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Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group

Cold Ash, Berkshire, England 1983

I. Introduction

- 1. The last fifteen years have seen a remarkable convergence between the Anglican and Lutheran Communions and their member churches. This applies both to theological understanding and practical contacts and exchange. The two Christian traditions have rediscovered a deep affinity in faith, worship, life and mission and a mutually enriching diversity of forms in expressing Christian faith and life.
- 2. In order to further this emergence of a new relationship between Anglicans and Lutherans, Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations took place from 1970 to 1972. A small Anglican-Lutheran Working Group metin1975. Official Episcopal -Lutheran conversations have been conducted in the USA since 1969. They led in September
- 3. This progress led the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in 1981 to recommend that the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) be invited to re-convene a Joint Working Group. This initiative was welcomed by the Executive Committee of the LWF in 1982. Both sides appointed an Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group and agreed that this group should
 - receive information about the development of Anglican-Lutheran relations in different parts of the world
 - assess the results of Anglican- Lutheran dialogues, especially in Europe, Tanzania and the USA
 - make recommendations with the intention of proposing how the two Communions might achieve full communion suggest procedures that would assure closer cooperation between the two bodies.
- 4. The Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group met from 28 November to 3 December 1983 at The Cold Ash Centre, Cold Ash, Berkshire, England. The meeting was marked by a spirit of joy and gratitude for a new era in Anglican-Lutheran relations. The participants now submit their report to the ACC and LWF and through them to the Anglican and Lutheran churches.

II. The Historical Background of Anglican-Lutheran Relations

- 5. In order to assess adequately the significance of recent theological convergence and growing contacts, exchange and collaboration between Anglican and Lutheran churches in many parts of the world, a glimpse at the history of our relations might be helpful.
- 6. In international, regional and national Anglican-Lutheran dialogues confidence is expressed that both churches are on the way towards full communion with each other. Such confidence is based on growing theological agreement and consensus. But it is also rooted in the rediscovery of common theological orientations, manifold contacts and sacramental sharing during the Reformation period and after. Today our churches, which had in many ways become strangers to each other during the intervening period, are discovering afresh their common convictions of faith, and a mutually enriching diversity in forms of worship, spiritual life, theological thinking and ethos, and in mission and service.
- 7. The following historical overview is taken from the Report of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission.

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Our Common Heritage

- 8. In the early stages of the Reformation close ties existed between the Reformers in Britain and on the Continent . Under Henry VIII and Edward VI many English Reformers were strongly influenced by Luther's writings. Attempts were made, though politically motivated, to formulate an official consensus between English and German theologians and churchmen (*The Wittenberg Articles* 1536). This early Lutheran influence has left its mark on Archbishop Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Homilies, English translations of the Bible, and, through a number of earlier doctrinal statements, on many of the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion (The Ten Articles* 1536, *The Bishops' Book* 1537, *The Thirteen Articles* 1538).
- 9. The theological common ground between Lutherans and Anglicans was soon superseded by the fast advance of Reformed, Calvinistic concepts. In England such views concerning the real presence in the eucharist and predestination found wide acceptance. Moreover, many of those who had been exiled on the Continent in the reign of Mary returned under Elizabeth I as zealous advocates for further reform of the English Church, following the example of the Church of Geneva

