

*The Nature and Mission of the Church:
A stage on the way to a common statement*

Faith and Order Paper 198
World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland

Response Document

from
The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
March, 2007

Introduction

1. It is now some years since the Standing Commission of Faith and Order of the WCC endorsed a study on the nature and purpose of the Church, the end result of which has been the 2005 publication of Faith and Order Paper 198, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. This small book “seeks to affirm what the churches can say together about the church, and to identify and clarify issues over which the churches continue to differ”.¹ This is an exercise in ecclesiology to which all member churches of the WCC have been invited to participate by now responding to the published paper which, indeed, will be subject to revision in the light of such responses. Specifically, churches have been asked to respond to the four questions highlighted at the end of Section 8 (page 12) of the text. Our own close analysis of these suggests, in fact six discrete questions and it is these to which this document makes response. However, before getting to them, a few general comments about this Faith and Order Paper are appropriate.

2. We would affirm its overall methodology as an ecclesial exercise in ecclesiological reflection. In particular the distinguishing of common or convergent perspectives in the body of the text, from areas in which difficulties remain in the boxed text, encourages theological honesty. However, we suggest that sometimes the common perspectives are articulated rather too confidently, and the identification of differences might be too understated. Yet, the document moves towards a genuinely constructive biblical hermeneutic. Biblical material is not used as data for simplistic comparisons or as accumulation of ‘proof texts’ but there seems to be an attempt — if not wholly realised — to sketch out and apply a genuinely biblical theology of the church.

3. As a general observation, the goal of visible church unity still seems to hover just over the horizon of the document. Implicit in this is the model of discrete denominations with specific theological identities and histories, with the purpose of ecumenical dialogue — typified by this document — being to inscribe the areas of consensus, however minor, and note the areas of divergence, however significant. This model focuses on denominational divisions rather than the more crucial underlying theological differences — the fault lines which run within denominations as well as between them. The experience of the worldwide Anglican Communion at this time reminds us sharply of this point. A document which assumes the primacy of denominational identity over theological identity fails to address a significant concern of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. In this regard, perhaps it also fails to offer a methodological model of how dialogue can be opened and maintained between adherents of divergent theological positions. But this may be asking too much.

¹ Letter from the General Secretary of the WCC, Rev Dr Samuel Kobia, to WCC Member Churches, September 2006.

4. We acknowledge that the WCC hopes that the very process of engaging, and responding to, the paper “will make a significant difference to the churches’ growing understanding of the church, and to the resolution of divisive issues”² but we are aware at this time that many churches are confronted more with the spectre of divisive issues within. Concerns about divisions between churches tend to fade by comparison. Indeed, some of the most significant contemporary divisive issues cut across traditional denominational distinctions to superimpose new forms of theological identity upon the extant ecclesial identities. Whether the work of the WCC in respect to the focus of this present paper can achieve a significant measure of both understanding and resolution to such issues is moot, even though it is to be hoped and prayed for.

The Questions

1. In respect to the ecclesiological convictions enunciated in the text, do we agree they are ‘correctly identified’? (Do they ring true for us in our context? Are there limitations or gaps?)

5. In our view, the ecclesial convictions in this paper are correctly identified, particularly on issues which continue to divide us.

The Nature of the Church (pp. 13ff.)

6. This is a full discussion which sits very comfortably with the Anglican ethos and understanding. We endorse the stress of cl. 13 on the Church as “not merely the sum of individual believers in communion with God, nor primarily the mutual communion of individual believers among themselves”, rather the Church “is both a divine and human reality”. Similarly, the stress on diversity as inherent to the life of the Christian community is a significant element (cl. 16), one which is of particular value to the Anglican Communion at this time. This statement speaks of the dynamic relational reality of the Christian community as ecclesia.

The Mission of the Church (pp. 24ff.) and *The Church as Sign and Instrument* (pp. 27f.)

7. These are sound statements, to be commended and endorsed. In particular, we find the stress of Gospel proclamation in word and deed (cl. 35), together with the motifs of witness (cl. 37) and preaching (cl. 38) to be well-grounded.

