

A black and white photograph of a well. The well is a circular hole in the ground, lined with rough-hewn stones. At the top of the well, there is a wooden structure that appears to be a pulley or a frame for drawing water. The well is situated in a grassy area, and a wooden fence is visible in the background. The overall scene is rural and somewhat aged.

**DRAWING FROM  
THE SAME WELL**

THE ST. BRIGID REPORT



ST. BRIGID (also spelled Bridget, and in England, Bride)

Brigid, daughter of a Celtic chieftain in eastern Ireland, was born about 453, and baptized by St. Patrick shortly before his death. A leader of the second generation of Irish Christianity, she became abbess of a community of women and men in Kildare, on the site of a pre-Christian ancient shrine to the Celtic goddess of the same name. Brigid was famed for her hospitality and generosity toward the poor. Tradition claims that she was also consecrated a bishop, which, if true, means she was the last woman bishop in the Christian Church until the late twentieth-century. In Ireland she is known as “Mary of the Gaels,” and girls are often given her name. Brigid died about 523.

Her feast day is February 1, the ancient Celtic feast of Imbolc, the first day of spring in Ireland, and a time of preparation for the planting of crops and the celebration of new life. Many wells in Ireland bear her name.

DRAWING FROM  
THE SAME WELL  
THE ST. BRIGID REPORT

A Report of the  
Anglican-United Church Dialogue 2003–2009  
Completed in Calgary on February 1, 2009 — St. Brigid's Day

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Drawing from the Same Well: The St. Brigid Report

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# INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In winter 2003, twelve persons named by The Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and The United Church of Canada (UCC) met in Vancouver to consider their new mandate to explore the relationship between our two churches. It was clear to us from the outset that we were not commissioned to prepare plans for a new “church union,” a successor to the failed project of the 1970s. What we should make our task was initially less obvious.

Over the past six years (2003–2009) we have met twice yearly, in various corners of Canada. We have explored various facets of our relationship, including looking at matters that still seem to distinguish us from each other, or for some, to divide. But above all, we have listened. Listened to each other, and listened as people from all parts of this country told of the ways in which our two great churches intersect in their lives, in their families, in their communities, in the nation, and in our world. We gathered stories of theological education, and how nearly all our clergy now train in settings where they interact daily with the other tradition. We heard stories of Ecumenical Shared Ministries — where Anglican and United Church people, as well as in many instances Lutherans, Presbyterians, and others, have learned, not without struggle, to live in a variety of patterns as one congregation of Christ’s Church. We have heard from chaplains of the Canadian Forces; from hospital and prison ministries; from Indigenous ministries; and from those engaged in social justice ministries, especially through KAIROS — and everywhere people had stories to tell. Stories of the creative energy of God’s Spirit at work in our relationship. Stories, also, that remind us that grasping too tightly to our particularities may be hurtful, may be a stumbling block to our fulfilment of God’s mission in our world.

Over these six years our respect for what God is doing amongst us has grown. We have decided that the time has come to pause in our meetings, and to share with you, Anglican and United Church people across our nation, some of these stories, and the conclusions we have drawn. We want to set before all of us the challenge of our relationship. We have now issued *Drawing From the Same Well: The St. Brigid Report, A Report of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue, 2003–2009*. We invite you to read, to listen, and to ask with us whether God is calling us into a new stage in our common life. And finally, we encourage you to respond as you feel moved, to help us discern the direction we pursue in the next phase of this Dialogue. Emails can be sent to [abarnettcowan@national.anglican.ca](mailto:abarnettcowan@national.anglican.ca) or [gallan@united-church.ca](mailto:gallan@united-church.ca) or responses can be mailed to The Anglican-United Church Dialogue at the addresses printed on the copyright page.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. Dr. William H. Harrison



The Rev. Dr. Robert H. Mills

# THE UNITY WE SHARE

When we meet as Anglican and United Churches, we know we have inherited a long history of dialogue. We meet, too, in the shadow of failed attempts, notably in 1967-75, to accomplish the organic union of our two churches in Canada. This history may make it difficult at first for us to appreciate the unity that we already share. The relationship of our two churches has continued to unfold since 1975. Across Canada, nearly all our leadership formation, both clergy and lay, now takes place in schools where Anglican and United Church people study, pray, and celebrate together, in some instances in virtually all aspects of their program. Both churches now ordain women, and in both our churches women are integral to all forms of ministry.

Conversations today take place within a wider ecumenical context. Both churches are active and respected members of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Throughout the world dialogues are taking place that wrestle, as we do, with the particular inherited issues that have impeded the road to greater unity. The sharing of insights gained in these has helpfully enriched our conversations. It is apparent that dimensions of the understanding and practice of ordered ministry remain problematic between us. But we note our shared participation and general accord on the WCC Faith and Order statements on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), and that these statements now have a central place in the theological formation of all our future clergy. Both of us, then, have benefited from wider ecumenical dialogues, and their insights and explorations are suggestive of new avenues for our Canadian experience.

The formal resumption of our dialogue in 2003 came with a significant new dimension. In 2001, The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) entered into full communion, and this new model of ecumenical relationship has stimulated and encouraged the renewal of this dialogue. Our churches wisely chose to request the appointment of a Lutheran observer to these talks. The Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, of Lutheran Theological Seminary (Saskatoon), has been an invaluable participant; his concluding theological reflections at each meeting have helped to name evasions, identify blind spots, and stimulate us to seek greater clarity and precision in our mutual understandings.

Recent decades — even in the absence of formal dialogue — have seen significant development in our relationship. We have continued and broadened our longstanding and healthy partnership with other Canadian churches in various chaplaincies, in universities, hospitals, prisons, and notably in the Canadian Forces. After years of working together in social justice coalitions, our two churches have made full commitment and taken leadership in the remarkable development of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, the common engagement in the mission of God in our nation and the world. At the congregational level, there are extraordinary stories of the various forms, each unique, taken in Ecumenical Shared Ministries. We observe, with gratitude, convergences as well as parallels in our worship lives: in particular, in the shared development of Christian education,

liturgical and lectionary resources, and we note the growing centrality of table fellowship in the worship experienced in the United Church. Today, too, both churches affirm the essential role of episcopal leadership in our communal life, while recognizing that this may be effected differently, both in individuals and in corporate structures. Finally, the notion of affirming a *consensus* in the essentials of faith and practice that does not require uniformity in all details of our life, and the sense of living with acceptable differences suggest helpful roads to pursue together in our quest for the greater unity of Christ's Body.

Our Dialogue has been blessed by the presence of Indigenous members. Together we have also agonized over our mutual responsibility for the tragic history of the residential schools established for Indigenous students, that we administered for the Canadian government. Each of us continues to struggle with the ongoing negative consequences of Christian colonialism. The Indigenous peoples of Canada were its first victims, but all of us need to walk together the road of healing from our broken past, in the common journey toward spiritual wholeness.

In our six years of conversations, we have been agreeably surprised at the breadth and depth of our common life. In our own conversations, too, we have concluded that for us both, the mission of God in the world is the key to our common lives. We also recognize that God's grace is at work and effective in both our traditions. Historically, in both our churches our identity has been strongly formed by a sense of call to mission to the entire nation. To that mission we bring today a variety of gifts and graces that the apostle Paul would recognize (Romans 12). Anglican historic rootedness in the worldwide Anglican Communion offers a catholicity of perspective that can help liberate from nationalist chauvinism. The forging of the United Church in the era of Canadian nation building offers a vigorous contextuality and pragmatism that can help focus our service to God's mission in the world in the particularities of this culture. When old resentments are replaced by respect and gratitude for the complementarity of these gifts, the door is open for becoming partners in advancing into God's future, together seeking those things that bring "mutual up-building."

It is in this spirit that we present this progress report from our Dialogue.

## SHARING OUR UNITY: ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES

*Is your parish church feeling empty? Are you without clergy? Has your budget stretched beyond your means? Well, WE may have an ecumenical solution for you!*

Ecumenical Shared Ministries often have proven to be positive answers for these three questions. All across Canada, in numerous communities, congregations have found a way to be truly ecumenical through shared ministry. Many of these parishes have shared in some way for 30, 40 or more years. There are hundreds of shared ministries in Canada with a variety of patterns, each with a unique experience: one minister, two congregations; two congregations, one building; several denominations, one service; one service, several buildings – there are so many ways in which people are sharing in God's service! In times of change, congregations look to those around them for support. Sometimes they find companions – other people facing similar challenges – and in some of those cases they find the potential for a new relationship.

St. Peter's Ecumenical Church in Slave Lake, Alberta, is a wonderful example of Anglican, Lutheran, United, and other folk worshipping together each Sunday. From the origins of a few people from each of these three denominations a thriving congregation has developed, recently celebrating its 30th anniversary of shared ministry. One clergy, one church building, and rotating denominational services have been the ecumenical route these Christians have taken. They have learned to celebrate their sameness and appreciate their differences, learning to see the face of God in each other.

### *A legacy of unity*

For the Riverside Churches of Ottawa, Inc., shared ministry is nothing new; it's a way of life. The Riverside United Church and the Anglican Church of the Resurrection share one worship space, which they built together in 1969. Non-profit incorporation helped to answer questions arising from the joint effort of two very different denominational polities. The fruitfulness of cooperative living is expressed in shared summer and other services, a common Vacation Bible School, as well as joint outreach projects such as AIDS vigils and Amnesty International write-a-thons.

### *Great! And how's that going?*

Over the course of their shared ministry, the Riverside Churches have found their arrangement at times both challenging and rewarding. Coordinating the use of spaces, operating two congregational offices in one, and remaining simultaneously consistent and flexible requires dedication and patience. The balance of distinct and shared identities has to remain fluid. Yet the people of the Riverside Churches will soon be celebrating 40 years of facing these challenges together and it's an anniversary they anticipate with joy.

*A recent witness*

With a long and vibrant history in Ottawa, First United found that its reputation as a welcoming and healing presence within the city was being challenged by the financial responsibilities of its building. At the same time, the congregation of All Saints' Anglican Westboro was looking for new ways to utilize its church's spaces and to continue its own outreach. After discussions and opportunities to meet together, in 2007 All Saints' invited First United to consider the church building at All Saints' their new home.

*How do you welcome 100 people into your home?*

Having prayed and worshipped together in their sanctuary for the last time, the congregation of First United set out in the direction of their new home in Westboro. However, they didn't have to walk alone. The members of All Saints' met them part way on their journey, placed red scarves around the necks of their new partners in shared ministry, and walked back to Westboro with them, welcoming them to their home.

These are just three ways that Anglican and United Church people are sharing their ministries. What continues to inspire our Dialogue are the many other ways in which people of both denominations continue to find ways of turning times of great challenge into opportunities for discerning a new way forward. When we are bold enough to ask openly what might build God's community, we are already cutting new ground.

There are many diverse and workable ways shared ministry can be established. You may want to develop or even just investigate a different version of shared ministry. An Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook has been developed to help you decide and use as a valuable resource. You may access this information by contacting your national church office or visit [www.anglican.ca](http://www.anglican.ca) or [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).

 *“How do we understand unity and diversity? Connected with that are two other questions: first, how do we decide what is ‘helpful’ diversity and ‘harmful’ diversity (and who decides this!)? Second, in our world today, what kind of unity among the churches is going to make a difference to people who don’t have either the time or interest in many of the things you most strongly feel to be a part of your histories and identities?”*

— GORDON JENSEN

# ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES

The ACC-UCC National Dialogue was given as a high priority the task of addressing shared ministry issues. During our time together we have visited various shared ministries, spoken with those involved including military chaplains, interviewed faculty at theological schools across Canada, and attended the most recent Collaborative Ministries Conference in Saskatoon facilitated by the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism.