The Parting of the Ways

- 10. From the second part of the sixteenth century the internal Puritan threat to abolish the episcopal system disturbed the unity of church and state in England and called forth a defence of the Church of England which emphasized its own identity by advocating its particular "middle way" between Rome and Geneva. In the same period some Lutheran Churches on the Continent retained a similar structure to the English Church, as in Sweden and Finland; others were forced to abandon the episcopal system. In either case the awareness of a family relationship between the Anglican and the Lutheran Churches was still strong. Mutual recognition and intercommunion were freely practised.
- 11. But this period also witnessed the beginning of a separate development. The defence against puritanism was in the main directed against the Reformed and Independent traditions, yet it also gave rise to critical attitudes towards all the Reformation Churches on the Continent. The Anglican theological method had as its main criterion the interplay between Scripture, tradition and reason. The Lutheran criterion of *sola scriptura* did not exclude a high esteem for tradition, but could not attribute to reason the same role as in English theological thinking.
- 12. Other developments and influences, many of them non-theological, led to further estrangement between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. Perhaps the most influential force in this development was the Oxford Movement. Lutheranism was identified with Protestantism as it was encountered in England. Lutherans, on the other hand, tended to see in Anglicanism an expression of semi-Catholicism which the y could not acknowledge. In practice this resulted in barriers to intercommunion and the failure to recognize each other as Churches. The deepest difference was seen in the understanding and structure of the ministry with its wider implications for eucharistic theology and ecclesiology.
- 13. However, even during these centuries of separate development many relationships between Anglican and Lutheran Churches continued. In both traditions there were individuals and groups who renewed contacts, enabled mutual theological exchange, and fostered a close relationship between Anglicans and Lutherans, especially in Scandinavia. The history of Anglican-Lutheran relations is a complex one-and cannot be reduced to one simple pattern.
- 14. The inadequate and often distorted images of Anglicanism and Lutheranism created during these centuries are still present realities, and much needs to be done to correct them, but since the beginning of this century new developments have increased mutual knowledge and exchange, and have produced far-reaching changes in our relationship. This leads us to a new stage.

III. Anglican-Lutheran Relationships Today

- 15. Anglican-Lutheran relationships today are the result of several more general developments during the last few decades:
 - (a) The ecumenical movement has provided many occasions for more frequent encounters between Anglicans and Lutherans. This has contributed to better mutual understanding between individuals and groups on both sides. A similar contribution has come from the conversations and the different arrangements for eucharistic sharing between the Church of England and the Scandinavian and Baltic Lutheran churches before and after the Second World War.
 - (b) Since the Second World War, the translation of theological works, increased exchange through visits and study in the other church context, together with growing contact between both leaders and church members, have broadened mutual knowledge and understanding.
 - (c) The ecumenical activity and the growing self-consciousness of Anglican and Lutheran churches in countries outside Europe have freed Anglican- Lutheran relations from their limited European perspective, and invested them with a special urgency, since Anglicans and Lutherans are living side by side in these countries and share common tasks of mission and service.
- 16. Together with this intensified exchange, there have been convergences resulting from general theological and ecumenical thinking, as well as the rediscovery of elements in our two traditions which indicate a close affinity. In addition to agreement on central Christian doctrine s, these convergences include among others:
 - (a) Becoming conscious that we share, as Anglicans and Lutherans, the same roots: Emphasis on the witness of Holy Scripture as normative and on continuity with the apostolic faith and mission throughout the centuries and appreciation of the Reformation as a renewal movement within the Church catholic and not as a beginning of a new church.
 - (b) Realizing afresh that our two churches are marked by a high esteem for sacramental life and liturgical worship.
 - (c) Affirming together the Church as a community, constituted by Jesus Christ through his presence and action through the means for grace. This community, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is called to responsibility for the wider human community in which it lives.
 - (d) Adopting similar views, assisted by the results of biblical and historical research, concerning the emergence of the Christian Church and its institutions. This and basic agreements on the understanding of apostolicity and on the nature, place and function of the ordain ed ministry within the ministry of the whole people of God have removed many fom1er differences.
 - (e) Realizing that both Anglican and Lutheran churches comprehend convictionsandfom15of expression which are commonly associated with the "catholic" and with the "protestant" traditions within Christianity. This enables them to exercise together a mediating role in efforts towards Christian unity.
- 17. Bilateral dialogues between our two churches have discovered, received, clarified and formulated these and other agreements and convergences. They are, therefore, paying an essential role in fostering the growing theological consensus between our two churches and in helping to broaden the awareness of the reality for such agreements and convergences. They challenge our churches to reconsider their relations and provide the necessary basis for decisions aiming at closer relationships with one another.
- 18. Increased contacts and exchange and theological dialogue and convergence have improved relationships between Anglican and Lutheran churches to a remarkable degree during recent years. But the forms of such relationships vary according to situations. A general, and far from complete, overview indicates the following types of relationships :
 - (a) In many countries there exists eucharistic hospitality between our churches as part of a broader invitation to communicant members of trinitarian churches under the specific provisions/regulations of the respective churches. In these countries our churches also work together in specific projects and programmes.
 - (b) A more specific relation between Anglican and Lutheran churches is found in situations where they have established bilateral contacts, cooperation, sharing in social work, assistance in pastoral work, mutual participation in worship and on special occasions, e.g. the consecration or installation of a bishop. These forms of relationships we find in all parts of the world, e.g. Europe, Canada, Latin America, Namibia, Tanzania, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia.
 - (c) In some situations these contacts have led to the desire to enter into a theological dialogue with the purpose of deepening these contacts, of overcoming still existing differences and of moving to forms of official eucharistic sharing. This step has been taken or is planned, e.g. in Canada and Tanzania.
 - (d) In other situations such a theological dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans has already been

