

FAITH & ORDER COMMITTEE

The business of Faith and Order has been largely involved with our two ecumenical dialogues, with the Anglican and Catholic Churches. Both dialogues have come to significant points – in our dialogue with the Anglicans we are actively engaged in a process which would lead to a mutual recognition of presbyteral / priestly ministry grounded in a mutual recognition of *episcopate* as expressed in our two traditions. In the dialogue with the Catholics we have moved to a level of warmth and mutual regard in our relationship that has led to services in which we have gifted one another music from our traditions.

Methodist-Anglican Dialogue *Tony Franklin–Ross.*

The Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity and Mission (AMICUM) published in 2014 a significant report *Into All The World – being and becoming apostolic churches*. A key factor that underlies both the international dialogue and our own in Aotearoa-New Zealand is:

“The churches of the Anglican and the Methodist world communions are both fully committed to the twin biblical imperatives of mission and unity ... both communions recognize that these two imperatives cannot be separated, but must be held together.”
(§27)

Our New Zealand dialogue continues to prioritise the interchangeability of ordained Methodist Presbyters with that of Anglican Priests. This represents a barrier to both our unity and common mission; and also alerts us to anomalies such as where a Methodist presbyter can serve in the life of Co-operating Parishes with both an Anglican and Methodist component, and yet cannot serve in an Anglican parish appointment without ‘re-ordination’. Meanwhile, we affirm and value the many Anglican priests who have in the past and currently serve *Te Haahi* in Full Connexion.

While I was studying at the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, it was very providential that the (international) Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) met at Bossey for their annual meeting in December 2014. One of their agenda items was to receive the paper that Rev Dr Douglas Pratt and I drafted for the (New Zealand) Anglican General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui. I was therefore able to present directly to IASCUFO on our Dialogue’s work, which produced a fruitful conversation and some constructive feedback to us for our next steps.

In July 2015, we timed a Dialogue meeting during the Winter School on Ecumenism to avail of three visiting international presenters: Rev Robert Gribben (Methodist Co-Chair of AMICUM and ecumenical officer for the World Methodist Council), Rev Ray Williamson (formerly involved in Australian ecumenical bodies), and Bishop Stephen Pickard (a member of ISACUFO). This gave an opportunity to receive insights from both Australian and international ecumenical dialogues; as well as further constructive dialogue for our work.

Bishop Ross Bay, Anglican Co-Chair of the Dialogue Group, recently visited Ireland and was able to speak with those involved in the journey towards mutual recognition of ministries there. He noted in particular the time taken to grow together in understanding of one another as churches, both in shared heritage and in their particular current context. This was not only at the level of Synod and Conference and ecumenical commissions, but at the flax-root level of neighbouring communities of faith in local areas. He was also impressed by the grace that was exercised in this coming together. Both churches had taken conscious steps towards one another which involved change in practice and understanding, and found a new common ground on which they can stand together.

These engagements have contributed to the strengthening of our dialogue regarding the mutual recognition of the role and office of the Presidential Team (particularly the ordained person in the Team), and that of Bishops. It is key to the outcome of this dialogue that there is mutual recognition of Bishops with the ordained member of the Presidential Team (whether the President or Vice President) acting as ‘episcopal minister’. Through this mutual recognition the effect is also to enable the mutual recognition of Priests and Presbyters, and further to open the next conversation regarding ordained Deacons.

An important aspect of ecumenical dialogue is the sharing of observations between dialogue partners in a way that enables each partner to learn more about themselves; as well as coming to a greater self-awareness of the gifts that each has to offer the other. This is a two-way process. As Methodists, this is an opportunity to affirm the nature of our Presidential Team and the role of 'episcopal minister' within the Team, as well as offering as an ecumenical gift our strong affirmation of leadership in the Methodist church as being a partnership of lay and ordained. This exchange of receiving and offering gifts enriches understanding for both dialogue partners.