We were informed that a regional conference had been held annually for many years in Grande Prairie, Alberta, sponsored by the Anglican, United, Evangelical Lutheran, and Presbyterian Churches. Judicatories of these four denominations initiated and attended these events. In an effort to aid shared ministries through some of their unique difficulties a **Shared Ministries Resource Kit** was compiled and completed for distribution at the January 1999 event. It included the following introduction:

With the decline of church membership particularly in remote isolated areas of Canada, but now also in urban centres, the idea of Shared Ministry has evolved. The tiny congregations from different denominations worship together and together may be able to continue as a community of faith in an alternate form. Because of the different theological, legal and statistical requirements of each denomination, this process is not so simple as it might at first seem. Therefore, those with experience in this dimension of ministry have put together this information package to help interested Christians explore the possibilities of shared ministry.

With this document and military chaplaincy materials the Dialogue members prepared the first draft of a larger ecumenical handbook. The group edited this until a final draft had been developed.

At this time the Dialogue members proposed that Lutherans and Presbyterians be invited to a common table with Anglican and United Church people to discuss shared ministry issues. There would be overlap with the Dialogue and theological conceptions or misconceptions might be uncovered that would need further discussion.

In November 2006 a National Ecumenical Shared Ministries Working Group was formed involving the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Churches in Canada. The members were to collect and disseminate resources about Ecumenical Shared Ministries. Using the material the Dialogue presented to them, they made more revisions, primarily by the addition of Lutheran and Presbyterian definitions. Each church examined its laws to see if there could be a way to create a category of “Ecumenical Shared Ministries” that would be treated as pastoral exceptions, working with guidelines developed by the task group. A formal **Handbook for**

**Ecumenical Shared Ministries** is now available through each of these denominational national offices and their websites, as well as the Moravian Church in Canada in Calgary and the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism in Saskatoon.

## Recommendation

- That our churches be proactive in considering Ecumenical Shared Ministry as a positive choice, both for congregations and for outreach and mission projects in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

### ECUMENICAL MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

“Serving as a military chaplain for the last twenty years has truly taught me the meaning of ecumenical and interfaith work. As a United Church minister serving rural and city churches, I thought I was quite forward thinking. I was part of a ministerial; I ventured to ‘interfaith-events’; I read and tried to understand the perspectives of others. Working in the ecumenical environment of the Canadian Forces chaplaincy pushes you to another level of understanding. The understanding of ecumenism moves from something that you do, to something you live, and something that rests at the foundation of every facet of your ministry. Let me try to explain with an example.

“Although ideal, it is not always possible on training or deployed operations to provide both a Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplain to officiate at weekly worship services. As a chaplain deployed to Kosovo, I was the only chaplain covering a large territory; I was the one who led four worship services each Sunday in different units living across the war-torn land. I led worship for the soldiers of all denominations with whom I lived and visited on a daily basis. We became friends, confidantes, and part of each other’s lives. Like any parish minister, I learned the names of their family members, their concerns; we laughed and prayed together. Not all were from my UCC tradition, but when it came to Sunday, we all worshipped together. I think in this there is a vision of what Christ would have expected of a community of faith. Those who work and live together also pray and serve together without boundaries. There was no going our separate ways on Sunday because we worshipped in different Christian churches. The gathering of different denominations together also created great discussion, which deepened all our understanding of our faith.

“This ‘worshipping together’ is mirrored in Canada where all Protestant denominations share a chapel and we come together for special services on induction of new chaplains, for instance, in a service that includes our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ as well as Muslim and Jewish chaplains. What I want to emphasize is that the tradition has to learn to stand beside the service that is required of a chaplain.

“I want to stress, too, that it is important to be grounded in and understand one’s own faith tradition. This, I believe, is the only true way we can enter into an ecumenical form of ministry. Only in understanding where we come from and ‘feeling comfortable in our own skin’ can we enter in a non-threatening way a workplace with others who have a different perspective than we do.”

— Lt. Col. Laurelle Callaghan



Photos: St. Peter's Ecumenical Church, Slave Lake, Alberta

# INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE UCC AND ACC

Our journey with the churches has been both blessed and hurtful. It has resulted in the formation of the All Native Circle Conference (ANCC) and the Anglican Council of Indigenous People (ACIP).

One experience that we as a Dialogue took part in was to visit Indigenous ministries in Winnipeg. We visited the Indian Family Centre, a storefront ministry run by the Christian Reformed Church; Rossbrook House youth ministries, run by the Roman Catholic Church and Circle of Life; and Thunderbird House, which is a traditional Teaching Lodge. Earlier in the Dialogue, we visited the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre, an Indigenous college run by the United Church.

We had lunch with the staff of the All Native Circle Conference and talked about their ministry.

We saw how Indigenous people experience the church in an urban setting.

The only ministry that is run out of a church is Agape Table at All Saints' Anglican Church. The aftermath of the residential schools for both our churches has shown us that church structures are still places where many Indigenous people feel very uncomfortable.

A sign of reconciliation between traditional elders and Christian ministries may be seen at funeral wakes and funerals. Drums and the smudging (purification ceremony) of the church and casket are elements that would not be included ten years ago.

Another form of healing happens at gospel jamborees, an ecumenical events where all denominations are invited.

## Recommendations

- That the churches ensure that Indigenous people continue to be part of the Dialogue, and encourage the Aboriginal Ministries Council of The United Church of Canada and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples to have dialogue at each other's gatherings.
- We encourage all members of both churches to find opportunities to learn about the wisdom and traditions of Indigenous peoples.

## WALK FOR HEALING

Since 2004 several churches in Winnipeg come together each year on the third Sunday of Advent for a gospel jamboree. This weekend event draws primarily Indigenous people from all over Manitoba and northwest Ontario in what we call a Walk for Healing. Singers and preachers from both our churches are interspersed with praise, testimony, and prayers for healing. Central to the weekend is a great feast on Saturday night, when volunteers from all over Winnipeg serve traditional foods to hundreds of participants, and others who come in from the bitter-cold streets. In 2007 the featured preacher, Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, drew many visitors to meet and hear this extraordinary man who is able to bridge traditional and Christian cultures, and bring all of us together around the gospel.

## TRADITIONAL/NON-TRADITIONAL

*Metoni-Kayas – A very long time ago.*

It is difficult to describe traditional. Traditional knowledge is a part of the identity of most Indigenous communities. The concept of traditional knowledge is too varied to have a single definition. As such, a definition would be hurtful (prejudicial?) to the various forms of knowledge that are held by traditional communities.

“We come from an oral tradition, not a literal one.”

When you gain spiritual understanding through the teachings of your own cultures, only then can you see all human beings are created equal and endure equally.

*History of Non-Traditional*

“1492” The start of destruction of social, spiritual, cultural systems and relations.

First contact . . . the reigning power destroyed the spiritual self-confidence of the people they ruled. Among their destructive ideas is original sin, the separation of humans from each other, from nature and from Kise Manito (Creator).

Still, to this day we obey the original instruction. Love, Honour, Respect for all things in the circle of life.

*The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

In September 2007 the UN General Assembly adopts the Declaration with an overwhelming majority of 143 votes in favour; only Canada, the U.S., New Zealand, and Australia were opposed, with 11 abstentions. The Declaration has been negotiated through more than 20 years between non-status and Indigenous peoples.

“The Declaration does not represent solely the viewpoint of the UN, nor does it represent solely the viewpoints of Indigenous peoples. It is a declaration which combines our views and interests and which set the framework for the future. It is a tool for peace and justice, based upon mutual recognition and respect.”

Dialogue that has come from United Church/Anglican

Mutual recognition  
Look for greater unity  
Obstacles

This is what I see coming from the two denominations.

The declaration may be a guide for

Other religious systems  
Indigenous peoples  
Civil society

In making the theme of the twenty-first century of Canada's Indigenous people "Partnership for Action and Dignity" a reality.

Religion is an enlightenment of one's understanding of themselves.

We became divided under the tree of life during our historical journey; it took us into two separate paths. Treaties broken, tears fell, children cried in boarding schools as their umbilical culture was cut away by the white hand.

Time clicked on, every second moving into another horizon. Our old songs and ceremonies echoed off the wind into silence.

With Indian tongue silenced in the thoughts of our children, a new culture would be born out of spite and ignorance; we became assimilated.

Our ancestors assumed that all human beings would honour the Great Spirit when making an agreement or vow, but this did not happen.

Justice

"I am not sick,  
I am broken."

Treat the earth well, it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

Throughout this land many tribes are slowly reclaiming identity. As we move into the twenty-first century many Ancestors' echoes are finally being answered.

"Let us put our minds together and see what kind of life  
we can make for our children."

Sitting Bull (Lakota)

So many young ones lose their heritage and do not know who they are. To give them wings, you have to give them roots first.

Our Indian prophecies. The seventh generation is about responsibility. This generation is the generation that will move the North American Indian into the realm of justice and freedom.

Since 1492, 517 years ago, our tribes have vanished. At one time we were 80,000,000 plus strong. Survival is our hope and this is history that we teach our youth. Mentoring and coaching lost languages is the theme of identity.

What happened in the past will never leave us; we have to deal with it.

1920–1930 Christian teachings of the superiority of the white race. Demographers were noting a decline in the population of the First Nations and predicting their extinction.

Release #5 Jan. 15, 2008 – Indian, Métis, Inuit population – 1,172,790 Registered Indians. Census:

50,485 Inuit

389,785 Métis

698,025 Status Indian

All My Relations

— Russel Burns

# THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

In the course of our meetings, the Dialogue has been impressed with the degree to which theological education happens ecumenically today. We have seen a variety of examples across Canada, from coast to coast, in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. We have encountered serious efforts to do together what can be done together, so that students, clergy, and scholars are more likely to have a real understanding of other kinds of Christianity. There is no substitute for the kind of conversation that occurs when people work on serious theological questions in the same classroom.

However, theological education is not merely a classroom matter. Much of the real work of learning and growing happens through informal encounters in the chapel, cafeteria, or study sessions. Here, efforts to be in close proximity to one another shine, offering the chance to swap stories, share advice, and participate in the joys and sorrows of life in other church contexts. Together, people in ecumenical theological arrangements are able to meet church life in all its richness and complexity, which is excellent preparation for whatever life brings.

We have discovered some challenges for theological education for the twenty-first-century church. One of the most pressing has to do with relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We yearn to see theological education undertaken in ways that honour the wisdom of Indigenous people. We hope to see theological education ensuring that non-Indigenous theological students gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture, theology, history, and perspectives. We hope to see our churches, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, working in partnership to create a learning environment in which all are challenged and yet in which all feel at home.

Since 1986 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students have been studying together in the Native Ministries Consortium Summer School at Vancouver School of Theology.

In addition, we hope to see increased preparation for work in Ecumenical Shared Ministries contexts. Common theological training is helpful, but more specific focus on Ecumenical Shared Ministries is necessary to meet the particular challenges raised by this form of church. We note that ecumenical theological education is uniquely equipped to respond to these challenges.

## LEARNING TOGETHER

Imagine this: a small town in rural Canada where the clergy of three churches, United, Anglican, and Roman Catholic, had all studied and trained at the same theological school! That was the case in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia. Although they had not been students at the same time, their mutual respect and common experiences fostered a special spirit of co-operation and opportunities for shared ministry. This spilled over into their congregations such that it became possible to embark on a Vacation Bible School together. Lay people, children, and clergy all enjoyed getting to know each other better in Christian fellowship. "When I walk down the street now, children I didn't know before say hello and wave to me! I can stop and chat with any of them!"

The founders of the Atlantic School of Theology (1971) had such a vision. For more than three decades now, clergy and lay people have worshipped and studied together at AST. They have fanned out across the Atlantic Provinces, and indeed across the country, making such co-operation more possible than it might have been (and even resulting in clergy marriages crossing denominations!). This story is but one example. Imagine more! How can you put this shared training and experience to work for you in your community?

## WORKING TOGETHER

In Brooklyn, Hants County, Nova Scotia, members of the Anglican and United Churches have frequently joined in study programs together, during Lent for example. In 2006 they participated in the KAIROS study on water. Their mutual concern for the issues raised in both global and local contexts led to engagement with the local community through a community watershed protection society, The Avon Peninsula Water Protection Society. Ecumenical learning and commitment made this action possible.