conducted for several years and has resulted in reports and even in decisions by the churches involved. The two most significant examples of this dialogue are the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue in the USA and the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue in Europe. Both dialogues built on the foundations laid by the *International Anglican-Lutheran conversations 1970-1972* and have enriched one another as well as profited from the multilateral dialogue in Faith and Order which resulted in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, 1982.

- (e) The Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue in the USA entered its third round in December 1983. After work between 1969 and 1972 the first dialogue commission presented a *Progress Report* in 1972. A new commission met between 1976 and 1980, and its Report and Recommendations were published in 1981. On the basis of these studies the Conventions of the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Lutheran Church in America adopted in September 1982 an agreement. It expresses mutual recognition as churches in which the gospel is preached and taught, establishes a relationship of "interim sharing of the Eucharist" and encourages forms of joint worship, mutual prayer, common study of Holy Scriptures, joint programmes of religious education, mission, social action, etc. (see Appendix II). This dialogue is of special significance because it is the first one which has led to action by the participating churches.
- (f) The Anglican-Lutheran European Commission met between 1980 and 1982. Its Report was published in 1983. The Commission set its reflections on several doctrinal issues-justification, baptism, eucharist, spiritual life and liturgical worship, ordained ministry and episcopacy and the nature of the Church—in the wider context of the challenges arising from the situation and mission of Anglican and Lutheran churches in present-day Europe. This dialogue, therefore, makes the affirmation that mission is the proper context of the search for unity. In its recommendations the Commission stated its belief that "on the basis of the agreements we have reached, and in the light of the earlier agreement recorded by the International Conversations together with the long-standing dialogue in the USA and the wider ecumenical consensus... there are no longer any serious obstacles on the way towardsthe establishment of full communion between our two Churches. This conclusion goes somewhat beyond the actions resulting from the dialogue in the USA, but the recommendations of the European dialogue are basically pointing in the same direction. Another difference is that the report of the European dialogue has not yet been received or officially accepted by the churches concerned.
- 19. Though there are areas where closer Anglican-Lutheran relations are still nonexistent or only in their initial stages, the overall development is remarkable and constitutes a new and highly significant stage in the history of the two Communions. This development has also led to increasingly close relations between the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation. The most advanced stage of relationships has been reached in the USA where the third round of Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue, begun in December 1983, may profit from the theological progress achieved in the European dialogue. It is to be hoped that these achievements serve as an impulse for Anglican-Lutheran relations in other parts of the world so that Anglicans and Lutherans also as two world-wide communions continue to move towards full communion in obedience to their common Lord and Saviour in serving together his mission in the world.
- 20. The relation between national and international dialogues is of great importance. National dialogue is naturally geared to a specific geographical location, but it provides the opportunity to apply the more general theological thinking of international dialogue to a specific situation. Conversely the national dialogue draws on the insights gained, in other dialogues. This inter-relation is not just one of dependence of one upon another (national upon international) but a mutual activity both testing conclusions and ensuring consistency.
- 21. The active participation of both our churches in the multilateral Faith and Order conversations provides a common reference point and a wider framework for their dialogue. This is also important in view of the fact that Anglican-Lutheran discussions are conducted side by side with other interchurch dialogues of our churches and communions. Such parallel conversations may run the risk of pursuing different directions and of appearing to be saying different things to different partners. The broader multilateral conversations, together with the meetings of the Forum on Bilateral Conversations and other efforts, help to maintain consistency and theological credibility. Increasing communication and exchange between the different dialogues also has the advantage of mutual enrichment. The Lutheran-Anglican dialogue has, for example, much profited from the statements on apostolicity, episcope and episcopacy in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic, Anglican-Roman Catholic and the Faith and Order conversations.
- 22. What has emerged from these different dialogues is that Anglicans and Lutherans have a distinctive role in ecumenical endeavours. Our traditions have a common root, and both our churches have been separated from communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Because of their history, therefore, both regard dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church as a principal responsibility. Between these churches an ecumenical breakthrough

