministries exercised are recognized by all as expressions of the ministry instituted by Christ in his church. [...] It is a committed fellowship, able to make common decisions and to act in common.” The portrait of visible unity begun by the 1998 Lambeth Conference (§§229-233) is strikingly similar. Differences do exist between typically Lutheran and typically Anglican perceptions of the final ecumenical goal (e.g., Anglicans are often more opposed to the continuing existence of parallel jurisdictions than are many Lutherans). Such differences have not hindered Anglicans and Lutherans, however, from moving together toward that goal. As such progress is made, we come to a clearer perception both of the elements of that goal and of the difficulty of describing it in advance of its attainment.

180 Neither Anglicans nor Lutherans have employed a consistent vocabulary to describe or to refer to this final ecumenical goal (cf. above, Section III, B). Recent texts show a common tendency to use the phrase ‘full, visible unity’ (or ‘full visible unity’) to refer to such a goal (see Meissen §7; Reuilly §22). Waterloo explicitly distinguishes the communion it establishes from the “full visible unity of the whole

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Church” (§D.9) toward which the two church’s pledged to work. While a more consistent ecumenical terminology would be desirable, past attempts to devise a common vocabulary (such as that of the 1952 Lund Faith and Order Conference) have not become widely accepted. Perhaps our understanding of such a final goal is necessarily too imprecise and too open to revision as we progress toward it to allow the development of a clear and agreed terminology.

- 181 Lutherans and Anglicans in official dialogue during the past three decades have attempted to keep the nature of the unity we seek clearly in mind. Specific dialogues as well the progress of other conversations in the larger ecumenical context have, however, given Anglicans and Lutherans occasional cause to restate the fundamental shape of and motivation for ecclesial unity.
- 182 Thus, in concert with others in the ecumenical movement, we have maintained constant reference to the classical locus of ecumenical motivation in John 17.20-22. At the same time, due to the very progress of dialogue, the nature of the unity we seek has come under scrutiny and re-evaluation. The goal of unity, for instance, is presently seen, not so much as an agenda to be achieved, but as a divine reality to be received, appropriated, and exhibited by the churches. This may be taken to be an exegesis of Jesus' prayer

*I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us...*

In this case, ecclesial unity is taken to be a deep and continuing sacramental expression of life together in the Triune God. Such ecumenism is much more, then, than simply meeting minimum standards for mutuality, removal of ecclesiastical obstacles, or the overcoming of previous difficulties between or among traditions.

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- 183 In the reflected light of such a life together, reconciled churches may indeed be able better to engage the mission of the Gospel with confidence that the hope of this fundamental ecumenical imperative can be sustained, namely, that the mission may be credible in the world to the extent that such unity is received, appropriated, and exhibited in the Church. There is, in other words, no lessening of the purpose of unity "so that the world may believe that you have sent me," but it is the reality of the divine life ecumenically lived out that informs mission.
- 184 The conclusion of this passage confirms the point: "The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one." Yet there is also here an eschatological dimension which energises the life and mission of the churches and beckons them beyond particular realisations of communion with one another. And precisely here is the present challenge for the future: (a) how can the ultimate goal of unity be described in such a way that present bi-lateral achievements between Lutherans and Anglicans forward rather than hinder future prospects; and (b) what wider connections or multilateral networks of mutuality might provide ways forward?

## IX. Summary and recommendations

- 185 As ALIWG reaches the end of its short-term mandate, it offers to its parent bodies the present report and recommendations. We believe that the task of monitoring Anglican-Lutheran relations carried out by the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) during 1986-1996 and by ALIWG during 2000-2002 needs to continue. In the light of its experience the Working Group has come to the view that a new, more long-range joint commission needs to be set up. A recommendation to this effect is presented below (point 5, cf. section VI B).

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186 The following brief summary is presented of the work carried out by the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group, arranged according to the points in its terms of reference. Added at each point are the relevant recommendations made by the Working Group.

### **1. Developments and progress in the regions**

187 The Working Group was asked to monitor developments and progress in Anglican-Lutheran relations in the various regions of the world and, where appropriate, encourage steps toward the goal of visible unity.