# STUDY GUIDE

Because the Dialogue had encountered a remarkable degree of growth in understanding and wanted to be accountable to the churches and include them in this process, it prepared a study guide and process for our churches, and requested feedback from them. Among the aims of the study guide were:

- To share with the churches what the Dialogue discovered about one another and the possibilities for future developments in our relationship;
- To seek response from the churches to these discoveries and possibilities;
- To raise awareness of the complicity of both our churches in a colonialist relationship with Indigenous peoples;
- To enable neighbouring Anglican and United Church congregations to explore their mutual understandings and differences, and possibilities for common mission.

A list of a variety of places to send the study guide was established and each member was assigned congregations to contact, asking for their participation in the project. In addition, a letter was sent from the co-chairs to Anglican and United Church congregations, inviting them to participate in the study.

There were 10 pairs of churches across Canada that agreed to pursue the project actively. The Dialogue sent letters to these churches that responded, thanking them and asking for their responses at the completion of their time together. Unfortunately, the follow through has not been what was hoped. At this point in time only one group has finished the process.

# DOCTRINE: THE BLESSING AND THE CHALLENGE

## **Introduction: What is Doctrine?**

The word “doctrine” is derived from the Latin word *docta*, meaning “things taught.” Doctrines, therefore, are of many kinds and exist in all aspects of our lives. Churches, however, tend to circumscribe the meaning of the word, limiting it to a range of assertions that are more or less held in common by all members of a particular denomination, which often constitute, nonetheless, a sizeable collection of beliefs. Doctrines come into being in a variety of ways, such as declarations of councils or synods and agreed statements derived from ecumenical conversations. A denomination’s doctrinal assertions are not necessarily a “body” of doctrine, because they are not inherently systematic. Doctrines arise in response to particular questions and concerns, as a response to specific historical circumstances. The relations between doctrinal assertions, as well as the degree of significance attached to any particular doctrinal statement, tend to be recognized after the fact.

A number of core doctrinal affirmations are generally held by more than one denomination and, indeed, some of the most recognizable doctrines are held by the great majority of Christians. Both the ACC and the UCC make a formal commitment to the two great ecumenical creeds, the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, as declarations of the essentials of Christian belief. Other statements of belief, such as the UCC statement “A Contemporary Expression of Christian Faith” (often called “A New Creed”), are intended to be elucidations of Christian understanding for the contemporary world and, as such, are regarded as consistent with the ancient creeds rather than as changes or replacements.

## **Tradition and the Development of Doctrine**

Since the nineteenth century and John Henry Newman’s *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, most theologians have agreed that doctrine is not static. As Peter Wyatt (UCC) noted, some of the major founding figures of the United Church, such as Nathanael Burwash, regarded doctrinal change as both necessary and a fundamental reason for “church union.” Appeals to scripture, history, reason, and religious experience (the encounter with God that brings about conversion of heart, central to the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition) serve as guideposts as old truths are stated in new language and new insights are accumulated. The process of formulating contemporary statements of belief serves as a framework for doctrinal development.

The pre-modern origins of Anglicanism, its effort to balance Protestant and Catholic priorities, and the international character of the Anglican Communion, are at the root of a strong emphasis

upon tradition and communal reason as guiding the reading of scripture and reflection upon contemporary circumstances. The language of the “*via media*,” or “middle way,” tends to require Anglicans to consider the views of other Christians in the past and present, so that doctrine is understood as developing on a continuous trajectory from decisions of the early church councils. Contemporary statements of belief emerge in ecumenical conversation, so that ecumenical documents generally accepted by Anglican Churches (such as the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* statement of the World Council of Churches [*BEM*]) both enable movement and serve as an indicator of contemporary understanding.

For both the UCC and the ACC, development of doctrine is oriented toward transformation of hearts and societies and the increase of God’s Reign in peace and justice. The work of God’s mission in the world is the overarching priority. In order that this continue to be so, a place must be found at the table for the voice of Indigenous people. It is not enough that people of European and other heritages give what we have to Indigenous people. They have been outsiders to most of the history of Christian doctrinal development. An ongoing challenge for all of Christianity, including the UCC and ACC, is to find ways that Indigenous people may act as full participants in the creation of statements of belief, so that others may receive what the Indigenous people have to give.

## **Doctrine is a Blessing**

Precisely because doctrine is a servant of God’s Reign, it is a blessing to the Church. Doctrine is the ground upon which we stand when we proclaim God’s saving grace and call to participation in God’s Reign. Consequently, we assert its value to all the world and to our ongoing life together.

Because doctrine is important to our life together, it serves as a fruitful ground for common support. We find helpful the recognition of the Lutheran/Reformed Dialogue in the U.S.A. that a healthy ecumenical relationship “provides both the complementarity needed for a full and adequate witness to the gospel (mutual affirmation) and the corrective reminder that every theological approach is a partial and incomplete witness to the gospel (mutual admonition)” (*A Common Calling*; Augsburg, 1993; 66). We accept this as a statement of mutual responsibility, understanding it as a central aspect of “bearing with one another in love” (Eph. 4:2).

We note, however, that many of the Indigenous people of Canada have accepted Christian doctrine as a blessing, but have found a curse attached. This presents a serious challenge to the whole Church, as we seek together to understand the relevance of Christian belief to the contemporary world.

## **The Challenge of Doctrinal Differences**

We have found ranges of belief to exist in both the ACC and the UCC. These ranges overlap, such that members of the two denominations have a great degree of commonality. This manifests itself in common action, especially joint ventures such as KAIROS, and common worship, either

in permanent shared ministry arrangements or in occasional sharing. Moreover, these ranges are variable and flexible, so that on some issues members of each denomination will find themselves in greater agreement with the formal position taken by the other denomination.

Significantly, many Indigenous people exist in a distinct set of ranges of their own, with little concern for the issues that preoccupy other members of our denominations. They may find greater doctrinal commonality with Indigenous people in different denominations than with others of their own denomination who have another heritage. This gap in understanding and priorities needs serious attention from both denominations.

Nonetheless, there are some notable areas of substantial difference between the ACC and UCC, which provide these denominations with some of their characteristic ethos.

Perhaps the most notable is in the realm of ecclesiology. Consistent with the assertions of *Called to Full Communion: The Waterloo Declaration* (2001), para. 8, and other ecumenical documents, we find the ministry of episcopate (oversight) present in its fullness in both the ACC (especially in the ministry of bishops) and the UCC (especially in the ministry of presbyteries and Conferences).

Challenges emerge, however, in the realm of understandings of ordination. Both the ACC and the UCC employ the term “ordination” with particular theological significance, using almost the same liturgical phrases in ordaining to the office and work of priest/minister. Both include in the work or functions of the priest/minister the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care. In the ACC, only those ordained to the priesthood (which includes all bishops) may preside at the eucharist, while the UCC authorizes others to do so in certain situations. The UCC indicates, in its response to *BEM*, that ordination is the “normative but not unique way in which individuals are authorized by the church to preach and to preside at the sacraments” and that the “fact of authorization by the wider church” is of greater importance than “the particular authorization of ordination” for eucharistic presidency (*The Churches Respond to BEM*, II, 282). The UCC has also authorized, in exceptional circumstances, the presbytery and Conference to appoint lay elders for sacramental presidency for a limited period of time in a particular pastoral charge only.

This is an issue worthy of further study. It raises numerous questions about the meaning of ordination, the nature of ordered ministry and the relation of such ministry to the church’s sacramental life, while touching upon broader issues of the meaning of sacraments.

## Mediating Doctrinal Differences

Other ecumenical conversations have aided us in the realization that not all points of doctrine must be agreed upon as a condition of breakthroughs in ecumenical relations. As we have noted, any denomination’s collection of beliefs is always in the process of development and is not, necessarily, fully systematic in character. Moreover, not all beliefs possess the same decisive significance. Given this complex situation, expectations of full agreement on all points between ecumenical partners must inevitably be frustrated.

From the *Scottish Church Initiative for Union* proposal, we draw the notion of “unity in co-ordinated diversity” (sec. 2.7). Diversity is necessary to living out the gospel in a multicultural world. We can expect and applaud differences of belief and practice, suited to local circumstances. However, the Church as a whole can make an effort to co-ordinate the diverse patterns, so that they are mutually supportive of the Church’s witness, rather than being destructive of common life.

From the Lutheran World Federation/Roman Catholic Church conversations on justification, we draw the notion of a “differentiated consensus.” Lutherans and Roman Catholics did not seek to reach full agreement on all aspects of justification; instead, they reached a consensus on basic truths about justification and agreed that the remaining differences were not subject to doctrinal condemnation (*Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, paras. 5, 14). Differences of belief are not necessarily fatal to relations. Each denomination may recognize that the other denomination holds the beliefs necessary to Christianity and does not hold positions that fundamentally undermine Christian belief, while understanding that (possibly irreconcilable) differences remain.

Differentiated consensus acknowledges that the truth of the Gospel is profound and complex at the same time. In differentiated consensus two churches, through a process of dialogue over historically controversial theological issues, come to some agreement that allows each to recognize the Gospel in the teaching of the other, even though there may not be total agreement about the way a certain teaching is expressed. The effect is to recognize that the unity of the Church is a unity within diversity and not a simple form of uniformity—an organic unity. But the differences that remain are not considered church-dividing and in fact may be seen as complementary. (Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, January 18, 2006)

These perspectives offer hope that the ACC and UCC may move forward together without having to reach absolute unanimity on all matters.

## Recommendations

Following from Jürgen Moltmann’s observation that the Church must always be discerning both in its identity and its relevance in the world, we make the following two recommendations:

- The next phase of the Dialogue should move beyond the mostly comparative model, focused on traditional theological themes as points of similarity and difference, to explore what is at the heart of our traditions, the obstacles these self-perceptions have created and create, and the gifts they share with society.
- The next phase of the Dialogue should explore each tradition’s understanding of doctrinal development and how this is related to self-identity.

# THE WIDER CONTEXT OF ECUMENISM

The impulse toward mutual recognition, at the heart of the Dialogue, occurs in a different context than did the discussions of “church union” in the 1960s and ’70s. Calling on her experience of ecumenical discussion within the Roman Catholic Church, Dr. Cathy Clifford, an ecclesialogist from St. Paul’s University in Ottawa, helped the Dialogue to consider the current state of ecumenism. The current “new phase” in ecumenism is marked not only by shared questioning and self-critique on the part of an increasing number of denominations, but also by previously unforeseen agreement cutting across denominational lines. For example, the Catholic Church increasingly finds public support for some of its moral positions from conservative evangelical churches.

The Dialogue has noted that, for many lay people, the apparent differences between Anglican and United Churches have either greatly diminished or are of less importance than may previously have been the case. This is perhaps partly due to the shared focus on social justice and mission within our denominations, and partly the result of the discussion of similar topics, such as issues of sexuality, which have at different times arisen within our churches. The shared use of the Revised Common Lectionary, as well as musical and other liturgical resources, has also contributed to a greater sense of kinship in weekly worship traditions among denominations.

To some, the trend toward commonality suggests that the goal of greater theological consensus has largely failed, resulting in an ecumenism that rests upon the lowest common denominator. This response to ecumenism can occasion stronger and less helpful assertions of denominational identities, and the loss of ground in ecumenical discussion. For others, because reconciliation is at the centre of Christian faith, theological consensus must be the basis of all ecumenical dialogue. The diversity of spirituality and expression celebrated within the Catholic Church, for instance, has increased since the Second Vatican Council. For Dr. Clifford, this suggests a vision for ecumenism in the wider sense as the affirmation of diversity. The danger here lies in the assumption that diversity must fall within the bounds of one communion in order to be honoured. Different Christian confessions, however, need not to be subsumed within a single Christian identity, nor be replaced by perilously vague statements. Rather, statements of consensus can best function as statements of responsibility, on the part of all denominations, to embody the Christian call to reconciliation.

To promote the best possible ecumenical discussion, Dr. Clifford drew a distinction between ecumenism as envisioned within denominational Christianity, and the even wider context of inter-faith dialogue. She cautioned that the goal of relationship with non-Christian traditions should not eclipse the goal of full visible unity among Christian churches. Citing Walter Kasper, she suggested that there is a difference between secular ecumenism, of which relativism and lack of consensus are symptomatic, and fundamental ecumenism, which seeks the reconciliation of Christian denominations through common witness.