would heal a painful division with far-reaching consequences and would be of major importance for the unity of Christ's Church. Such a consideration and commitment provides a strong link between us, but it also provides a link in the wider ecumenical scene, where both our churches, being catholic and reformed, are in dialogue also with the Orthodox, Reformed and other traditions.

23. In addition, our Anglican-Lutheran dialogue can now find a framework, and a source of enrichment for its further development in the Faith and Order document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM). This document has a different focus and status from the reports and recommendations coming from bilateral commissions, but it serves the same purpose of contributing to the movement towards visible unity. It will, therefore, be natural and helpful if our churches study and evaluate BEM together with the reports from their bilateral conversations. Since Anglicans and Lutherans appear to be adopting similar positions with regard to BEM, we hope that this will also be of assistance to their moving closer to one another on their path towards full communion.

IV. Goal of Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue

- 24. We look forward to the day when full communion is established between Anglican and Lutheran churches.
- 25. By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith:
 - (a) subject to such safeguards as ecclesial discipline may properly require, members of one body may receive the sacraments of the other;
 - (b) subject to local invitation, bishops of one church may take part in the consecration of the bishops of the other, thus acknowledging the duty of mutual care and concern;
 - (c) subject to church regulation, a bishop, pastor/priest or deacon of one ecclesial body may exercise liturgical functions in a congregation of the other body if invited to do so and also, when requested, pastoral care of the other's members;
 - (d) it is also a necessary addition and complement that there should be recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service.
- 26. To be in full communion means that churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous . One is not elevated to be the judge of the other nor can it remain insensitive to the other; neither is each body committed to every secondary feature of the tradition of the other. Thus the corporate strength of the churches is enhanced in love, and an isolated independence is restrained.
- 27. Full communion carries implications which go beyond sharing the same eucharist. The eucharist is a common meal, and to share in it together has implications for a sharing of life and of common concerns for the mission of the Church. To be in full communion implies a community of life, an exchange and a commitment to one another in respect of major decisions on questions of faith, order, and morals. It implies, where churches are in the same geographical area, common worship, study, witness, evangelism, and promotion of justice, peace and love. It may lead to a uniting of ecclesial bodies if they are, or come to be, immediately adjacent in the same geographical area. This should not imply the suppressing of ethnic, cultural or ecclesial characteristics or traditions which may in fact be maintained and developed by diverse institutions within one communion.

V. Moving Towards full Communion

- 28. Unity by stages is a concept that is gaining wide recognition, though not great clarity of definition. It implies that the end cannot be seen from the beginning, and that unity must be pursued in te1ms of movement and process . It does imply that we know the direction in which we wish to move, and that we take definite steps to break down the barriers which at present stand in the way of visible unity.
- 29. Lutherans and Anglicans concur that agreement in the faith is a proper prerequisite for unity: it is a stage on the way to its achievement. The agreed statements of dialogues carry the authority only of their members until they receive the approval of the appropriate juridical authorities of the churches. This approval should itself reflect a general consensus within the churches which must not only involve dialogue but also common prayer and practical collaboration.