188 The Working Group has considered available information on Anglican-Lutheran relations in Africa, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe, India, Japan, the Middle East, and the USA. Requests were made for information from other places as well, but this did not result in a broader picture. The report provides assessments of the various developments and relations considered, taking into account the four practical steps suggested by the Niagara Report for realising full communion: Mutual recognition as churches, provisional structures of unity, possible changes of practices, and declaration of full communion.

189 Since the mid-1990s significant Anglican - Lutheran relations have developed in different parts of the world, most of them drawing on results achieved by the international Anglican-Lutheran dialogue. These relations continue to develop further in common life and mission and also toward more formal patterns of communion, sometimes under the guidance of specially established coordinating committees. However, communication among the regions regarding these developments remains uneven and uncoordinated.

190 In some parts of the world, there can be valuable ecumenical cooperation between Anglicans and Lutherans, even without substantial

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initiatives to establish formal church relations. Through its report, the Working Group draws attention to the ecumenical significance of formal agreements of communion relations with a view to the goal of visible unity.

### *Recommendation 1*

191 **We recommend that those responsible for Anglican-Lutheran contact groups or continuation bodies should be requested to keep the appropriate offices of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation informed of their meetings and activities and to send them copies of documents which may be of interest to other regions. The Working Group also recommends that the appropriate bodies of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation encourage Anglican-Lutheran church relations in areas where such relations have not yet been substantially developed.**

### **2. Consistency and coherence of the regional agreements**

192 The Working Group was asked to review the characteristics and theological rationales of current regional and national dialogues and agreements, particularly with reference to the concept of unity and to the understanding of apostolicity and episcopal ministry. This review would include an evaluation of their consistency and coherence with each other and with Anglican-Lutheran international agreed statements and would take note of issues of wider ecumenical compatibility.

193 The report provides an evaluation of the consistency and coherence of the different agreements reached on the basis of their foundational documents. Special focus is given to the descriptions in these documents of the goal of unity and the understanding and practices related to apostolicity and the episcopal ministry. The differing patterns of exercising *episcopate* among the Lutheran churches have meant that in

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some areas mutual recognition of ordained ministries is easier than in others. The observation is made that Anglicans and Lutherans approach unity on a regional and national basis, and that the contexts of their conversations influence the style, content and outcome of the agreements. Certain agreements are found to represent relations of church communion, whereas others represent various significant degrees of fellowship on the way toward communion. The report also discusses the presence within the various Anglican-Lutheran church relations of legitimate forms of diversity, of bearable anomalies and of issues that could possibly have a church-dividing effect.

- 194 The report provides an evaluation of the consistency and coherence among the various formal agreements involving Anglicans and Lutherans according to two aspects. The question is raised whether the various agreements are consistent in their use of foundational documents and concepts of unity, as well as other aspects (specified in the report, section II B). Such a consistency is found to be present, taking into account the different stages the agreements represent. ALIWG considers this task as having been completed. The report also considers the ecclesiological issues raised by the existing complex web of bilateral ecumenical relationships involving churches of various Christian world communions.

### *Recommendation 2:*

- 195 **The Working Group recommends that the appropriate bodies of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation, at the level of the two communions, receive this report's evaluation of the compatibility of the documents examined and welcome the achievements of the Anglican-Lutheran regional agreements.**

### 3. Implications for global Anglican-Lutheran relations

196 The Working Group was asked to explore the implications of regional developments for deepening and extending the global relationships between the Anglican and Lutheran Communion.

197 Two main perspectives, developed separately in the report, are important for understanding the implications of national and regional Anglican-Lutheran developments for the global relationship between the two world communions.

198 First, the report describes how the two world bodies understand themselves as Christian world communions. Although the historical and ecclesial differences between the two traditions are not insignificant, the international Anglican-Lutheran dialogue has shown that the two communions have important similarities in their doctrine as well as in their confessional and ecumenical self-understandings. An important common characteristic is that both communions see themselves as belonging to, and part of, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. National and regional communion agreements are entered into with a clear understanding of this wider, common ecclesial frame of reference.