There are some stumbling blocks on the road of ecumenical discussion today. First, there is a suspicion, by some, that ecumenical statements mean to replace denominational confessions. Second, the mutual recognition of ministry is the major fault line within discussions of full visible unity, while issues of common scriptures, creeds and confessions, and sacraments are continued topics of discussion.

Very different churches, such as the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have, in limited ways been able to “recognize” each other. However, Dr. Clifford noted that the Second Vatican Council statement that “churches in the proper sense of the word” have “ecclesial elements present within them” is not a position assiduously adhered to since that Council, nor is it a statement encouraging to ecumenical dialogue. Yet, this also suggests that all Christian denominations still have much to discuss with and learn from each other.

Ecumenism in the wider context shares the same central premise as the Anglican-United Church Dialogue: members of the Body of Christ are called to the continual work of reconciliation.

## Recommendation

- That the Dialogue continue to place our learning in the wider context of ecumenism by discussing our denominational responses to the WCC document “The Nature and Mission of the Church.”

 *“Remember the vision; don’t waver from it, but gather others around it as you go.”*

— GORDON JENSEN

# INTERFAITH RELATIONS AND THE ANGLICAN-UNITED CHURCH DIALOGUE

At its first meeting, the Dialogue listed the “relationship of mission, evangelism, and interfaith relations” under its fifth priority of missiology and witness. It turned its attention to interfaith relations particularly at its October 2006 meeting in Edmonton, when it invited interfaith guests Bikkar (Randy) Randhawa (Sikh), Allison Kydd (Anglican), and Don Mayne (United Church) from the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action to meet with them. At the same meeting, the Dialogue considered various documents prepared by each of the two churches:

- resolutions of General Synod regarding interfaith relations
- Anglican “Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue”
- Anglican guidelines for “Worship with Persons of Other Faith Traditions”
- The UCC statement “Mending the World” and a study guide for it
- a brochure on United Church Statements on Interfaith Dialogue from 1926–1983
- the statement “Bearing Faithful Witness” on United Church-Jewish relations
- the statement “That We May Know Each Other” on United Church-Muslim relations.

Anglicans have not engaged in any direct dialogue with other faith traditions since the 1980s, as they are committed to working at interfaith dialogue ecumenically through the Canadian Council of Churches. The United Church, while sharing the same commitment, has also worked at building interfaith relations, in particular with Jewish and Muslim communities, through study material and joint action to encourage encounter as neighbours in the local community. “Mending the World” serves as both framework and priority for interfaith work.

A United Church member of the Dialogue observed that “once we realized that the call to be a ‘united and uniting church’ was not possible, we had to shift our understanding to work with others as ecumenical partners, instead of as an agent for union. The movement away from interchurch to interfaith reflects some despair at being able to effect ecumenical union.” Others asserted a continuing commitment to interchurch work, reflected in part in the establishment of this Dialogue.

An Anglican member observed that “the shift in the definition of ecumenism to ‘whole world ecumenism’ was seen by some as a unilateral shift that makes it appear that church ecumenism is less significant. It has been helpful to hear the origins of the educational work that the United Church has done and to realize that we are not really in very different places.”

One of the questions for future work in the Dialogue is the theological understanding of what Christians are doing when they engage in relationships with other faiths. What are the implications for Christology?

## Recommendation

- That the next phase of the Dialogue undertake a study of Christology in our two churches in light of our consideration of how each church addresses the theological issues involved in interfaith relations.

 *“How can we learn to be at home in a multitude of settings, and when our teachers are not just those in the front of a classroom, but those who share their wisdom to the benefit and learning for all, in ways that are accessible to all?”*

— GORDON JENSEN

# DISCOVERIES THROUGH DIALOGUE

Throughout our discussions we were increasingly able to identify obstacles that have kept us from greater unity, and in particular from mutual recognition of our ministries. Through our study of unions in other parts of the world we discovered that some of those obstacles had been addressed in helpful ways, sometimes resulting in “church unions” and/or Councils of Churches. While some others of these proposals have yet to be implemented, they provide us with creative models for finding a way through the complex issues connected with the mutual recognition of ministry. These include an understanding of ordination, episcopacy, and apostolic succession. While many of these studies have not been put into practice, they give us encouragement to continue our study, which could lead to our overcoming some of the obstacles to a mutual recognition of our ministries.

## Regarding Ordination

The union that created the Church of South India in 1947 was a world first, in that episcopal and non-episcopal traditions came together and reached a foundational agreement that enabled them to proceed in their union negotiations and to realize a union. They agreed to accept the Lambeth Quadrilateral as a satisfactory basis on which to proceed: scripture, creeds, two sacraments, and ordained ministry with a historic episcopate. Regarding episcopacy, they concluded that God’s blessing rested on all without distinction, and so they would accept the ministry of all who entered the union without distinguishing them according to method of ordination, after which all would be ordained by bishops. A significant decision leading up to this 1947 union was that the grace of Christ is manifested without distinction in all churches, which made it possible for them to refrain from imposing episcopal ordination on those who came into the union who were not ordained by bishops.

A similar agreement, known as the *Scottish Church Initiative for Union* proposal, was recommended in 1997 by the Scottish Episcopal Church to the continuing initiative originally taken in 1964 by the British Council of Churches. The Scottish proposal acknowledged evolving understandings of episcopacy, becoming more conciliar, and held that any union must acknowledge the fullness of God’s grace in ministries of all participating churches, which included United Reformed (Congregational and Churches of Christ), Methodist, and Scottish Episcopal, with Baptists and Roman Catholics as observers. A key part of the anticipated agreement was that all present ministries would be recognized at the time of union, following which all ordinations would be by bishops.

The Church Unity Commission (CUC) of South Africa was formed in 1960 and includes Anglican Churches in South Africa, Mozambique, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, and St. Helena, as well as the Uniting Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, and the United

Congregational Church. In it, all member churches in 1995 accepted “that the ordained ministries of Word and Sacrament in the member churches of the CUC have been called and ordained by God in Christ through his Church and exercise a sacramental, preaching, teaching and pastoral ministry in the Church of God and not simply in the particular church to which they belong.” Churches of South Africa appear to have overcome most of the obstacles around ordination experienced in the Canadian Anglican and United Churches.

## Regarding Episcopacy

The Scottish Church Initiative noted that all churches have structures of episcopal authority. All participating churches agreed to be “open to discovering God’s new thing.” It was also noted that all churches involved, except the Scottish Episcopal, have had since 1984 a mutual recognition and authorization to minister on invitation, and according to local procedures. The Scottish Episcopal Church has a current canon allowing the same locally, and indicated that when agreement on union is reached the Scottish Episcopal Church can be expected to make this provision national.

Some creative theology has developed in the Church Unity Commission (CUC) in South Africa around the concept of episcopacy. “Where the bishop is, there is the Church” (Cyprian): the bishop is present as the centre of the liturgical community, as a symbol of the community, not as a ruler. A bishop ordains as a representative of the whole Christian community. This reflects the understanding of episcopate in both The United Church of Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada. The CUC in South Africa is thus recovering an understanding of episcopate that is an authentic understanding of the heritage. These understandings have been discussed in the churches, and the conversations have been encouraged to continue.

Bishops in the Anglican Church in Wales have within their powers the authority to grant generous privileges to clergy of other churches that participate in the ecumenical organization “Churches Together in Wales” when they are involved in local ecumenical projects. They may officiate at one or more of the following services in the Church of Wales: Holy Communion, Holy Baptism, Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, Communion of the Sick, Burial of the Dead, and ecumenical acts of worship.

Acknowledgement was made in the joint declaration adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada in 2001, known as “The Waterloo Declaration,”

that personal, collegial and communal oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in both churches in a variety of forms, in continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry... We acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in both our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church’s unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry.

## Regarding Apostolic Succession

The Lutheran-Reformed Dialogues in the USA were part of official conversations between Reformed and Lutheran Churches that began in 1962. In the first round (1962–66) the delegates concluded that there are “no insuperable obstacles to pulpit and altar fellowship”<sup>1</sup> and encouraged the churches to move toward intercommunion and the full recognition of one another’s ministries. Following two more rounds, by 1986 the representatives of all the churches involved concluded that the churches should recognize each other as churches where “the gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments administered according to the ordinance of Christ.”<sup>2</sup> The Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations met from 1988–92 and found no “church dividing differences” and recommended that the churches enter into an agreement of full communion.<sup>3</sup> One of their findings focused on the understanding that one can deduce that their churches are in apostolic succession because the evidence of it, namely, that “the gospel is being preached in its purity and the sacraments rightly administered,”<sup>4</sup> is found in each of the churches.

According to our Lutheran theological reflector:

This understanding also played a role in the Anglican-Lutheran dialogues in Canada where it was understood that apostolic succession is carried out by the historic episcopate, which was a ministry of oversight, with the bishop ensuring that the apostolic message would indeed be proclaimed by the person being ordained, and is revealed to be happening wherever the gospel is being proclaimed. The structures of the church may provide the framework necessary to ensure that the gospel is being proclaimed, even if it does not have the traditional marks of the episcopal office.

In addressing questions raised by the Waterloo Declaration, the Joint Working Group of The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada noted that “some Lutheran churches did not have bishops ordained in exact continuity by the laying on of hands by other bishops. Lutherans in Canada, while not viewing the historic episcopate as a necessity, are now prepared to appreciate and accept historic succession as a sign of continuity and the unity of the Church.”<sup>5</sup>

“In recent years, as a result of ecumenical conversation, Anglicans have been re-examining their understanding of this question in many parts of the world. In 1997, the House of Bishops and the Council of General Synod agreed that The Anglican Church of Canada is prepared to view the historic episcopate in the context of the understandings of apostolicity articulated in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, *The Niagara Report*, and the *Porvoo Common Statement*, ‘all ecumenical documents’ that seek to put the episcopate alongside other marks of the apostolicity of the church.”<sup>6</sup> Apostolicity is defined as continuity in the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles, reflected in the doctrine of apostolic succession. “It is God’s gift in Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is not confined to the historic episcopate but is a diverse reality which expresses itself in the teaching, mission and ministry of the whole Church.”<sup>7</sup>

## In General

From our study of the above mentioned documents as well as others, we concluded that the findings and actions of these churches and councils challenged us to apply their learnings to our own situation and to address the obstacles to our growing together more fully than we have managed in the past. We know that both of our churches have an educated and ordained ministry, a form of episcopacy, and can claim to be in the line of apostolic succession. We may disagree on how we interpret these concepts, but we should guard against being judgemental about the validity of any interpretation. The Lutheran and Reformed Dialogues concluded that to think of each of our church's doctrines and teachings as a penultimate word, rather than an ultimate word, is a helpful attitude for churches in dialogue with each other. We agree that this is a wise approach to take. There is little doubt that we both have more to learn, that God has not yet given us the final bit of illumination and inspiration on matters theological.

In his reflections to the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Assembly in 2005, the Rt. Rev. Michael Jackson suggested that “an acceptance of diversity brings an urgent need for a theology of diversity... An engagement in respectful diversity, in my experience, strengthens self-understanding and witness to others. This engagement takes place within communion — *koinonia* — as both an activity and a state of being that transcends and honours distinctions. Diversity is profoundly Christian and profoundly churchy.”

Roman Catholic-Lutheran discussions focused on “differentiated consensus,” an approach that is very attractive to our Dialogue.

## Some Conclusions

In that spirit, following are some of the conclusions drawn from our discussions:

- The grace of Christ is operative in all of our traditions.
- The approach of accepting all ordinations at some point and then moving to episcopal ordination for all was considered positively — without necessarily entering into formal unity talks we might be able to participate in and recognize each other's ordinations.
- The language of “God's new thing” in the Scottish Church Initiative for Union we found attractive.
- Episcopacy may not necessarily depend on exercise by an individual — bishop with synod, or presbytery/Conference.
- The Church, like the human family as a whole, will always be characterized by diversity — John Wesley: “if your heart be as my heart, give me your hand.”
- Each tradition can bring correctives to the other — as with Lambeth Quadrilateral — holding elements together and as mutually corrective.
- A process that respects traditions is crucial.