- 30. An agreed statement is thus a crucial vehicle of consensus and provides grounds for decision-making about a changed relationship between churches its "reception" by the churches is therefore a decisive stage on the way towards unity. The statements provide a basis for mutual recognition of churches and members and thus allow some degree of eucharistic communion.
- 31. Under certain conditions, individuals or groups are admitted to Holy Communion in one another's churches before full communion has been achieved. One way to describe this initial stage is "limited eucharistic sharing". A specific example of this stage is the "interim sharing of the eucharist" that has been achieved in North America. In other Lutheran and Anglican churches those responsible should discuss and could adopt the same agreement or an adaptation. In so doing, they would accept the goal of full communion, committing themselves to resolve the remaining questions and work together. Some of these questions may only be resolved within the new relationship of limited eucharistic sharing.
- 32. The goal of full communion may be described as full mutual recognition of catholicity and apostolicity. That is to say, the churches become aware that they share a common identity in all essentials of the Christian faith, recognizing that they are in harmony and expressing their agreement in statements as well as in life. Full agreement in the faith should include proposals for implementation, that is, the implications of agreement on what is to be done.
- 33. At this time there are no Lutheran and Anglican churches in full communion with each other. To reach that goal, they must address and reach consensus on the following issues: authority in the Church, the gospel and its implications, justification/salvation, the sacraments, the ministry and its ordering. In the process of reaching consensus on these issues, they may make their own the agreements which are already in place or develop future ones. They must also jointly address and act upon such concerns as witness and evangelism, worship and prayer, and service. The churches may well discover as they address and act on certain of these issues that this can best be done through their international institutions (the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Consultative Council).
- 34. It would be necessary before the goal of full communion to have developed some modus vivendi of worship and work. The tentative beginnings of common prayer, study, witness, and evangelism as well as joint projects begun during the stage of interim eucharistic sharing should become the norm when the goal of full communion has been reached and hence must develop greatly before the step to full communion can be taken. The experience of the agreement in faith and recognition of ministries must be accompanied by genuine renewal for both Lutherans and Anglicans by which their constituencies can better see, understand and carry out the apostolic ministry in the service of the gospel.

Recommendations

On the basis of the international, regional and national dialogues between Anglicans and Lutherans and in the light of the communion centered around Word and sacrament we have experienced in each other's traditions, we are mutually able to recognize the presence of the Church of Jesus Christ in our respective Communions. This recognition can be affirmed even if there is not as yet complete agreement on the ministerial expressions of apostolicity. But in spite of convergence rather than consensus on this sensitive issue our mutual recognition of Christ prompts us to move with urgency towards the fullest possible ecclesial recognition and the goal of full communion.

To this end as first steps upon the way we recommend that:

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- (a) Anglican and Lutheran churches should officially encourage the practice of mutual eucharistic hospitality-if this is not already authorized-where pastoral need exists and when ecumenical occasions make this appropriate;
- (b) The churches of our two Communions should make provision for appropriate forms of "interim eucharistic sharing" along the lines of that authorized in the USA or recommended by the European Regional Commission as a further step towards full communion where there is a commitment to that goal.

We also recommend that:

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- (a) The ACC and the LWF should monitor the developing relationships between the two churches and encourage these relationships by communicating the information gathered to their member churches-in the first instance sending them this report;
- (b) The ACC and the LWF should establish a permanent Continuation Committee to co-ordinate and assess developing Anglican-Lutheranrelationships and dialogues;
- (c) The ACC and the LWF should mutually invite consultants and observers to international bodies or consultations where they have not already done so;
- (d) The ACC and the LWF should arrange a joint consultation (with advisers from their major dialogue partners) on the relation between Apostolic Succession, the Ministry of the whole People of God, Episcopacy and the Historic Episcopate, taking the BEM treatment of this issue as its framework together with the results of appropriate bilateral dialogues;
- (e) The ACC and the LWF should encourage theological and pastoral exchanges and study at regional or church to church levels-such as the established Anglican-Scandinavian theological and pastoral conferences-in regions where this has not so far taken place with a view to (i) examining and preparing ways to full communion; (ii) exploring jointly common pastoral and evangelistic challenges and opportunities;
- (f) The ACC and the LWF should, in consultation with the WCC, cooperate more closely in political and social matters of mutual concern, especially in relation to urgent situations in countries (e.g. Namibia) where the two traditions exist in some strength.