This dialogue raises questions for *Te Haahi*. In affirming and celebrating the 'episcopal ministry' that is transmitted from the outgoing Presidential Team to the next, can we more appropriately represent this through the sign of the laying on of hands in the Induction Service? Can this also be done in a way that reflects a *whakapapa* of episcopal ministry by the involvement of not just the outgoing officeholders but also other past Presidents/Vice-Presidents? Further, as a sign of the recognition of this 'episcopal ministry' by our fellow churches, would we be prepared to invite Anglican's Bishops to participate in such an Induction Service (with the reciprocal invitation of Methodist participation in the ordination of Anglican Bishops)?

These questions are not simply intended to adapt MCNZ to Anglican models. Indeed, we are conscious that internationally the majority of Methodist churches order their ministries and Connexions in a way that includes Bishops. Such questions help us to sharpen our actions and signs to reflect in a conciliar manor that we believe our ecclesiology is already exercising a ministry of episcopate. Ecumenical engagement can often be expressed as 'receptive ecumenism', and in our dialogue with the Anglicans we are exploring 'receptive episcopacy' – a process of expansion and enrichment of the episcopal space through respective understandings of *episcopate*. We are therefore engaged in the question of ecclesiology, ministry and mission in a spirit of ecumenical convergence that embraces diversity in unity.

To support this continuing work, and to help encourage a substantive proposal to the Anglican General Synod 2016 and correspondingly to Conference, the Dialogue facilitated a *hui* in September 2015 as a combined workshop for members of the Anglican-Methodist Dialogue Team, Anglican Council For Ecumenism, Methodist Faith & Order, as well as representation from the international dialogue AMICUM.

Subsequent to this *hui* a substantive report has been prepared as a Methodist response to the Dialogue's work; please refer to Appendix Three.

Methodist-Catholic Dialogue *Trevor Hoggard.*

The dialogue has continued this year with the same warmth and enthusiasm as we have come to anticipate recently between our traditions. The most significant item on our agenda has been the "exchange of gifts" as first promoted by the papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (1995). We have exchanged hymns with the Catholic Church as outlined in last year's report to Conference. A service of exchange was held in Auckland on 7th June at Sacred Heart Church, Ponsonby. The service was well attended and very well received and some asked if we could hold a similar service on an annual basis. Another exchange of hymns service has been held on the West Coast. If any parish wishes to still be part of this initiative, please contact Faith & Order.

The dialogue has also considered Pope Francis' first encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, the last chapter of the 2011 International Methodist-Catholic report, *Encountering Christ the Saviour*, the possible role the Petrine Office might play in a reconciled Church and looked in some detail at a catechesis given by Pope Francis on ecumenism on 8 October 2014.

At our next meeting we will look at prayers as appropriate gifts for exchange and consider how Methodists explain who they are to a Catholic audience.

Other work we have undertaken this year has included beginning the resource we described as a Calendar of Saints in our report last. We are launching it with a resource provided by Gary Clover, many of you will know that Gary is a keen historian of New Zealand Methodism. He has for some time advocated that a day be set aside in the liturgical calendar when we might remember the Methodist Martyrs of Aotearoa New Zealand as a way of connecting to their stories and honouring their legacy. We advocate that the last Sunday of January be an occasion when we might

remember these stories and draw inspiration from them. Appendix One is a resource to help us do this. It contains some biographical information, suggested scripture readings and prayers that might be used.

By the time we meet for Conference each District Superintendent will have received a letter from Faith and Order asking that our communities around the country reflect upon the stories of faith that inspire them and think how we might remember and celebrate our mothers and fathers in the Faith. Parallel to this Faith and Order will look at stories of the saints of the wider church that we might include in our resource.

The latest edition of the Lectionary includes a COCU reference for each day. This helps people preparing Worship access resources more easily. In doing this the Lectionary is not simply a list of readings but a more effective tool for preachers and worship leaders.