- We need to examine how we understand each other's liturgies.
- We agree with the principle from Leuenberg Agreement in Lutheran-Reformed Dialogues: we honour our ancestors, we do not disavow our traditions, including separations, but we recognize that their questions are not necessarily our questions today — we may have grown beyond them.
- We must look at places where we can make common cause.
- Ecumenism is not optional — it is not just something nice to do.

As a result of these discoveries a new hope has emerged within our Dialogue that our denominations can come to a greater sense of unity, and work toward concrete actions that will demonstrate that we are indeed one in Christ.

## Recommendations

- That the next phase of the Dialogue examine the processes leading to ordered ministry and placement systems with a view to understanding the ways in which episcopal functions in these systems in our respective churches.
- That the next phase of the Dialogue review the effect of our mission history, both in Canada and in other parts of the world, upon our understanding and practice of episcopate and how this is changing in the contemporary world.

## Notes

1. From: "Appendix II: Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue II: Report and Recommendations," as found in James E. Andrews and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *An Invitation to Action: The Lutheran Reformed Dialogue Series III: 1981–1983* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 52.
2. This reference is found in "The Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations," as found in, Keith F. Nickle and Timothy F. Lull, eds., *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1993), 67.
3. *A Common Calling*, 65–67.
4. *A Common Calling*, 67.
5. From: *Called to Full Communion: A Study Resource for Lutheran-Anglican Relations including the Waterloo Declaration*. Prepared by the Joint Working Group of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, December 1997 (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1998), 22 (under the section, "Questions Commonly Asked").
6. From: *Called to Full Communion*, 22 (under the section, "Questions Commonly Asked").
7. From: *Called to Full Communion*, 22 (under the section, "Questions Commonly Asked").

## SPIRITUALITY

In October 2007 (Mississauga), the Dialogue gave opportunity for each of us to share our personal spirituality. As guides for our reflections, we were given some questions related to, firstly, our personal faith and, secondly, our connection to the faith tradition. After each person had had an opportunity to share from the heart their own response to these questions, we reflected together upon what we had heard and shared. We concluded that there were common themes such as:

- Similar stories although couched in varied terminology
- Confidence that God is in our lives, a sustaining, persistent presence
- Kinship with each other
- Relationship with Jesus Christ, Spirit, God
- Sacramentality including awareness of God/Spirit in the whole creation
- Incarnational
- The Great Commandments of love of God and love of neighbour and the imperative to seek justice and transformation
- Equality of all creatures—all my relations
- Commitment to community
- Influences of feminist, liberation, Indigenous, and ecological theological perspectives
- Tension between “it’s not about me because it’s about justice and the transformation of the world” and “it’s about me and my transformation”
- Sometimes tension between our deeply held spiritual experiences and traditions and “official” practice of the church
- There was a deep passion that we do not often talk about, even causing tears, as we shared so personally and at such depth.

Our final conclusion was that it was difficult for a listener to discern our denominational affiliation as we each spoke. Differences and similarities appeared to be due more to individual experience and personality than to denomination.

 *“Let me suggest that the sticking points in the dialogue are not over ‘core’ doctrines. Rather, the sticky points are over how you understand and practise and live out your ‘doctrines.’”*

— GORDON JENSEN

# SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY

In April 2007, the Dialogue returned once again to the question of sacramental theology, particularly as it related to ministry and who could preside at the eucharist. Bill Harrison (ACC) and Rob Fennell (AST, UCC) facilitated the discussion regarding the role of the eucharist in our respective traditions. It was agreed that we share a common history up to the Reformation, and that there has been an evolution of meaning and practice over the centuries including in very recent times. At the time of the Reformation it was unlikely that the laity received communion more than a few times a year, if that, since reception was largely for the clergy while the people participated by their presence at the liturgy. While reformers in England, both Anglican and Protestant, and in Europe called for weekly celebration of the eucharist and reception of the elements on the part of the laity, this did not necessarily happen. When, for example, in Zurich, communion was received four times a year, it was likely more often than the laity had received before. Again, in the Presbyterian tradition, for example, until recently, such a high and holy ritual could only be approached with due reverence and preparation three or four times a year.

The placing of eucharist at the centre of Anglican life is also a more recent development. (Some of us grew up with the tradition that one received at 8:00 a.m. once a month and if attending another communion service on a Sunday did not receive.) A heavy emphasis is now placed on the sacraments and a sacramental approach to life. Mission is to be sacrament, living in relation to the divine, being a revelation of God's transformational activity and transformative grace in the world. The eucharistic meal forms Christians as the Body of Christ and is the meal of the reign of God. Only the ordained are permitted to preside at the eucharist; in this context, ordination is understood as empowering priests for this function and to be sacramental witnesses helping others to recognize their own sacramental role through their baptism. Although this place of the eucharist at the heart of parish life, and the practice of individuals, is common in Canada and some other regions, it is not necessarily universal practice in the Anglican Communion. Nor is it always regular practice in The Anglican Church of Canada. For example, some parishes continue a pattern of alternating Morning Prayer and Eucharist at the primary Sunday service.

In The United Church of Canada there is a continuum of perception of the meaning of the eucharist (not surprisingly when one considers the three roots of the UCC: Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodist with its roots in the Church of England). At one end there is a Lutheran view of the physical presence of Christ, others view eucharist as a memorial of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and at the other end of the continuum a family or community meal. However, the vast majority of people in the United Church would ground their understanding of the eucharist in remembrance. In recent years, the frequency of the celebration of the eucharist has increased in the UCC with once a month not being uncommon and in some places even a weekly celebration and participation in communion. In the past, the emphasis of the Sunday liturgy had been on the

Word; the balance of Word and Sacrament has perhaps been evened out as eucharist (most likely called “communion”) has become a more prominent and valued focus of the nurture and growth of the worshipping community. There may still be lingering resistance to more frequent communion, as some view the greater frequency of communion as making too common a sacred and special experience.

The Dialogue agreed that our churches hold much in common concerning the eucharist, including: an eschatological sign of the reign of God in anticipation of the banquet at the “end time”; it is Christ’s table with Christ as the host who calls us to it while offering himself as food for our nurture and transformation; communion not merely for the individual’s benefit but also as a call and means to become signs of love, and agents of justice, healing, and peace; a recalling of the Last Supper; a remembering of Jesus’ self-offering in his life, death, and resurrection until his coming again; the inclusion of children as recipients of communion has helped to open the table to others; an open and inclusive table is common to both but not universal in application; communion with and in community not just as an individual, “me and God;” communion with the whole Church, all who have come before and are no longer with us on earth; while Anglicans speak of the real presence of Christ in the elements, this is not in a literal sense. All these varied expressions of meaning, though not necessarily all at the same time, are found in the liturgy and eucharistic prayers in some form or other in both traditions even though liturgical practices vary considerably in the UCC. The session of the congregation, or its equivalent, has oversight of the administration of the sacraments and the order of public worship, provided the worship remains in continuity with the Basis of Union. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the liturgical renewal movement, a rediscovery of the important role of visible and tangible symbols and the value of ritual, together with ecumenical theological education have all contributed to what is common in our understanding and practice of eucharist.

We reflected upon how meaning and efficacy is given to the eucharist through, for example, the role and person of the presider, the actions and words of liturgy, the work of the people, and the gathering of the whole community. We reminded ourselves that it is God who is the source of grace active in eucharist.

Within The United Church of Canada the ordained are always eligible to preside at the eucharist. Ordination is irrevocable as in the Anglican Church; in the ACC, the bishop can take away a priest’s license. Likewise, in the UCC under the equivalent episcopal oversight of presbytery and Conference, a minister can be placed on the discontinued service list and be deprived of the privilege of presiding. Diaconal ministers and lay pastoral ministers may be licensed to preside within a particular pastoral charge in which they are serving, usually when they are the only paid accountable ministry personnel. In times of necessity, other lay persons may also be permitted to preside. There is a recent development of sacramental elders who would preside normally only in the absence of an ordained minister or in special circumstances and particular contexts of fellowship. Lay persons functioning as chairs of presbytery, president of Conference or moderator are also permitted *ex officio* to preside at the eucharist in these courts of the church. Various denominational documents

support these positions and decisions. The authorizing of people for ministry and for presiding at the eucharist is conditioned by context and praxis more than by theology. There has also been a tendency to make all ministries egalitarian, moving away from what some see as a hierarchy, with the ordained minister at the top of the heap in a position of privilege and power. Lay presidency at the eucharist was also discussed in greater depth on earlier occasions (Winnipeg and Edmonton) using a paper by Rob Fennell as a guide, exploring the theological and historical justification of such a practice. There is one exception in the Anglican Communion, the Diocese of Sydney in Australia, which has authorized deacons to preside at the eucharist, without the blessing of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

It was agreed that there is a common practice of the ordained presiding at the eucharist. In the Anglican Church, ordination is a requirement for a valid celebration of the sacrament, only priests and bishops being permitted to preside. In the UCC ordination is not an absolute requirement for a valid celebration; other persons, ordered (diaconal ministers) or lay, may be authorized under certain circumstances to do so.

 *“The places of worship are not our places so much as a place where God gathers us, and the focus is not so much on buildings or on language, but on the community of God’s body being shaped and moulded together.”*

— GORDON JENSEN

## VARIETY OF MINISTRIES

This leads us to a more detailed exploration of the varieties of ministries in both our traditions with David Fletcher (ACC), Wayne Yorke (UCC), and David Hewitt (UCC) helping us with this discussion.

All could agree with David Fletcher (Director for non-stipendiary ministries in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) that ministry is the defining activity of the Christian community which begins with baptism, the ministry of all the baptized. Various functions of ministry are described in the Bible and traditionally three areas of ministry were recognized: mission being evangelism, outreach, social justice, and service; maintenance being worship, pastoral care, teaching and prayer; and oversight being administration, speaking on behalf of the church, participation in its councils. These functions evolved over time and solidified into the established orders of deacon (mission/service), presbyter/priest (maintenance), and bishop (oversight *episcopate* and unity). These orders have continued in the Anglican Church. The order of deacon is normally transitional to being priested, but not always; there are some permanent deacons whose function is similar to that of diaconal ministers in the UCC. It was a distorted view of ministry that elevated the ordained in a hierarchical manner during the Middle Ages and into our present time. The distinction is not between ministry and lay ministry but rather between ministry and ordained/ordered ministry. We are called to be “ministering communities rather than communities gathered around a minister” (Wes Frensdorff). In congregations of both our churches, you will often find this expressed in printed material such as the Sunday bulletin in a statement like: “Ministers: the Congregation. Clergy or Staff: name(s) of individual(s).”

David Fletcher explained the recent development in the ACC of non-stipendiary priests who are ordained and therefore may preside at the eucharist, but who serve only their local (parish) church at the license of the bishop. Their training and education differs from those in paid ordained ministry.

Wayne and David explained their roles and functions as lay pastoral minister (LPM) and diaconal minister respectively in The United Church of Canada. LPMs are recognized by Conference, exercising its episcopal authority, while diaconal ministers (one of the two orders of ministry, the other being ordained to “a Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care”) are commissioned, likewise by Conference, for “a Ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care.” They also spoke about the discernment process for ministry, that involves local congregation, presbytery, and Conference; and the training and educational requirements for these ministries. While a Master of Divinity degree is required for ordination, there are other paths established and provided nationally for the LPM and diaconal minister. Both of these ministers may, like the ordained, serve as sole paid accountable ministry personnel in a pastoral charge, and there is likely very little difference in what they do in the life of the community, despite the different emphases of their education and training. An LPM’s position has to be renewed annually at the request of the pastoral charge to the presbytery exercising its episcopal role, and is only for that particular place, although he/she may move to another place where needed. The

two orders of ministry are subject to settlement, which means in effect that they are assigned wherever the church needs them within Canada (and Bermuda, part of Maritime Conference).