Appendix I Anglican Lutheran Joint Working Group

Participants

Anglican

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The Rev. Nehemiah Hamupembe, Swakopmund, Namibia

The Rev. Dr William A. Norgren, New York, USA

The Rev. Francis Ntiruka, Kasulu, Tanzania

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The Rt Rev. J.R. Crumley, Jr., New York, USA

The Rev. Professor Per Limning, Strasbourg, France (proxy for Bishop Hanselmann)

The Rt Rev. Sebastian Kolowa, Lushoto, Tanzania

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Secretaries/Consultants

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The Rev. Canon Christopher Hill, London, England

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Appendix II Agreement

Adopted by the Conventions of the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Lutheran Church in America

September 1982

It was voted/resolved that the above mentioned churches

- 1. welcome and rejoice in the substantial progress of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues (LED) I and II and of the Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations, looking forward to the day when full communion is established between the Anglican and Lutheran churches;
- 2. recognize now the ... (name of church) as a church in which the Gospel is preached and taught;
- 3. encourage the development of common Christian life throughout the respective churches by such means as the following:
 - a) Mutual prayer and mutual support, including parochial/congregational and diocesan/synodical covenants or agreements.
 - b) Common study of the Holy Scriptures, the historical and theological traditions of each church and the materials of LED I and II.
 - c) Joint programs of religious education, theological discussion, mission, evangelism, and social action.
 - d) Joint use of physical facilities.
- 4. Affirm now on the basis of studies of LED I and LED II and of the Anglican- Lutheran International Conversations that the basic teaching of each respective church is consonant with the Gospel and is sufficiently compatible with the teaching of this church that a relationship of Interim Sharing of the Eucharist is hereby established between these churches in the USA under the following guidelines:
 - a) Extend a special welcome to members of the ... (name of church) to receive Holy Communion in it under the ... (reference to respective regulations). This welcome constitutes a mutual recognition of Eucharistic teaching sufficient for Interim Sharing of the Eucharist, although this does not intend to signify that final recognition of each other's Eucharists or ministries has yet been achieved.
 - b) Recognize that bishops of dioceses of the Episcopal Church and bishops/ presidents of the Lutheran districts/synods may by mutual agreement extend the regulations of church discipline to permit common, joint celebration of the Eucharist in their jurisdictions. This is appropriate in particular situations where the said authorities deem that local conditions are appropriate for the sharing for worship jointly by congregations of the respective churches. The presence of an ordained minister of each participating church at the altar in this way reflects the presence of two or more churches expressing unity in faith and baptism as well as the remaining divisions which they seek to overcome; however, this does not imply rejection or final recognition of either church's Eucharist or ministry. In such circumstances the Eucharistic prayer will be one from the Lutheran Book of Worship or the Book of Common Prayer as authorized jointly by the bishop of the Episcopal diocese and the bishops/presidents of the corresponding Lutheran districts/synods.
 - c) Request that the experience of this Interim Sharing of the Eucharist be communicated at regular intervals to the other churches of the Lutheran and Anglican Communions throughout the world, as well as to the various ecumenical dialogues in which Anglicans and Lutherans are engaged, in order that consultation may be fostered, similar experiences encouraged elsewhere, and already existing relationships for full communion respected.
- 5. Authorize and establish now a third series of Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues for the discussion of any other outstanding questions that must be resolved before full communion (*communio in sacris*/altar and pulpit fellowship) can be established between the respective churches, e.g. implications of the Gospel, historic episcopate, and ordering of ministry (bishops, priests, and deacons) in the total context of apostolicity.

Appendix Ill Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue: Bibliography

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