8. We paid particular attention to the first boxed and highlighted passage of the paper, The Institutional Dimension of the Church and the Work of the Holy Spirit (Box 1, p. 15-16), as follows:

a) The Sacraments: means of salvation or witnesses to salvation?

9. We note that the very life of Christ can be considered a sacrament, for in his earthly life he revealed, in his humble humanity, the glory of God. But he is also the author of the sacraments. According to C.S. Lewis, ‘there are three things that spread the life of Christ to us: baptism, belief, and that mysterious action which different Christians call by different names – Holy Communion, the Mass, the Lord’s Supper’.³ We would wish to affirm the element of mystery or the mystical nature of Communion, where bread and wine becomes spiritual food to its recipients. In light of many theories regarding the nature of Communion, Lewis also said that we are commanded to “Take eat”; not “Take, understand”.⁴ It is important from an Anglican perspective to affirm the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, yet this is something that

² *Ibid.*

³ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 62.

⁴ C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 104.

cannot be precisely defined nor fully understood.

b) The Ordained Ministry, under Episcopal authority.

10. The New Testament terms for elder (*presbuteros*), bishop (*episcopos*) and shepherd (*poimen*) appear to be used interchangeably (see Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1ff; Titus 1:5-7). In the matter of church ministry and leadership we suggest a need to be guided more principles of New Testament thinking rather than driven by certain favoured New Testament texts that appear to give ecclesial support to particular denominational structures. The New Testament draws no hard distinction between clergy and laity; it would appear to know nothing of denominationalism as such, although there is evidence of early diversity in terms of ecclesial communities (cf. the letters of Paul).

11. First century nascent ministry and leadership were relatively flexible and versatile. Admittedly, there is an early distinction made between local ministries and itinerant ministries; but it took time for a fixed hierarchical structure to emerge. First century Christians were obviously in the process of constructing something new – beginning that which was to become the ‘Tradition’ of the Church. By contrast, Christians in the 21st century are either ‘deconstructing’ aspects of the received Tradition, or trying to make the church more relevant in regards to contextual needs. The first Christians were building up a singular movement; by comparison, we in modern times are seeking to create space for others (ecumenism), implying a more dynamic understanding of what it means to be ‘Church’ than what might be otherwise applied by a more conservative reading and application of the Tradition as such. Certainly, in respect to the Anglican Church in our part of the world, the application of a dynamic ecumenical perspective within and to our own context have resulted in innovative developments of, but not a fundamental departure from, the received Tradition of the Church.

12. Baptism is itself an ordination that calls us all to ministry.⁵ It has been described as the *primary ordination* within Christian ministry: “Those who are baptised are called to worship and to serve”.⁶ Indeed, ministry is grounded in that life of discipleship, witness and action which is the province of all the baptised *per se*. Nevertheless, paradox and inconsistency in terms of mutual Christian recognition abound. In our context, the New Zealand Anglican and Methodist Dialogue Group has raised the issue somewhat acutely inasmuch as, on the one hand, Anglicans and Methodists accept one another’s baptism and within ecumenical contexts there is mutual acceptance of ministry, yet Anglican canons require that should a Methodist minister seek to become an Anglican priest, ordination (thus re-ordination) is required. Does this mean that the episkope of an otherwise acceptable communion is not acceptable, or acknowledged as equivalent? This is a significant issue. An answer has been given to the effect that the ‘re-ordination’, or the ordaining into Anglican ministry someone ordained previously in another communion, is not a theological issue as such, rather a matter of establishing the proper ‘ordering’ of the new ministry – who is that person being ‘re-ordained’ answerable to, under whose authority does he or she come? Newly ordained Deacons and Priests, irrespective of their previous ecclesial histories, are obliged to submit to the authority of the Bishop in whose jurisdiction they come under.⁷ In the case of clergy ordained elsewhere the liturgical action of Anglican ordination does not vitiate their former theological statues *qua* ordained; rather it aligns that status now within a different ecclesial community, making clear the contexts of authority and privilege. However, this does not apply to priest formerly ordained in the Roman Catholic Church: these are simply accepted in and given a licence. The wider issue of episcopal equivalence remains a topic of ecumenical contention.

⁵ Cf. NZPB, 3.

⁶ NZPB, 390.

⁷ NZPB, 894 & 905.

c) The value and importance of episcopacy.