In view of the fact that those not ordained such as LPMs and diaconal ministers may be authorized by presbytery and Conference, jointly exercising their episcopal function, to preside at the eucharist, the question was posed: “Why not ordain them?” The answer seems to be that this is not the practice because these ministries have arisen in different contexts and for other functions, and, in the case of the LPM, historically for local ministry only. Episcopal authorization, or licensing, was viewed as sufficient. However, it was agreed that the distinctions between these ministries with different titles were often not clearly discernible as persons carry out their ministry.

A chart is appended that seeks to clarify these varied ministries. In the UCC those lay persons who are in paid, accountable ministries will in future all have the name of Designated Lay Minister (DLM, effective February 1, 2009).

Can there be mutual recognition of ministries? We consider not only the above discussion but also take into account the discussions concerning episcopacy and apostolic succession; we bear in mind the premise that God’s grace is active in the Church whatever its polity might be, and that the apostolic succession is witnessed in the faithfulness of the Church’s proclamation of the gospel in Church and world. Therefore, it appears that the Ordained Minister in the UCC is parallel/equivalent to the presbyter/priest in the ACC. The UCC already accepts this principle in relation to the presbyter/priest in the ACC. Note that in the ACC one is ordained to the particular order “in the Church of God,” not in The Anglican Church of Canada. Those who transfer from the ACC to the UCC are not ordained again; they are received into the ordained ministry for the UCC; however, the reverse is not so. There are similarities in ACC and UCC liturgical rites of ordination, reception, commissioning, and recognition, which usually happen at the same eucharistic service conducted by the Conference. Any perceived barriers to the recognition and acceptance of other forms of ordered or lay ministry in the UCC could well be overcome; parallels are to be found in the ACC.

## **Recommendation**

The notions of “differentiated consensus” and of “unity in coordinated diversity” have been described elsewhere in this report. We also bring forward the notion of “bearable anomalies” (Lambeth Conference 1998 Resolution IV.1) as being relevant to future discussion of the mutual recognition of ministries. (“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.”)

- Therefore, we recommend that in its next stage the Dialogue explore and propose steps toward the mutual recognition of the ministries of our two churches in light of the notions of “differentiated consensus,” “unity in co-ordinated diversity,” and “bearable anomalies,” as well as the considerations named in this section of the report.

**Official Ministries of The United Church of Canada  
and The Anglican Church of Canada: A Comparison**

<b>MINISTRY OF</b>	<b>ORDER/ OTHER EQUIV.</b>	<b>FUNCTION AND EDUCATIONAL PATH</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE TO</b>
<b>Service and Outreach (ACC)</b>	<b>Deacon</b>	Call to service ministry Vocational: Usually unpaid, but works in diaconal ministries; Transitional: priest in training	Bishop
<b>Education, Service, Pastoral Care (UCC)</b>	<b>Diaconal Minister</b>	Permanent Professional (Paid Accountable) Call to service ministry, but often works in ministries of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care (licence to preside at sacraments granted); Specified Diaconal Ministry education program required	Presbytery
<b>Building up Body of Christ (ACC)</b>	<b>Priest (Seminary trained)</b>	Permanent Professional Primary pastoral, preacher and presider. M.Div. required Ordained to preside at sacraments	Bishop
	<b>Priest (Locally identified)</b>	Locally contrained, Normally collegial, non-degree education required Ordained to preside at sacraments	Bishop and Incumbent
<b>Word, Sacrament, Pastoral Care (UCC)</b>	<b>Ordained Minister</b>	Permanent Professional (Paid Accountable) Primary pastoral, preacher, and presider. M.Div. required Ordained: "Presides at sacraments ex officio"	Presbytery
<b>Oversight</b>	<b>Bishop (ACC) Conference and Presbytery (UCC)</b>		

<b>MINISTRY OF</b>	<b>NAMED LAY MINISTRIES</b>	<b>FUNCTION AND EDUCATIONAL PATH</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE TO</b>
<b>Education, Service, Pastoral Care (UCC)</b>	<b>Designated Lay Minister</b>	Ministry status while under appointment Specified Designated Lay Ministry education program	Presbytery
	<b>Congregational Designated Minister</b>	Focussed area of ministry within congregation; educational requirements vary	Congregation
<b>Building up Body of Christ (ACC)</b>	<b>Lay Reader</b>	Licensed, not ordained; but may preach and lead non-eucharistic worship	Bishop
<b>Word, Sacrament, Pastoral Care (UCC)</b>	<b>Designated Lay Minister</b>	Ministry status while under appointment Specified Designated Lay Ministry education program May be licensed to preside at sacraments	Presbytery
	<b>Sacraments Elder</b>	Specified training required Presides at sacrament only, limited to congregation/ pastoral charge in extraordinary circumstances only	Presbytery
	<b>Licensed lay Worship Leader</b>	Licensed, not ordained; but may preach and lead non-eucharistic worship	Presbytery
	<b>Congregational Designated Minister (word, pastoral care)</b>	Focused area of ministry within congregation; educational requirements vary Not normally licensed to preside at sacraments	Congregation

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That our respective churches mandate a next phase of the Dialogue, with the following agenda:
  - a) Move beyond the mostly comparative model, focused on traditional theological themes as points of similarity and difference, to explore what is at the heart of our traditions, the obstacles these self-perceptions have created and create, and the gifts they share with society.
  - b) Explore each tradition's understanding of doctrinal development and how this is related to self-identity.
  - c) Undertake a study of Christology in our two churches in light of our consideration of how each church addresses the theological issues involved in interfaith relations.
  - d) Examine the processes leading to ordered ministry and placement systems with a view to understanding the ways in which episcopate functions in these systems in our respective churches.
  - e) Review the effect of our mission history, both in Canada and in other parts of the world, upon our understanding and practice of episcopate and how this is changing in the contemporary world.
  - f) Explore and propose steps toward the mutual recognition of the ministries of our two churches in light of the notions of "differentiated consensus," "unity in co-ordinated diversity," and "bearable anomalies," as well as the considerations named in this section of the report.
  - g) Continue to place our learning in the wider context of ecumenism by discussing our denominational responses to the WCC document "The Nature and Mission of the Church."
2. That our churches be proactive in considering Ecumenical Shared Ministry as a positive choice, both for congregations and for outreach and mission projects in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
3. That the churches encourage congregations to use the study guide process as a means of deepening our relationship. (The study guide is contained in this report and may be reproduced freely as needed.)
4. That our churches ensure that Indigenous people continue to be part of the Dialogue, and encourage the Aboriginal Ministries Council of The United Church of Canada and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples to have dialogue at each other's gatherings. We encourage all members of both churches to find opportunities to learn about the wisdom and traditions of Indigenous peoples.

# LIST OF MEMBERS

## CURRENT MEMBERS

United Church		Anglican Church
Robert Mills (2003) Halifax, Nova Scotia	Co-Chairs	William Harrison (2003) Vernon, British Columbia
Russel Burns (2007) Ponoka, Alberta		Heather Labrie (2003) Ponoka, Alberta
Gerald Hobbs (2003) Vancouver, British Columbia		Barbara Shoomski (2005) Winnipeg, Manitoba
Andrew O'Neill (2008) Oak Bay, New Brunswick		
Margaret Sagar (2005) Terence Bay, Nova Scotia		<i>There had been two recently developed vacancies on the Anglican team and it was decided not to fill them so close to the end of this phase.</i>

Gordon Jensen (November 2003)  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Ecumenical Partner and Theological Reflector

## STAFF

United Church	Anglican Church
Gail Allan (November 2004)	Alyson Barnett-Cowan (2003)

## FORMER MEMBERS

<b>United Church</b>	<b>Anglican Church</b>
John Haas (2003–2007) Regina, Saskatchewan	David Ashdown (2003–2007) Kenora, Ontario
Nobuko Iwai (2003–2007) Davidson and Regina, Saskatchewan	Rosalyn Robertson (February 2003) Halifax, Nova Scotia
Kelly Shapiro (2003–2004) Winnipeg, Manitoba	Nancie Erhard (November 2003–2008) Centre Burlington, Nova Scotia

## FORMER STAFF

<b>United Church</b>	<b>Anglican Church</b>
Chris Ferguson (2003–2004) Glenn Smith (November 2003)	

## APPENDIX A

# LIST OF TOPICS AT EACH MEETING

### **Vancouver, February 2003**

- Met with VST faculty
- Reviewed material from preliminary regional gatherings
- Discussed mandates
- Talked about history since 1943 including the failed Plan of Union
- Set the Agenda for the Dialogue including methodology
- Worship at University Hill United Church

### **Winnipeg, November 2003**

- Shared Ministry
- Resource Kit
- Visited Jessie Saulteaux Centre
- Overview of the Anglican-United Church relationship over four time periods
- Work arising: Handbook for Shared Ministries
- Worship at the Pinawa Christian Fellowship

### **Halifax, March 2004**

- Met with military chaplains
- Met with AST faculty
- Fred Krieger — Reviewed the responses of our two churches to the WCC's paper *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*
- Worship at St. George's Anglican Church, Halifax, and St. John's Anglican Church, Fairview

### **Toronto, November 2004**

- Met with TST faculty
- Sacraments
- Models of church
- Models of ecumenical theological education
- Lay Presidency of sacraments (United Church)
- Worship at Trinity United Church, Aurora

**Saskatoon, April 2005**

- Some attended Collaborative Ministries Conference
- Met with Saskatoon Theological Union faculty
- Handbook for Shared Ministry draft
- Reviewed Ecumenical Agreements and Statements from other parts of the world
- Visited Wanuskewin Aboriginal Heritage site

**Montreal, September 2005**

- Met with Montreal Diocesan College and United Theological College faculty
- Handbook for Shared Ministry revisions
- Preparation of Report
- Worship at St. Barnabas Anglican Church, Pierrefonds

**Winnipeg, April 2006**

- Met with faculty of Winnipeg area theological colleges
- Engagement with Indigenous ministries
- Study Guide
- Finalized Handbook for Shared Ministry
- Reviewed proposal for National Ecumenical Shared Ministries Working Group
- Lay Presidency
- Worship at All Saints' Anglican Church

**Edmonton, October 2006**

- Met with Anglican and United Church members involved in interfaith work
- Issues arising from General Council
- Lay Presidency (Sacraments Elder)
- Churches' statements on Interfaith Relations
- Study Guide
- Worship with Inner City Pastoral Ministry in Edmonton

**Halifax, April 2007**

- Varieties of formally recognised ministries in our two churches
- Mission of the Church
- Theologies of Sacramental Ministry
- Developed a Chart of Ministries in the two churches
- Interfaith Relations
- Worship with St. Matthew's United Church

**Mississauga, October 2007**

- Authority and purpose of the Dialogue
- How dialogues develop and receive statements
- How doctrine functions in our churches
- Our spiritualities
- Update on use of study guide
- Worship at Trinity Anglican Church, Streetsville

**Ottawa, April 2008**

- Met with people in our churches working on Truth and Reconciliation
- Met with Ottawa congregations who used the study guide
- Discussed the current state of the ecumenical movement with Dr. Catherine Clifford, RC ecclesialogist
- Began to develop pastoral letter
- Discussed the WCC document *Called to Be the One Church*
- Worshipped at Wesley United Church

**Quebec City, November 2008**

- Future of the Dialogue
- Pastoral letter
- Lambeth Conference (with local Anglican priest, bishop, and archdeacon)
- Outline of final report from this phase of the Dialogue
- Worshipped at la Paroisse de Tous les Saints

**Calgary, January 2009**

- Writing the Dialogue Report
- Integrated Pastoral Letter into Dialogue Report

## APPENDIX B

# ANGLICAN-UNITED CHURCH STUDY GUIDE

### Purpose of the Pilot Study

The purpose of this study is to provide an opportunity

- for participants from particular selected neighbouring congregations of the Anglican and United Churches to meet, to explore, to share and to deepen our faith and understanding of ourselves and each other
- for the Dialogue to share with the churches what it has discovered about each other and the possibilities for future developments in our relationship
- to send any comments to the Dialogue group using the form provided.