Some feedback we have received has brought certain points to light. There is a degree of confusion about the period covered by the Lectionary. We naturally think of a year as January 1st to December the 31st, the Lectionary year starts on the first Sunday of Advent. Also some of the abbreviations for books of the Bible are confusing – *Jn* and *1 Jn* being a case in point. There may be some merit in including a key to these abbreviations. Sometimes there are alternate readings and, on occasion, these include books from the *Apocrypha*; a collection of books which Protestants regard as “profitable” but which were removed from the biblical canon by the Reformers. In Catholic editions of the Bible these books are integral to the First (or Old) Testament whereas versions of the Bible we are likely to use would put them in a separate section or omit them completely. These books are particularly notable for an insight into the religious world of the Jewish people in the last couple of centuries BC and for their Wisdom literature; which is more extensive than that contained in our canonical books. There would be some merit on a resource to make the *Apocrypha* better known.

One fruit of the ecumenical relations in New Zealand is the publication of a common baptismal certificate. Though there is not a mutual recognition of ministry amongst all the churches and there is not a full sharing at the table of the Eucharist we have baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in common. It is easy to be dismissive of this, but baptism is incorporation into the Body of Christ and to acknowledge we share one baptism is to acknowledge we share a common fundamental identity as Christians, that in a real way we belong to one another. The common baptismal certificate is issued in the name of a wide range of churches in New Zealand and can be obtained from the Administrative Division office in Christchurch. It still names the parish community and denomination under whose auspices the baptism was celebrated.

Conversation and feedback about the Common Baptismal Certificate has celebrated this common witness and revealed points of difference. The certificate is available to and can be used by churches which practice infant baptism and those which only practice believer’s baptism, the churches have a wide range of practices and theologies about the other steps of Christian initiation; namely reception of Holy Communion and Confirmation. In the face of these differences though we can affirm and celebrate our common baptism.

The churches talk about membership differently. One way this has come up was through an inquiry about whether a child who has the Common Baptismal Certificate would be accepted as Catholic in terms of admission criteria for a Catholic School. No, not if the baptising community wasn’t Catholic and if the parent or parents haven’t subsequently joined the Roman Catholic Church.

Part of the remit of Faith and Order is to equip the Church to engage theologically with the issues of the day, with questions that arise in our society from time to time. One such issue this year that has presented itself with a fresh urgency is the question of medically assisted dying; no doubt you recall the story of the late Lecretia Seales, who when close to death took a case to the High Court hoping to establish that her physician would not face prosecution should s/he help Ms Seales end her life.

It is probably only a matter of time until the issue of medically assisted dying is discussed in Parliament. Changing the Law will require a process of public consultation, which doubtless people in our parishes will want to be part of. Appendix Two is a discussion on this issue, it is offered with the hope it helps people think and engage with the issue. It is offered not as a definitive answer but as an overview, a respectful consideration of the state of the debate amongst Christians.

Suggested decisions:

1. That this report be received.
2. Membership of Faith and Order for 2016 shall be as follows; David Poultney (Convenor,) Robyn Allen Goudge, Norman Brookes, Tony Franklin-Ross, Jan Fogg, Andrew Gamman, Cathie Hoggard, Trevor Hoggard, Paulo Ieli, Goll Manukia, Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel, Val Nicholls, Ikilifi Pope, Utumau'u Pupulu, Rowan Smiley, Paula Tamoeapeau, Aliverati Uludole. Other persons as appointed by the President.
Corresponding members: Margaret Birtles (for the Deacons,) Gary Clover, David Kitchingman (for a study group at Mornington Church in the Dunedin Parish,) Amos Muzondiwa, Diana Tana (for Taha Maori,) Terry Wall, Alan Webster (for the Evangelical Network.)
3. Conference appoints the following as members of the Anglican – Methodist dialogue team; Tony Franklin-Ross (Co-Convenor), Prince Devanandan, Setaita Kinahoi-Veikune, Abhishek Solomon, David Poultney and others as appointed by the President.
John Roberts, Diana Tana and Terry Wall as corresponding members.
4. Conference appoints the following as members of the Catholic – Methodist dialogue team; Trevor Hoggard (Co-Convenor,) Tovia Aumua (in recess during his Presidential term,) Anne Griffiths, David Poultney, Terry Wall, Tony Franklin-Ross and a person appointed by Te Taha Maori.
5. Conference warmly endorses our dialogues with the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.
6. Mindful of our ecumenical dialogues and to further our own self understanding as a church, Conference encourages the Church to reflect upon how episcopate is expressed in the life of Conference and in the function of the Presidential team.
7. Conference affirms the ecumenical witness of the Common Baptismal Certificate and encourages our parish communities to consider using it.
8. Conference thanks Gary Clover for the work he has done on preparing a resource to remember the Methodist martyrs of this country and encourages our parishes to engage with their stories and consider remembering them in their Sunday worship on the last Sunday of January.
9. Conference encourages rohe, synods and local church communities to reflect upon their history and ask who their “saints” have been and how their stories might be remembered and shared.
10. Conference is mindful of the debate happening in New Zealand society about medically assisted dying and commends the document *Physician Assisted Dying: Resources for a Conversation* to our parish communities for their reading and reflection.
11. The Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa* recognizes that all three expressions of personal, communal, and collegial episcopate are effective in the polity of *Te Haahi*, in the person of the ordained presbyter in the Presidential Team whether that person be the President or Vice President; and his or her predecessors and successors.
12. Further, the Methodist Church of New Zealand affirms that the term 'Episcopal Minister' gives expression to the office and function of the ordained presbyter in the Presidential Team (including those of Past Presidential Teams). Therefore the charge given to the incoming ordained President or Vice President is to “exercise your pastoral, prophetic, sacramental, episcopal ministry and administrative tasks for the care and oversight of The Methodist Church of New Zealand – *Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa*.”
13. The induction of the Presidential Team in 2016 will reflect this affirmation.
14. As a visible expression of this understanding, the induction of the ordained presbyter who is President or Vice President will include the laying on of hands as a reflection of the traditions of the church through the ages, and at least two presbyterally ordained Past Presidents/Vice Presidents (episcopal ministers) also be invited to participate accordingly. Faith and Order is charged with developing an accompanying prayer as part of a review of the order of service for the Induction of the President and Vice President.
15. The Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa* affirms consonance and equivalence between the Episcopal Ministers in *Te Haahi* vested in the ordained

presbyter of the Presidential Team with that of Bishops in the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *Te Haahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tirenī, Ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa*.

16. The Methodist Church of New Zealand invites the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia to affirm there is sufficient consonance and equivalence of a common ministry of oversight between Methodist Episcopal Ministers and Anglican Bishops, and that in the future both churches invite such Methodist Episcopal Ministers and Anglican Bishops to participate in the respective inductions and ordinations to such offices. Further, that through such recognition that all past and future ordinations of Presbyters and Priests be affirmed as of consonance and interchangeable.
17. The Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa* makes this significant step of affirmation of episcopal ministry that brings the aspirations of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant to a deeper expression of unity, through a fulfilment in the deepening of communion, and in sharing a common life and mission. This step of receptive episcopacy is also reflective of our ecumenical relationship with other churches, including our sister churches in the Methodist and Wesleyan family.
18. The Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa* invites the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *Te Haahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tirenī, Ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa* to draw our people together between and within our churches in active and mutual reception of this proposal.

APPENDIX ONE

A Foundation for our Calendar of Saints

Commemorating Wesleyan Methodist Early Missionary Martyrs of the Faith

Every 13 March the New Zealand Anglican Church's lectionary encourages congregations to commemorate the martyrdom of Kereopa (Hemi) Patene and Te Manihera, two Church Missionary Society (CMS) Ngāti Ruanui Māori missionaries, by Ngāti Tuwheretoa assailants on 12 March 1846 near Tokaanu, Lake Taupo.