199 Second, the report discusses in some detail whether bilateral agreements that have been reached between Anglican and Lutheran churches can be considered to apply to other churches in the same communions or to churches of other communions with which the relevant Anglican and Lutheran churches are also, or could be, in church fellowship. The report terms this issue 'transitivity'. In popular speech, it concerns "whether your friends are my friends also." The report maintains that bilateral ecumenical agreements that have been reached formally at national or regional level do not automatically extend to other church relations in which the parties find themselves, either within or beyond their own communion. In this perspective, the

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agreements reached do not *per se* have formal ecumenical implications more broadly, either within or between the Anglican and Lutheran communions globally. The Working group did, however, note certain ambiguities arising from communion with the See of Canterbury (see §163 above)

- 200 The ecumenical relations entered into by individual provinces / member churches are connected to, and influence, the character and self-understanding of the respective world communions. Important aspects of these agreements relate to the ways of overcoming our traditional difficulties with mutual recognition of episcopal ministries. Such formal agreements make a valuable contribution to the search for the full visible unity of the church. The ecumenical fruits that these agreements represent need to be recognised and appreciated at global level with regard to the self-understanding and the mutual relationship of the two communions, as well as the broader ecumenical movement.

### *Recommendation 3:*

- 201 The Working Group recommends that the appropriate bodies of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation welcome the Anglican-Lutheran agreements which have resulted in relations of communion in various regions; and take them into account in the development of their self-understanding as Christian world communions which are moving towards the full visible unity of the church.**

## **4. Interchangeability of ordained ministers**

- 202 Regional agreements do not automatically extend to other Anglican and Lutheran provinces / churches. Nevertheless, the Working Group sees here an ecumenical possibility. In regions where agreements have been signed that include the mutual interchangeability of ordained ministers, the provinces / churches could take actions to extend that

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interchangeability to ordained ministers from other regions where similar agreements have been signed.

### *Recommendation 4:*

**203 The Working Group recommends that the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation encourage Anglican and Lutheran provinces / churches which have signed agreements that include the mutual interchangeability of ordained ministers to take action at the synodical level to extend that interchangeability to ordained ministers from other regions which have also signed agreements, applying the terms of the relevant agreements appropriately, subject to the canonical provisions of their own churches.**

## **5. Hospitality toward individuals**

204 Even though regional agreements do not automatically extend to other Anglican and Lutheran provinces / churches, the Working Group sees that there could be a basis, in the light of the regional agreements that have been achieved, and that the Working Group has found to be compatible, for such provinces / churches that have not yet entered into a formal agreement, nevertheless to extend sacramental and pastoral hospitality to individual members and ordained ministers from other Anglican / Lutheran churches. The global movement of laity and clergy among our churches makes this a growing need. Such hospitality might also include invitations to visiting clergy to exercise ministerial functions subject to local permission.

### *Recommendation 5:*

**205 In the light of the regional agreements that have been achieved, which the Working Group has found to be compatible, the Working Group recommends that provinces / churches that have**

**not yet entered into a formal agreement, should consider extending sacramental and pastoral hospitality to individual lay members and ordained ministers from other Anglican / Lutheran churches. Such hospitality might also include invitations to visiting clergy to exercise ministerial functions subject to local permission. The Working Groups recommends the appropriate bodies of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation to consider this possibility.**

## **6. Further contact and co-operation**

206 The Working Group was asked to propose forms of closer contact and co-operation between the international instruments of both communions, in specific projects and programmes and in addressing practical issues.