 *That they may all be one – that the world may believe*

— JOHN 17:21

### Background

The Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and The United Church of Canada (UCC) began conversations in the 1940s, and by the early 1970s, were seriously working toward an organic union. This organic union was formally proposed in *The Plan of Union* (1972). From 1974 until 1983, conversations continued, leading to the *Report of the Task Force on the Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministry (United/Anglican)*, which was received but never acted upon by the two communities. That path was not chosen, and there are unresolved feelings and issues from that time.

International and regional ecumenical dialogues have brought us to quite a different place from where we were in the early 1970s. The World Council of Churches, in 1982, published the important document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. BEM has identified a foundation that our churches can work from: agreement on baptism and welcome at the table. These are things we can build upon. Our churches benefit from agreements reached in Anglican, Reformed, and Methodist international dialogues, which have forged new commitments and possibilities for conversation in our own churches. The model of “full communion,” as agreed to by the ACC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), has provided ecumenical dialogues with viable alternatives

to organic union. Partnerships with other Canadian churches, including shared ministries, military chaplaincies, and KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, also shape our ecumenical commitments and understandings. We want to strengthen these commitments and understandings.

Significant changes have also taken place within our churches. Breaking the silence about residential school abuse, and the first steps in repentance, have taken place. The All Native Circle Conference of the UCC has been formed, and the Anglican Indigenous Covenant has been affirmed and is moving toward implementation. The ACC began ordaining women in 1976. For various reasons, cooperation in theological education has taken place. Diversities of views, both theologically and socially, have continued to arise in our churches, even as we struggle to learn how to include the diversity of voices speaking out. Our faith has been challenged and enriched by an explosion of theologies that address our context from different perspectives. A deepening awareness of the richness of liturgical practices and some changes in worship have taken place. The growth and diversity of religions and personal spirituality, away from institutional connections for people, have posed new challenges. We live in a society that increasingly presents itself as secular, while at the same time it welcomes people from many and varied vibrant faith communities into our common life. There has also been a rising influence and awareness of religious extremism in various faith traditions, including our own.

The present Dialogue was approved by the appropriate bodies of the UCC and ACC in 2002 and began meeting in February 2003. Meetings have been held twice annually since then. An observer from the ELCIC has accompanied us on our journey.

The task assigned to the Dialogue was to explore themes that will enable members of the two churches to understand each other better; to encourage and strengthen shared ministry and mission, particularly at the local level, and to foster other circles of dialogue, regionally and locally, between the two churches.

The work that we have done to date is largely exploratory. We have reviewed our common history, with particular attention to events surrounding the Plan of Union (1972). We have examined statements of agreement from ecumenical dialogues worldwide. We have explored various models of ecumenical theological education in places where Anglican Church and United Church people teach and study together. We have discussed practical governance issues regarding shared ministries, and are endeavouring to communicate learnings from shared ministries more widely across the church.

Because the Dialogue has encountered a remarkable degree of growth in understanding, and wants to be accountable to the churches and include them in this process, we invite you to engage in this opportunity to share with one another your own experience of what it means to be the church individually and together. How do you understand and express your faith in and through your common life, your worship, and your witness? What do you cherish about your tradition?

The Report that was written by the Dialogue in September 2005 for the United Church General Council and the Anglican General Synod is enclosed for your information. (See Appendix C.)

## Areas for Exploration

What are you doing and what do you cherish most about each of these areas?

### *A. Common Life*

By common life, we mean those activities, apart from worship and outreach, that build community in a local church. Our common life together as a Dialogue has been a significant part of our experience. This includes our social time together, sharing the events of our lives with one another, and caring for each other.

For the churches we have visited, common life is an important part of who they understand themselves to be.

What does your local church do to build a caring community among yourselves, such as

- pastoral care
- hospitality
- church suppers
- education, faith formation, and Bible study
- spirituality
- parties
- providing space for community groups (e.g., AA, Scouts).

### *B. Worship*

We entered these conversations aware that we come from two historically different traditions. Each of us cherishes those things in our worship that make us distinctly who we are. As we met and worshipped together, we learned to appreciate the gift of our diversity, and the ways in which our traditions can complement each other. As we continue the journey together, we are coming increasingly to celebrate the many things we have in common.

Some suggested topics:

- Music – what are your favourite hymns?
- Lectionary
- Types and styles of services
- Sacred space
- Ceremony and ritual
- Sacraments
- Leadership
- Place of children

- Times and seasons
- Services in the community
- Ecumenical worship
- Baptisms, weddings, funerals

### *C. Witness*

As people of God and as those who bear the image of Christ, we are called to live out our faith in context that is both local and global. Our vision of the Reign of God will inform our response to that challenge. In our Dialogue, we have noted the witness of our churches through participation in the Canadian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches; in the advocacy, education, and action groups now brought together under the umbrella of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives; and through other networks such as Project Ploughshares and the Churches' Council on Justice and Corrections. We work together in chaplaincies, and institutions of theological education.

Both churches have been compelled to face the issues arising from our involvement in residential schools and the impact of church, colonialism, and racism on Indigenous peoples and our life in Canada. Consequently we are both challenged to work for redress, healing, and reconciliation for all our sakes. There are other issues of human rights and inclusivity with which both churches grapple.

Share how you witness to your faith where you live, for example:

- Meeting needs in community – homeless, addicts, seniors, children
- Advocacy
- Education
- Interaction with civic bodies
- Interfaith relations and action
- Engagement with Indigenous neighbours
- Addressing racism/prejudice in the community
- Sponsorship of refugees
- Gender and sexuality
- Evangelism

### *D. Shared Ministries*

Shared ministry is when people worship and serve God in a unified way while still maintaining their denominational identity and connections. It is any combination of denominations sharing a program, outreach, ministry, or building.

Since shared ministries have become for various reasons a more common option in Canada in the last thirty years, this has been a major focus for the Dialogue. Congregations are joining with one another across denominational lines out of a sense of common call, as well as for pragmatic reasons. Shared ministries take many forms. They may be as simple as sharing programs. Some congregations may share a building only and otherwise maintain their own denominational ministry and services. Some share a minister in common and worship together.

We have listened to the experience of people in shared ministries and have developed a new *Shared Ministries Handbook*. We have discovered that two of the primary challenges facing these ministries are the difficulty of dealing with distinct church bureaucracies and the inability to recognize fully and completely the ministries of those who serve in them. For example, in the case of a United Church-Anglican congregation, a United Church minister is not automatically permitted to preside at a eucharist using Anglican liturgy. Although there are at least 50 formal arrangements for shared ministries involving our denominations (with others) across the country, much more informal sharing of ministry takes place among congregations in local communities.

Using the list of possibilities below as examples of shared ministry, discuss the following questions:

- In what ways are you engaged in shared ministry?
- What other ecumenical partners do you engage with?
- What possibilities/opportunities do you see for shared ministry in your community?
  - Shared programs (including common life and witness activities)
  - Shared buildings, separate ministries and services
  - One minister, alternate forms of worship among participating denominations
  - One minister, a common worship service that meets the needs of each denomination
  - Several denominations that share and maintain church buildings in several locations and rotate services
  - Other

### *E. Imagine the Future*

We want to include your vision in our discussion of the future of our churches and the ways in which we can work together. Since our churches are ministering in many different contexts, our conversations need to reflect the realities of different places and circumstances. Therefore, we will be asking you to imagine your own future and how you are called to embody the reign of God in your own community.

What future do you imagine for church life in your community?

Where do you imagine that God is calling your community of faith?

## Study Guide Process Notes for the Facilitator

Thank you for agreeing to undertake this study.

The suggested process for this study involves two sessions, preferably a week apart.

### *Session 1*

- Begin with a meal hosted by one of the congregations.
- Provide name tags.
- Try to ensure a mix of people at each table.
- When the meal is over, gather in mixed groups of 4. Each person in turn shares
  - What brought them to their particular church community
  - What they do in their church community — describe their own ministries
  - How they live out their ministry outside the church.

This process should take approximately 1 hour.

- The whole group gathers and the study guide and report are introduced and distributed.
- The facilitator asks one person from each congregation to be prepared to listen carefully at the next session in order to sum up their appreciation for what they have received from the other congregation.
- Conclude with a form of night prayer/compline in the worship space.

### *Session 2*

- Begin with a meal hosted by the other congregation.
- Provide name tags.
- Try to ensure a mix of people at each table.
- When the meal is over, gather in different mixed groups of 4. Each group is assigned one of the 5 topics as their beginning topic. Groups are invited to proceed through the topics taking as much time as they wish for each. Ask each group to record significant insights, on a separate piece of newsprint for each topic. *For example, group 1 starts by discussing “common life,” then “worship,” then “witness,” etc. Group 2 starts with “worship,” then “witness,” then “shared ministries,” etc.*
- After an hour, groups post their responses on walls and view each other’s comments. Responses should be grouped according to topic.
- Gather the whole group and share impressions from the discussion and the postings. What has surprised you? What has challenged you?
- Invite everyone to write one or two sentences about what has been significant for them in these sessions, and to bring that paper with them to the concluding worship.
- Those designated as listeners thank each other’s congregations for what they have learned and received from them.
- Conclude with a form of night prayer/compline in the worship space. Invite everyone to put their comment paper into a basket as they come to worship. Suggest that worship conclude with a commissioning for mission in the community.

## APPENDIX C

# REPORT OF THE ANGLICAN-UNITED CHURCH DIALOGUE

*to The Anglican Church of Canada and The United Church of Canada  
September 2005*

### **Preamble**

This is an interim report on the ongoing work of the ACC-UCC Dialogue. Amidst challenge, laughter, pain, and deep sharing we have journeyed faithfully together. This report represents a brief summary of our understandings of our context, some of our discussions and findings, and recommendations.

It is offered in prayer and respect.

### **Section A: The Context of this Dialogue**

#### *1. Histories Shaping our Dialogue*

Our religious and spiritual journeys, as people of faith, can never be separated from our political, social, and economic context either in the past or present. The United Church of Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada share many things in common due to our roots in the British Empire. The British ancestors brought with them the baggage of a common patriarchal, dominant culture and significant divisions in theology and church polity, which both helped and hindered the sense of the mission of the church in a new land. Thus, our journeys on this continent as mission churches have often been difficult. One crucial result of the Euro-centric churches' zeal in the proclaiming of the gospel to all nations was to blind the immigrants to seeing the presence of God amongst First Nations people when these two cultures encountered each other. The understanding of First Nations people that all people, rooted in a shared community, have a relationship with all of creation, was overshadowed by the understanding of an individual relationship with God alone and not God's creation. Residential schools operated by churches and government were both a symptom and a tool of that colonial oppression and mindset. It is imperative for the churches to let the transforming power of the Spirit cleanse and heal the wounds and brokenness that have been inflicted upon all, so that the gospel that has been proclaimed, albeit imperfectly, might also be the gospel that is lived.

Our shared history as churches also includes contributions to shaping the Canadian social fabric. Churches gave leadership in establishing systems and institutions for education and health

care. Energized by the social gospel vision of “a kingdom of justice on earth,” Canadian churches joined in the Social Service Council of Canada (1907–1939), the Canadian Council of Churches (established in 1944), and other ecumenical initiatives, to work for economic justice. These efforts have included advocating for the rights of labour, national pensions, medicare, family allowance, and other aspects of the Canadian social safety net. As well, the ACC and UCC have participated significantly in global Christian mission and witness, including in the establishment of the World Council of Churches.

## 2. ACC-UCC Dialogue History

The ACC and UCC began conversations in the 1940s, and by the early 1970s, were seriously working toward an organic union. This organic union was formally proposed in *The Plan of Union* (1972). From 1974 until 1983, conversations continued, leading to the *Report of the Task Force on the Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministry (United/Anglican)*, which was received but never acted upon by the two communities. That path was not chosen, causing a great disappointment for many. This previous work continues to be instructive for the present Dialogue. The present Dialogue, which began in February 2003, began as a result of conversations between the ecumenical officers of our churches in 1999. In 2002, the Dialogue was approved by the appropriate bodies of the UCC and the ACC.