New Zealand Methodism also has early nineteenth century Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) martyrs, Māori and English, ordained and lay, class leaders and mission teachers, who deserve to be similarly commemorated. They were killed or died prematurely in the course of their ministries during the heroic, early years of missionary endeavour in Aotearoa-New Zealand - at least six early WMS Māori missionary martyrs, and three English ordained missionaries, not to forget the many English missionary wives and children who died prematurely on the New Zealand mission field during the early nineteenth century. Each year on 22 January, or the Sunday closest, New Zealand Methodists, too, might remember their martyrs for the faith. Those Methodists might commemorate are:

1. On 22 January 1837, a Sunday afternoon, musket shots rang out near the Hokianga Māori village of Mangataipa near the Mangamuka River beyond the upper Hokianga Harbour. Four young Wesleyan "native" teachers and lay catechists were ambushed outside the non-Christian village of chief Kaitoke, an associate of the influential traditional Māori tōhunga, Te Atua Wera (or Papa-huri-hia), as they attempted to take the Gospel message to Kaitoke's people. Matiu (Matthew), appointed a Wesleyan Native Teacher at Oruru beyond the Mangamuka River, was shot and died almost immediately. A companion, Rihimona (Richmond), was severely wounded & died eight days later. A third member of the party, Wiremu Patene (William Barton) Kairangatira, escaped unharmed but with three musket holes through the blanket he was wearing. A fourth, Hohepa Otene (Joseph Orton) Tito-kō-warū, a formerly enslaved young chief from Ngā Ruahine in South Taranaki freed by missionary influence about 1833, was out of range at the rear of the little party, and raced back to Mangataipa to tell of the incident.

Gary Clover's full article of this tragedy was published in the WHS *Journal 2011*, Proceedings 93, December 2011, pp.5-12.

2. In 1836-1837 and 1838-1839, four WMS Ngā Ruahine and Ngāti Ruanui Māori missionaries from South Taranaki were martyred near the mouth of the Whānganui River, two each in two separate incidents. During the summer or autumn of 1836-1837 Te Pūtakarua and Te Awaroa were martyred for their faith by the Ngāti Raukawa chief, Nepia Taratoa, a nephew of Te Rauparaha, at Te Oneheke pa (today near the Heads Road cemetery in Whānganui). According to the CMS's Rev Richard Taylor, based at Putiki from 1843 on the eastern side of the Whanganui River opposite, when told that Te Putakarua and Te Awaroa were Christians, Nepia Taratoa famously declared "they would eat all the sweeter." About a year later during the summer or autumn of 1838-1839 Ngā Rauru Māori on the order of their chief, Mare, ambushed and martyred Te Mātoe and Te Hau Maringi of Ngāti Ruanui at Te Ahituatini pa, a high sand hill alongside the Whānganui River (today Mason Terrace next to the State Highway 3 Whānganui River bridge).

Gary Clover's account of these four Whānganui martyrs was published in the *WHS Journal 2010*, Proceedings 92, December 2010, pp.6-19.

3. Along with Matiu, Rihimona, Te Pūtakarua, Te Awaroa, Te Mātoe and Te Hau Maringi, also worthy of commemoration each 22 January, might be, Rev John H. Bumby (drowned 26 June 1840 when the waka conveying him across the Hauraki Gulf was swamped); Rev John Skevington (died 21 September 1845 of heart failure in the High Street Wesleyan Chapel, Auckland, during the Sunday evening service at the 1845 AGM of the New Zealand WMS); and Rev John Whiteley (killed on 28 February 1869 by Pai Marire soldiers at Pukearuhe, north Taranaki).

Lectionary Readings:

Hebrew History:	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
Genesis 45:4-8; 50:19-21;	Psalm 7:1-11;	Revelation 2:8-11;	John 15:7-17

Alternative Readings:

Micah 7:5-7;	Psalm 23:1-4;	Philippians 1:19-24 - 2:4;	John 11:45-53
		or: Romans 14:7-9	

See also suggested readings in *A New Zealand Prayerbook*, p.681.

Prayers: (Adapted from *A New Zealand Prayerbook*, p.680)

Eternal and faithful God, we remember on this day your holy martyrs of our Wesleyan faith who died in early Aotearoa-New Zealand during the carrying out of their ministries.