13. As Anglicans, we affirm the importance and value of episcopacy both in its long and enduring history and in terms of its spiritual graces and gifts to the wider Church down through the centuries and which has received renewed attention in recent times.⁸ This does not in any way suggest that non-episcopal churches do not have gifts and wisdom to offer the wider church, nor does this mean that non-episcopal churches do not have apostolic content, because they most certainly do. Furthermore, while episcopacy is a sign of God's presence, historically at times it has not always been effective or true to its witness of the Gospel. There is both a functional and an ecclesial-ontological value in episcopacy which can be seen affirmed today in many quarters.

2. In respect to the issues which the text identifies as continuing to be divisive for the Church, do we agree with this identification? (Are these the issues we experience as divisive? Would we add to these?)

14. Clause 32 highlights what constitutes “visible and tangible signs” of a Christian life (‘members one of another’) and underscores the lived reality of division – what it is that Christians often cannot do together, as in shared worship, Eucharist, ministry, life, witness etc; in part because of some remaining canonical barriers, but more so because of profound theological divergences. This is reinforced by the boxed statement (Church as “Sacrament”? pp29-30) which highlights “varying views about the instrumentality of the Church with regard to salvation”, and also the comment (el. 51) concerning the loose relationship that many Christians hold toward their community of identity (‘belonging without believing’; ‘believing without belonging’).

15. Differences concerning ordained ministry (boxed statement, p. 52) and governance and leadership (boxed statement, p. 54) seem on the mark: ontological and functional interpretations of ministry, apostolicity and episcopacy would appear intractable; so also the deep issues surrounding conciliarity and primacy (boxed statement, p. 60), which impinge as much within some Christian Churches as between them.⁹ These are key issues for which the ecumenical movement, through Faith & Order, needs to strive even harder to find a way through — especially in respect to issues of gender and church leadership.

16. Section IV: In and for the World (pp. 62ff) raises some concerns. We see a major problem with cl. 110 that speaks of evangelization such that proclamation is effectively identified with evangelization. There is no clarification as to whether or not evangelization is to be equated with proselytizing — which may be assumed on the basis that ‘preaching for conversion’ is likely to be a default interpretation of evangelization, and so of proclamation. Thus the somewhat superficial assertion that “there is no contradiction between evangelization and respect for the values present in other faiths” is manifestly contentious. Many Christians would demure with that assertion on the basis that proclamation and evangelization together imply both Christian primacy and an inherent disjunction between Christian belief and values, on the one hand, and the beliefs and values of other faiths, on the other. At the same time, the assertion of the primacy of evangelization without any context of the theology of mission, witness and dialogue, implicitly devalues the challenge of interreligious engagement and dialogue as legitimately expressive of the *Missio Dei*. Furthermore, the affirmation of respect for values can undercut the need for deeper interfaith engagement in the contemporary world where it is the issue of belief perspectives and

⁸ Cf. *The Gift of Authority*.

⁹ See also *The Virginia Report*.

religious identity differentiation which needs to be addressed. We may respect values, especially where they sit comfortably with our own, but do we respect differences of beliefs, which lie at the heart of religious diversity? There is need here for the Faith and Order perspective on the beliefs and identities of other religions to be addressed in the context of the “service” of Gospel proclamation, not just values.

17. This critique is reinforced by the sentiment expressed in clause 115: on the one hand the motif of co-operative working for “the values of the Kingdom” is promoted in concert with received ecumenical tradition; on the other hand the motif of bearing witness is simply juxtaposed with that — the inherent tension goes un-remarked in this simplistic hortatory juxtaposition. It is also reinforced by the earlier imperialistic evangelical reference which translates a theological value into an ontological assertion — “God’s design to gather all creation under the Lordship of Christ ... and to bring all creation into communion” (cl. 34). Such assertions vitiate the value placed on created and eschatological diversity that are elsewhere affirmed. The result is likely to exacerbate divergences where those who apply the primacy of evangelization will vitiate interreligious co-operation; those inclined to co-operate may either avoid, or artificially engage in, a witness for faith, and those who seek to reconcile, theologically, interreligious engagement and intentional Christian discipleship are likely to be increasingly marginalised. A major issue that has the potential to exacerbate division has been glossed, only to contribute to the difficulties of slow progress (cl. 120) and the spread of “retrenchment” and “an anti-ecumenical spirit” (cl. 121).