207 The Working Group has discussed various possible instruments of contact and co-operation between the communions at the international level. It welcomes first of all the fact that the practice of holding annual Joint Staff Meetings, which the Working Group considered at its first meeting, has already been put into effect at the level of the Secretary General (Anglican Communion) and the General Secretary (The Lutheran World Federation) and relevant staff persons from both sides. In addition, the Working Group sees possibilities for contact and co-operation in certain specific areas described in the recommendation below:

### *Recommendation 6:*

**208 The Working Group recommends that contact and cooperation between the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation at the worldwide level be furthered by the following instruments:**

- 209** *Programmatic cooperation.* Relevant offices and agencies of the two communions should develop ways of sharing tasks and resources in such areas as: worship and liturgy, Christian education, gender issues, human rights and international affairs, and diaconal services.
- 210** *Theological education and research.* Increased ecumenical awareness, knowledge and understanding can be fostered among students by encouraging church-related centers of learning and research to prioritise ecumenical co-operation whenever possible in different disciplines. Helpful initiatives might include offering credit for ecumenical training, ecumenical exchanges of faculty and students, and networking among Anglican and Lutheran seminaries in the area of theological and ecumenical research.
- 211** *Consultations.* In the past, occasional consultations on specific issues have proved fruitful, e.g. the Niagara consultation in 1987 on ‘Episcopate in relation to the Mission of the Church’, the Harare consultation in 1992 on African issues and the West Wickham consultation in 1995 on the renewed diaconate. We recommend that from time to time further consultations should be held on central issues of common concern, preferably in different parts of the world.
- 212** *Ordination candidates and ordained ministers.* We recommend that, where Anglican-Lutheran agreements have been reached, the theological formation of ordination candidates should include study of the other tradition's identity, practices and foundational documents. Any ordained minister who intends to serve within the other tradition should receive training as to the customs and practices of that tradition.
- 213** *Meetings of church leaders.* Such meetings could possibly take place every three years, and should include church leaders, together with

theologians, from various regions of the world, also including such regions where formal Anglican-Lutheran relations are not yet established. Such meetings could find it useful to focus on topics that have also been dealt with in consultations (cf. point c).

**214** *Mutual visits and common action by church leaders.* Mutual visits of Anglican and Lutheran church leaders at global or regional levels should be encouraged. Joint visits by such leaders to public authorities and other churches should also be encouraged.

## **7. Future**

215 The Working Group was asked to advise whether an Anglican-Lutheran International Commission should be appointed and to recommend the issues that require further dialogue.

216 In view of the solid theological progress already made, the Working Group believes that, whilst a commission for theological dialogue is not required at the present time, a more permanent body is needed to maintain the focus and momentum of global Anglican-Lutheran relations.

### *Recommendation 7:*

**217** The Working Group recommends that a new Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) should be set up. It should be appointed for four years at a time by the appropriate bodies of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation. The commission should consist of church leaders and theologians. Persons who have not had a long history with Anglican-Lutheran relations should be included along with persons experienced in this area. Its composition should enable proper communication between the Anglican-Lutheran contact groups or continuation bodies related to the agreements achieved in different regions, with

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**a view to broad information sharing and possible co-ordination of initiatives. The mandate of the commission should include:**

- A. Monitoring and stimulating the continued development of Anglican-Lutheran relations around the world,**
- B. Consideration of ways to promote the role and contribution of the Christian world communions in the wider ecumenical movement, and**
- C. Facilitating the implementation of those recommendations by this Working Group that the appropriate bodies of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation approve.**

## Appendix I

### Members of the Anglican – Lutheran International Working Group

#### Lutheran Members:

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London, England

Appendix II

Structures of the Communions

and their instruments for consultation and decision making.

**A. The LWF as a Communion**

- 218 Before the Second World War Lutheran churches held gatherings of a consultative nature in the Lutheran World Convention. The need for a stronger LWF emerged in the aftermath of the war, in order to provide coordinated church relief for refugees in Europe and promote reconciliation among the Lutheran churches.
- 219 The ecclesial profile of the LWF as a global organisation has undergone a significant development since its establishment in 1947. The decisions taken by the Seventh Assembly in Budapest (1984) stand out as particularly significant in this regard. After a broad consultative process over several years, a decision was made that membership in the LWF involved being in pulpit and altar fellowship with all the other member churches. At the same time it was made clear that the Lutheran communion of churches does not see itself independently of, but as an expression of the wider fellowship of the universal Christian church.
- 220 In its statement on the self-understanding and task of the LWF the Seventh Assembly stated:

*This Lutheran communion of churches finds its visible expression in pulpit and altar fellowship, in common witness and service, in the joint fulfilment of the missionary task and in openness to ecumenical cooperation, dialogue, and community. The Lutheran churches of the world consider their communion as an expression of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Thus, they are committed to work for the manifestation of the unity of the church given in Jesus Christ.*

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*The LWF is an expression and instrument of this communion. It assists it to become more and more a conciliar, mutually committed communion by furthering consultation and exchange among its member churches and other churches of the Lutheran tradition as well as by furthering mutual participation in each other's joys, sufferings, and struggles. (LWF Report 19/20, p. 176).*

- 221 As a consequence of the decisions of the Seventh Assembly, the Eighth Assembly in Curitiba (1990) adopted a change in the LWF constitution describing the Federation as a communion of churches. Since Budapest and Curitiba, ecumenical theology has intensified its focus on the understanding of the church as *communion* or *koinonia*. In many ways, the developments and actions taken by the LWF in 1984 and 1990 point ahead to some of the current developments of the ecumenical movement.
- 222 The governing bodies of the LWF are the Assembly, meeting as a rule every six years, and the Council, meeting once a year. These two bodies have the authority to make decisions that are binding for the communion that is the LWF.
- 223 In addition to decisions of structural and programmatic nature, the governing bodies have also taken some decisions pertaining to church discipline and doctrine.
- 224 In 1977 the Sixth Assembly in Dar-es-Salaam decided that the practice of racial discrimination in the Church brought into question the *status confessionis* of the churches involved. On that basis, the Eight Assembly suspended the membership of two member churches in South Africa. This membership has since been restored, after changes introduced.
- 225 In 1999 the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church signed jointly the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, expressing that there is a consensus in basic truths regarding justification and that the 16<sup>th</sup> century mutual condemnations concerning justification do not apply to the teaching by the two partners as expressed in the Joint Declaration.

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- 226 The member churches of the LWF remain autonomous. Decisions by the LWF Council or Assembly apply to the common life of the world communion as such. Decisions that have impact on the common life of the communion can only be reached if there is a firm basis for the decisions among the member churches. The churches which did not vote in favour of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, or who voted against it, remain members of a communion that nevertheless has only one official position on the issue, expressed in the Council decisions of 1998 and 1999.
- 227 The LWF regards the development of its communion as a contribution to the one ecumenical movement. The building of fellowship among individual churches living in various regions of the world is a complex process. The Christian world communions can contribute to this among its own member churches in ways that differ from, or lie beyond, the possibilities of other ecumenical instruments. This is an important factor to consider, in the context of the World Council of Churches as well as by the various Christian world communions, as the communions move closer to each other in bilateral and multilateral relations.

### **B. Instruments of the Anglican Communion – their development and authority**

- 228 The 1930 Lambeth Conference in resolution 49 agreed a helpful description of the nature of the Anglican Communion:

*The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, which have the following characteristics in common:*

- (a) they uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their several Churches;*

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*(b) they are particular or national Churches, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a national expression of Christian faith, life and worship;*

*(c) they are bound together not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference.*

229 Today, there are over 70 million Anglicans in 38 provinces and 8 extra-provincial churches world-wide. As Anglicanism spread beyond the shores of Great Britain and Ireland, as a result of British colonisation, provinces were formed, each with its own episcopal and synodical structures for maintaining the life of the Church. Today, the various independent Anglican Churches are governed by synods which recognise bishops' authority in some form as crucial and distinct, but which include not only presbyteral representation, but also lay representation. Each province too has developed some form of primatial office in the role of archbishop or presiding bishop.

230 In the development of the Anglican Communion to this time, there is no legislative authority above the provincial level. Nevertheless, while each province maintains the legal and juridical right to govern its way of life, in practice, there has been an implicit understanding of belonging together and being interdependent within a world-wide Communion. Today Anglicans recognise four 'world-wide instruments of communion' or structures of unity in the Communion: The Lambeth Conference, the Primates Meeting, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first three of these instruments are meetings or councils, and are all recent in origin, relatively speaking. The office of Archbishop of Canterbury is the only instrument with a history longer than 150 years.