International and regional ecumenical dialogues have brought us to quite a different place from where we were in the early 1970s. The WCC, in 1982, published the important document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. BEM has identified a foundation that our churches can work from; agreement on baptism and welcome at the table. These are things we can build upon. One advantage that our churches have is that agreement on Anglican, Reformed, and Methodist international dialogues have forged new commitments and possibilities for conversation in our own churches. The model of “full communion,” as agreed to by the ACC and the ELCIC, has provided ecumenical dialogues with viable alternatives to organic union. Partnerships with other Canadian churches, including shared ministries, military chaplaincies, and KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives also shape our ecumenical commitments and understandings. We want to strengthen these commitments and understandings.

Significant changes have also taken place within our churches. Breaking the silence about residential school abuse, and the first steps in repentance, have taken place. The All Native Circle Conference of the UCC has been formed, and the Anglican Indigenous Covenant has been affirmed and is moving toward implementation. The ACC began ordaining women in 1976. For various reasons, cooperation in theological education has taken place. Diversities of views, both theologically and socially, have continued to arise in our churches, even as we struggle to learn how to include the diversity of voices speaking out. Our faith has been challenged and enriched by an explosion of theologies that address our context from different perspectives. A deepening awareness of the rich-

ness of liturgical practices and some changes in worship have taken place. The growth and diversity of religions and personal spirituality, away from institutional connections for people, have posed new challenges. We live in a society that increasingly presents itself as secular, while at the same time welcomes people from many and varied vibrant faith communities into our common life. There has also been a rising influence and awareness of religious fundamentalism in various faith traditions.

### *3. Social Context*

The social context in which we live has also changed in the past thirty years. Issues of human sexuality, sexual orientation, ordination, and marriage have emerged, challenging the churches to examine themselves and their self-understandings. The growing gap between the rich and poor, both within nations and among nations, calls for justice and redress. As Canadians, we have failed to address the issues of homelessness and child poverty. The social safety net for which the Canadian churches worked diligently is being undermined. Withdrawal from commitment to the world is sometimes regarded as a viable alternative to mutual responsibility and interdependence. The world has been confronted with the explosion of AIDS and varieties of “super viruses.” Political realities have also shifted. The cold war has ended, but recent wars and a different expression of militarism are dominating the planet. Ecological pressures and globalization have come to the forefront of our consciences. The technology we are accustomed to today was not even created when the *Plan of Union* was written in 1973.

### *4. Role of the Dialogue Group*

The task assigned to the Dialogue was to explore themes that will enable members of the two churches to understand each other better; to encourage and strengthen shared ministry and mission, particularly at the local level, and to foster other circles of dialogue, regionally and locally, between the two churches.

The present members of the Dialogue recognize that we do not represent the diversity of our churches; for example, missing or underrepresented are: First Nations, out gay or lesbian people, youth, and laity.

## **Section B: The Progress of the Dialogue**

The ACC-UCC Dialogue has met six times between February 2003 and September 2005. The work that we have done to date is largely exploratory. We have reviewed our common history, with particular attention to events surrounding the *Plan of Union*. We have examined statements of agreement from ecumenical dialogues worldwide. We have explored various models of ecumenical theological

education in places where Anglican Church and United Church people teach and study together. We have discussed practical governance issues regarding shared ministries, and are endeavouring to communicate learnings from shared ministries more widely across the church.

### *1. Revisiting our History*

We acknowledge the pain caused by the failure of attempts at organic union that were manifested in the *Plan of Union*. We recognize especially the hurt felt by many in the UCC as a result of the perceived rejection by the ACC. We also acknowledge the various initiatives that were birthed in this era such as: the development of The Hymn Book; the Canadian Church Calendar; and a variety of shared ministries, including the development of joint ventures in theological education. This era also saw the affirmation of mutual recognition of baptism among a number of Canadian churches, and a change in Anglican practice inviting all baptized Christians to the table (a policy already in effect in the United Church).

### *2. Common Mission*

From the review of our common history has come recognition of the centrality of unity-in-mission to the life of the Christian Church and, therefore, the ecumenical endeavour. We have found this to be especially exciting because of our existing common commitment to, and work on, mission. This is reflected in joint efforts such as chaplaincies, institutions of theological education, social justice ministries (KAIROS, CCC Justice and Peace Commission, and many local initiatives), and shared ministries.

The ACC and UCC have a long history of working together on mission-related tasks. Our mutual commitment to Christian mission reflects a commonality in theology. Our respective understandings of the Reign of God are similar, as are the issues that we face in our ecclesial communities. We listen to each other and employ one another's resources on complex issues with social and political dimensions.

### *3. Initial Exploration of Ecclesiology*

The Dialogue has begun an investigation into issues of ecclesiology and sacramental theology and practice, where we are discovering both differences and common threads. For example, in relation to the ministry of oversight (*episkope*), we have noted a range of views and practices in both denominations.

The Dialogue discussed a number of ecumenical agreed statements, including the following: *God's Reign and Our Unity* — Anglican Reformed International Commission (1984); *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*; *Scottish Church Initiative for Union*; *Church Unity Commission*

(South Africa); *Churches Uniting in Christ* (USA); Roman Catholic-Lutheran *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999); *Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue* (USA). We uncovered a number of strategies in these statements, which we believe could prove fruitful for relations between the ACC and the UCC. We also have benefited from the experience of the establishment of the Churches of North India, South India, and Pakistan.

These ecumenical agreed statements and experiences are a major source of our emphasis on unity-in-mission. Other ideas we have found helpful include: 1) “differentiated consensus” and 2) “penultimate” theological statements, from the Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue, and 3) “unity in coordinated diversity,” from the *Scottish Church Initiative for Union*.

#### 4. *Theological Education*

The degree to which we are able to do theological education together is a further demonstration of the extent of our common life. UCC and ACC people teach and study together, learning from one another. This is an important aid to mutual understanding and common mission.

ACC and UCC faculties work together in a variety of different ways. Perhaps the most tightly integrated model is that followed by Atlantic School of Theology (AST) and Vancouver School of Theology (VST), where students follow a common curriculum with denominational components. Probably the least integrated model is that followed by the Toronto School of Theology (TST), where students function largely within their own denominational seminaries but are able to cross-register for courses at other institutions. The Saskatoon Theological Union, University of Winnipeg Consortium, and the Montreal School of Theology exist at different places on a continuum between the AST/VST model at one end, and the TST model at the other end. All of these models have strengths and weaknesses; the variety is beneficial to the church.

The seminaries are to be applauded for their commitment to working together. They have demonstrated a strong awareness of the need for mutual understanding and common work for the Reign of God. Many courses have students working with faculty of other denominations. In a number of places, solid efforts have been made to have faculty of different denominations in the classroom together.

The Dialogue recognizes the need for theological faculties to do more to prepare students to live and work in an ecumenical environment. Students need more opportunities to develop an awareness of their own denominational perspectives in relation to perspectives rooted in other Christian heritages. This need is particularly urgent for those who will serve in shared ministry contexts. Shared ministry situations demand a strong awareness of denominational histories, languages, and meanings; preparation in these things must begin at seminary.

#### 5. *Shared Ministries*

Shared or collaborative ministries have become for various reasons a more common option in Canada in the last thirty years. It may be a commitment to an ecumenical model of ministry, declining membership and resources, or geographical isolation that is the impetus for establishing a shared ministry. The Dialogue used the *Shared Ministry Resource Kit* prepared by participants in shared ministries as the basis for a new *Shared Ministries Handbook*. In exploring various models of shared ministry we have discovered a wide range of approaches to worshipping, living and working together in faith. In our meeting with members of shared ministry communities and through the participation of several members of the Dialogue in the Collaborative Ministries Conference, we have seen that many communities are able to establish a common identity while still maintaining denominational connections and denominational identities. There are different means of achieving that diversity in unity as illustrated in the *Shared Ministries Handbook*.

What has surfaced in our consideration of both theological faculties and shared ministries is the difficulty caused by the inability to recognize fully and completely the ministries of those who serve in them. For example, where liturgical forms are restricted according to the denomination of the ordained minister, members of that denomination in that congregation are deprived of those liturgies. As “the very celebration of the eucharist is an instance of the Church’s participation in God’s mission to the world” (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, 15), an impairment of the eucharistic practices of these shared ministries is a serious matter. Shared ministries have brought the issue of mutual recognition of ministries to a focus for us, but it is a question that is not merely a pragmatic one; these ministries merely demonstrate concretely what is at stake in living out our faith as communities of God’s people.

This Dialogue has begun to explore the ACC – UCC history and relationship. In the midst of this exploration we have recognized failures and successes in our denominational attempts to flourish in faith. As we meet, we are uncovering, and more clearly defining, our self-identities and passions. Ecumenical statements of agreement from various parts of the world witness to the many creative possibilities of Christians collaboratively sharing the gospel. Discussions with theological educators revealed that there are and may be future possibilities to aiding mutual understanding. In shared ministries we witness these mutual understandings lived out in communities of faith.

## Section C: Where Are We Going?

### *Recommendation 1: Continuation of the Dialogue*

Because we have learned from one another and have come to believe that there are possibilities for collaboration and further developments in our relationship, we recommend that The United Church of Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada authorize the continuation of this Dialogue. The mandate for the next stage would be:

- To continue to pursue an understanding of one another and the contribution that each of our

churches makes to the work of Christ in Canada

- To ensure that the Dialogue is enlivened by the vision and values of the Anglican Indigenous Covenant and the United Church Aboriginal Justice and Right Relationship Process; to give increased attention to the effects of colonization on First Nations peoples and the wider church, and the changes that the churches need to make in light of that history
- To continue to address our theological similarities and differences and their significance for our relationship
- To explore the possibilities for resolving outstanding issues relating to the sacraments and ministries
- To continue work on a study guide and process for our churches (see Recommendation 2).

### *Recommendation 2: Study Guide and Process*

Because the Dialogue has encountered a remarkable degree of growth in understanding, and wants to be accountable to the churches and include them in this process, we recommend that the Dialogue continue work on a study guide and process for our churches. Among the aims of the study guide would be:

- To share with the churches what the Dialogue has discovered about one another and the possibilities for future developments in our relationship
- To seek response from the churches to these discoveries and possibilities
- To raise awareness in our churches of colonialism and its consequences
- To enable neighbouring Anglican and United Church congregations to explore their mutual understandings and differences, and possibilities for common mission.

### *Recommendation 3: Shared Ministries Joint Task Group*

Because we have learned through our experience of shared/collaborative (ecumenical) ministries, we recommend that our churches establish a joint task group, in collaboration with other churches (see recommendation #4), to address the concerns of these ministries.

Issues for the shared ministries task group might include:

- Different understandings of the ordained ministry
- Inconsistency of policy and its application across the country — e.g., licensing, presiding at the sacraments, voting in governing bodies
- Finance and remuneration
- Buildings
- Conflict resolution
- Training for leadership

- Enhanced attention to shared ministries in theological education
- Connectedness to the wider church

The task group would be funded by each of the churches and report to each of them, but could make recommendations of issues to be further discussed by the Anglican-United Church Dialogue.

One resource for the task group is the *Shared Ministries Handbook*.

#### *Recommendation 4: Wider Participation*

Because we have benefited greatly from the presence of a Lutheran partner/observer to the Dialogue, we recommend that

- the Dialogue continue to have a partner/observer from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada be invited to join the joint task group to address shared ministry issues.

#### *Recommendation 5: Theological Education*

Because theological faculties prepare students to live and work in an ecumenical environment and have demonstrated a strong awareness of the need for mutual understanding and common work for the Reign of God, we call on the ACC and UCC to make solid financial commitments to professional theological faculties, so that the work of ecumenical theological education may continue and expand.

We challenge theological faculties to teach North American Indigenous theologies and to be more welcoming places for First Nations people as students and faculty.

We challenge theological faculties to do more to prepare students to live and work in an ecumenical environment, to provide students with more opportunities to develop an awareness of their own denominational perspectives in relation to perspectives rooted in other Christian heritages, and to equip those who will serve in shared ministry contexts with a strong awareness of denominational histories, languages, and meanings.