3. Does the substantive portrayal of the nature and mission of the Church contained in the document reflect an emerging consensus? (To what extent can our Church own this document in its essence? What else/more would we want to say here?)

18. Much of the substantive portrayal of the nature and mission of the Church in this document is uncontroversial from an Anglican perspective. The emphasis on the church as *koinonia*, explicit in the Introduction (specifically cl. 3) and in Section III (pp.42-60) reflects an emerging Anglican consensus about the fundamental reality of the church found in its recent ecumenical dialogues. The fullest treatment of the theme is found in the ARCIC report *Church as Communion*, which describes ecclesial communion as being

...rooted in the confession of the one apostolic faith, revealed in the Scriptures, and set forth in the Creeds. It is founded upon one baptism. The one celebration of the eucharist is its pre-eminent expression and focus. It necessarily finds expression in shared commitment to the mission entrusted by Christ to his Church.¹⁰

19. The Windsor Report is in continuity with this thinking as it declares that communion is both God’s gift to us and our calling, a divine expectation.¹¹ This sits comfortably with the statement in the WCC document that “God bestows on the Church the grace of the apostolic faith, baptism and eucharist as a means of grace to create and sustain the *koinonia*” (cl. 67) This understanding successfully upholds the two aspects of *koinonia* which can be distinguished but not separated, namely the visible dimension of the church’s action, and its animating, divinely-given source of life (which is also made explicit in *The Windsor Report*, para.7).

20. There is an unambiguous affirmation of diverse expressions of Christian experience in the document (cl. 16, cl. 52, cl. 55 & 56, and boxed text pp.37-39) which conforms to the

¹⁰ *Church as Communion*, para. 45.

¹¹ *The Windsor Report*, para. 5.

diversity of expressions of Anglican identity within our communion. For us, these have the effect of focussing, in particular, on the articulation of issues of autonomy and interdependence; worldwide structures and contextualized mission; episcopacy and the ministry of the baptized; centralized accountability and dispersed authority. The dynamic of unity without uniformity promoted by the document is an enlivening principle for Anglicans seeking to find more effective ways of maintaining *koinonia* in times of change. The particular understanding of mission presented in clauses 39-41 appears to conform implicitly to five principles of mission outlined by the Anglican Consultative Council — to proclaim the good news of the kingdom; to teach, baptize and nurture new believers; to respond to human needs by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

21. The Anglican Church recognizes that *koinonia* is upheld and invigorated by “structures of grace”.¹² While there is much in the document in essence which we can own as a church, some of the specific details of the “structures of grace” it promotes do not fit comfortably with Anglican ecclesiology and experience. This is particularly true of the conditions of baptism (cl. 75): “Baptism involves confession of sin, conversion of heart, pardoning, cleansing and sanctification”. While there has been considerable controversy within Anglicanism about the distinct sacramental actions in the rite of baptism, especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries¹³, a new Anglican consensus in this matter became evident at the 1991 International Anglican Liturgical Consultation. This asserted unequivocally that baptism is complete sacramental initiation, including the gift of the Holy Spirit, but underplayed the role of confession of sins and conversion of life in relation to the fundamental action of incorporation into the Body of Christ.

22. Similarly, there is a tension in the description of the action and purpose of the Eucharist in clause 79: “Eucharist is a proclamation of the Gospel, a glorification of the Father for everything accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification; a memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus and what was accomplished once and for all on the cross; and invocation of the Holy Spirit; an intercession, the communion of the faithful, and an anticipation and foretaste of the kingdom to come.” This seems to be an undifferentiated accumulation of diverse understandings of the Eucharist, some of which are at odds with each other. It also omits any understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving – a theological emphasis present both in the 1662 BCP and in the New Zealand Prayer Book, especially the Eucharistic liturgy (*NZPB* p.404).