231 The first Lambeth Conference took place, at Lambeth Palace, the London seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1867 and was called to address an issue, which threatened to divide the Communion. It is unlikely that the 76 bishops who gathered at that time understood that such gatherings of

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bishops would become a regular feature of Anglican life. Today, the Lambeth Conference is a gathering of all the diocesan bishops of the Communion, and takes place every 10 years. The most recent Conferences included suffragan and assistant bishops as well, either a representative number, or all who are active, as was the case in 1998 when close to 800 bishops in total gathered at the University of Kent in Canterbury. The Lambeth Conference, although not a legislative body, does pass resolutions which provide an interesting and representative snapshot of the mind of the Communion on the issues of the day, every decade or so. It seeks to be a way to strengthen the unity of the Communion, but through the experience of the entire college of bishops taking counsel together, in the context of prayer and discussion, for the good of the whole Church. At times, provinces have taken resolutions passed at Lambeth Conferences to their own synods for a binding resolution, but this is not an automatic process.

- 232 The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) came into being out of a resolution of the 1968 Lambeth Conference. It was set up to share information, advise on inter-Anglican relations (division and formation of provinces), agree policies in world mission, and to foster collaboration and maintain dialogues and relations with other Christian Churches. It is the only body in global Anglicanism that has a constitution and legal standing. It meets every 3 years in different parts of the Communion and has a standing committee, which meets annually. Every province is assigned from 1 to 3 members depending on its population. As the Council is made up of bishops, other clergy and laity, some might say that the ACC is the 'synodical' instrument of global Anglicanism, inasmuch as the whole people of God are represented. Again, as with the Lambeth Conference, the decisions of ACC are not binding on provinces unless action is taken at the provincial level to make them so.
- 233 The first Primates' Meeting was held in 1979 following a proposal by the Lambeth Conference the year before. The meetings are supposed to be for 'mutual counsel and pastoral care' (see 'The Virginia Report' in *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, p. 61). It has met about every 2 years, although in recent years the tendency is towards annual

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meetings, at the specific request of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In practice, the Primates' Meeting, as a meeting of *bishops* does provide for a way for the global episcopate of the Anglican Communion to be consulted, in a limited, but somewhat representative way, between Lambeth Conferences. It is thus a useful instrument for individual Primates to test out regional concerns within the wider Church. The Primates' Meeting does not pass resolutions, but seeks to communicate pastoral messages to the Churches by letter or statement.

- 234 These three instruments of the Communion are presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, either in an honorary capacity (in the case of the ACC which elects its own chairman), or in an active convening and presiding role, in the case of the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meetings. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the link, which interweaves all the other instruments, besides the Anglican Communion Secretariat, which staffs them. Thus the primacy of honour which the Archbishop of Canterbury holds within the college of Anglican bishops is enhanced by his visible role in gathering and presiding over the other instruments. To be an Anglican it is necessary to be in Communion with him, although Churches in Communion with the See of Canterbury are not necessarily Anglican.
- 235 The instruments of Anglican unity are still developing. Reports and resolutions pose some sharp questions about the inter-relatedness of the current instruments and their authority. At various levels in the Communion study is ongoing about how the structures of communion at a world level can become more effective tools to strengthen the Communion and guard its unity.

## Appendix III

### Acronyms

AAALC	All Africa Anglican Lutheran Commission
ACC	Anglican Consultative Council
AELC	Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches
ALC	American Lutheran Church
ALIC	Anglican Lutheran International Commission
ALICC	Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee
ALIWG	Anglican Lutheran International Working Group
BEM	Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (WCC Faith and Order Commission 1982)
CCM	Called to Common Mission
CLAD	Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue
CONIC	<i>Conselho Nacional das Igrejas Cristãs</i> (National Council of Christian Churches)
CWC	Christian World Communions
ECUSA	Episcopal Church of the United States of America
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCIC	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
EKD	Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
FGR	Federal German Republic
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IASCER	Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations
LCA	Lutheran Church in America
LCMS	Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
LED	Lutheran Episcopal Dialogue (in the USA)
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
PCS	Porvoo Common Statement