23. Finally, clause 50 appears to identify individual, cultural and historical conditioning as part of the (negative) “conditions of the world” which constrain the life of the church. There is a tension here with the experience of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia as a three-tikanga church, exercising mission and ministry to God’s people from within the specific culture of each partner. There is a further internal tension within the document, with clauses 60 and 61, which speak about the authenticity of the Gospel as it is rooted and lived out in specific contexts, and provide a more realistic understanding of an appropriately contextual theology.

4. Are there significant matters in which the concerns of your church are not adequately addressed? (What isn’t there?)

¹² *The Windsor Report* para. 7.

¹³ See Arthur James Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism* and Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*. For further description of the liturgical controversy see Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*.

24. There are five specific areas of concern which, from our point of view, the document does not adequately address.

1. Cultural diversity

25. Since the adoption of a new constitution in 1992, the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia has embraced a bold innovation to the episcopal tradition of Anglicanism by forming a three *tikanga* (cultural streams) model of church structure and organisation. This is a serious attempt to create space for indigenous communities to express the gospel within, and in terms of, their own culture, and to grapple with the contextual expression of the gospel and of liturgy, especially in the context of the particular history of these islands shaped by a unique covenant, the Treaty of Waitangi.¹⁴ However, the relationship of context and theology, which is crucial to our particular ecclesial identity and expression, appears briefly and with some confusion in the document. For example, clause 50 seems to identify the specifics of individual culture and history as components of the partly negative “conditions of the world”. Behind this there seems to lay an almost Platonic theology of the Church in its perfected state, as contrasted to the reality of the church in its “human dimension”. Yet clauses 60 and 61 appear to allow much more positively for the authenticity of the Gospel as it is rooted and lived out in specific contexts. This tension is an unhelpful aspect of the text as it stands.

2. Admission to the Eucharist

26. The document does not address in any detail the question of admission to the Eucharist, with the considerable differences of opinion which that entails. Part of our constitution defines the mission of our church as “teaching, baptising and nurturing believers within Eucharistic communities of faith.” To that end, and notwithstanding a normative presumption that admission to the Table of the Lord is a privilege of the baptised, from a pragmatic point of view admission to the Eucharist is inclusive of all forms of personal identity simply on the presumption of a response in faith: there is no overt requirement of ecclesial membership, which means that, to all intents and purposes, the practical reality is that ‘Whosoever wills’ may and does receive communion.

3. Gender and Sexual orientation

27. A further and significant concern for our church at this time is the exploration of the roles within the church of those of differing gender and sexual orientations, focused particularly on the ordination of women, and of people in homosexual relationships. This issue has exposed a serious theological fracture within our denomination, bringing to light divergent understandings of hermeneutics and ecclesiology, with implications for doctrinal theology which have yet to be worked out fully. This concern is not addressed in the document.

4. Reclaiming Mary

28. Some creative work has recently been done by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on the role of Mary.¹⁵ We endorse the acknowledgement given to Mary (cl. 10). We suggest, however, that her reception within protestant (or at least non-Catholic) circles would be strengthened by reference to her as, effectively, the first Christian disciple: before she is acknowledged as Theotokos she is rightly understood as one who bears witness to the response

¹⁴ Signed between representatives of the British Crown and the chieftains of Maori tribes on Feb 6, 1840, this treaty marks the effective beginning of New Zealand as a modern nation-state embracing two peoples, the European (non-Maori) settlers and the indigenous (Maori) race. Issues of honouring the Treaty, remedying historical breaches, and applying its principles into contemporary social and institutional arrangements, have become significant elements engaging Church and Society in New Zealand since the 1970s.

¹⁵ *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ.*

of discipleship and who provides a model of the nurturer of faith.¹⁶ There may be more room in the document for reclaiming Mary as such a model of faith and discipleship with creative ecumenical possibilities, transcending both Roman Catholic doctrinal understandings of her role and traditionally negative Protestant responses to it.

5. *The Environmental Context*

29. Section IV of the Faith and Order paper relates thinking about the Church to some critical wider realities including issues such as HIV/AIDS, the cause of peace and justice, and an oblique reference to the environment (cl.114). However, in an age of heightened awareness of, and concerns about, the bio-physical world – the material environment in which we live – and the many significant ecclesial pronouncements on that including, from our perspective, the Anglican Fifth Mission Statement¹⁷ calling the Church “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth”, we regard the omission of any overt linking of a discussion on the nature and mission of the Church to this vital contextual reality to be a significant omission.¹⁸

5. In what way do we see this document assisting the ecumenical cause of unity in our context? (What is the understanding of ‘unity’ assumed or applicable? Does the substance of this document help or hinder that?)

30. The ecumenical cause of unity finds support in the stress on *koinonia* found in the Introduction. In noting the demand for “a credible witness to unity in diversity” (cl. 3), a signal is given to a dynamic understanding of unity such as to embrace the diversity of ecclesial alterities across an ever widening range. The lead motif of the Church as the “communion of the faithful” (cl. 10) is also indicative of an encompassing perspective that is inclusive of a wide range of particular identities and structural arrangements conjoined, not by being members of the same organisation, sociologically or organically, but by participating in the same theological verity — the life of God (cl. 13). This suggests, therefore, a basis for a reconciliation of difference and disagreement of interpretation and concept that nonetheless respects and allows for diversity: the possibility for a wider and even more inclusive vision of what it means to be the body of Christ, the Church, is thus flagged.

31. Diversity of Christian identity and expression is clearly affirmed by the document. The fact of Christian plurality is met by the advocacy of a dynamic unity that allows for variety and does not equate reconciliation with assimilation or the absorption of the many into a homogenous uniformity: “The communion of the Church consists not of independent individuals but of persons in community, all of whom contribute to its flourishing” (cl. 32). The range and diversity of points and moments wherein the Church “participates in and points to the Kingdom of God” (cl. 36) give cause to affirm a dynamic unity as the basis of ecumenism and so the prospect of a renewal of ecumenical intent: Christians of diverse orientation correlatively and mutually participating in that ecclesiological reality which embraces, and is more than, the sum of the participating churches. At other points this dynamic unity is clearly reinforced (cf. cl. 65, 66, 99, 101, 106, 113). Our own ecclesial experience of honouring the distinctive identities of the two predominant indigenous cultural streams within the geographic boundaries of our Church, Maori and Polynesian, while at the same time holding them together with the numerically dominant European (also including now new immigrants and settlers from many other countries

¹⁶ Cf David Van Sienna, ‘Hail Mary’, *Time*, March 21, 2005.

¹⁷ The principles of which are embedded within the Constitution of our Church: see <http://www.anglican.org.nz/Constitution/4.%20Constitution%20English.htm>.

¹⁸ Cf. *Mission in a Broken World*; C.M. King, *Habitat of Grace*.

and ethnicities) within the one Anglican church by virtue of a trinitarian (3 cultural 'persons' in one ecclesial 'substance') constitutional arrangement, gives local expression to the theme of dynamic unity as expressed in this ecumenical document.

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Acknowledgements

The Council for Ecumenism of The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia undertook responsibility of responding on behalf of the Church to the request of the WCC pertaining to Faith and Order Paper 198, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. A small working group was delegated to prepare a draft Response Document which became the basis for the final Response from The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, submitted through the Standing Committee of the General Synod. Those directly responsible for the preparation of the document included the Rev Canon Dr Douglas Pratt, convenor; the Rev Rob McKay and the Rev Lynda Patterson.

Appendix — the process of responding to the WCC

1. The task of responding to the request of the WCC to address this document on behalf of The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia fell within the

purview the Council of Ecumenism.

2. At the invitation of the General Secretary, Mr Robin Nairn, a small working group, including The Rt Rev Api Qiliho, Dr Jenny Plane-Te Paa, the Rev Rob McKay and the Rev Lynda Patterson, was convened by the Rev Canon Dr Douglas Pratt late in 2006.
3. Initial work was allocated on the basis of the six key questions to which Churches had been asked to make response to the WCC. In the event the two working group meetings held could only be attended by the Revs Pratt, McKay and Patterson, who completed the task of producing the draft document on behalf of the whole group.
4. The initial Response Document was received and discussed by the Council of Ecumenism on March 8, 2007, who identified some points of amendment and expansion requiring attention.
5. The final amended Response Document is to be submitted to the Standing Committee of General Synod for endorsement and thence forwarding, as the response of our Church, to the WCC.