We name our faithful martyrs: Māori Wesleyan class leaders and teachers, Matiu and Rihimona of Hokianga Ngapuhi; Te Pūtakarua, Te Awaroa, Te Mātoe and Te Hau Maringi of Ngā Ruahine and Ngāti Ruanui in South Taranaki; and the English Wesleyan missionaries, Revs John H. Bumby, John Skevington and John Whiteley; also the many wives and children of the early Wesleyan missionaries.

Everloving God, by your grace and power these our ancestors in the faith were faithful unto death; Strengthen us with your grace that we too may faithfully witness in our day to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Jesus our Redeemer, who suffered, was crucified, and gave your life as a ransom for us; You have called people of all ages and all times to drink your cup and undergo your baptism. Thank you for our Wesleyan witnesses who were faithful even to death; May we have their level of faith and resolution to keep the faith as did they in spite of the cost.

God, our Friend and Guide, you gave your servants in past ages courage to confess Jesus Christ as your Son, and resolution sufficient to die for his faith; May we, too, be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and to suffer gladly for Christ's sake as in our lives we witness in the steadfastness of our own New Zealand Wesleyan martyrs.

APPENDIX TWO

Reflections on Physician Assisted Dying: Resources for a Conversation.

This is offered not as a definitive statement on Physician Assisted Dying but as an overview and reflection. We would note the Christian tradition and much of the current Christian perspective is against physician assisted termination of life. Yet we note there is a growing debate on the issue between Christians as there is in our wider society.

This debate needs to be undertaken carefully and respectfully that we truly listen to one another.

A note on language: this paper avoids the word euthanasia, a word often used to talk about physician assisted dying. The word is highly emotive and has connections to eugenic theories popular in the early twentieth century which – in Nazi Germany – led to the large scale murder of physically and mentally handicapped people

Likewise though suicide is used we wonder whether this is an inadequate or loaded word, physician assisted dying seems to be as neutral a term as we can use.

The question of whether a physician might, without risk of prosecution, assist a terminally ill person to end their life has recently presented itself with some urgency when the case of Lecretia Seales was considered by the High Court. Ms Seales was a 42 year old lawyer in the late stages of a terminal brain tumour. If she had lived longer her condition would have deteriorated to the point where she would have suffered cognitive impairment, she would not have known those around her, and she would have been physically incapacitated. The prospect of this was unbearable to her and she took a case to the High Court to establish whether or not her physician would face prosecution if he or she helped Ms Seales end her life at a time of her choosing.

The High Court found against her case, though Ms Seales died within a few hours of the verdict. In describing how she took the news her husband – Matt Vickers – said her response was; “*Isn’t this my body? My life?*”

However we feel about the question of “*a right to die*” or physician assisted dying we cannot but be moved by Lecretia Seales’ plight and her eloquence. It is in these – almost her last words – that we see questions at the heart of ethical deliberation about this topic. Whose body is this, whose life?

This paper is offered as a reflection from Faith and Order in response to the Seales case and in awareness that there is a growing body of public opinion in Aotearoa New Zealand pressing for a change in the law to allow people in the latter stages of terminal illness to be assisted by medical intervention to end their lives.

If and when this leads to a bill being presented to the House of Representatives then individual citizens and groups will be encouraged to make submissions to further deliberation on the issue. Beyond that many people may wish to write to or email their MP.

We acknowledge that, in good faith, Christians hold a range of opinions on this subject. In a way this range of opinions reflects a conflict of goods between what we can see as a traditional approach stressing life as gift and ultimately as belonging to God and a more recent discourse informed by the language of human rights and personal autonomy.

The longstanding Christian resistance to suicide and assisted dying draws on the biblical witness. A helpful framework for looking at the relevant biblical literature is provided by in Interchurch Bioethics Council paper *Euthanasia. Unethical Intervention or Dying with Dignity?*¹ which looks at the biblical witness under four different categories relevant to this conversation. None of these references are offered as a “proof text,” it is clear there are biblical references which mandate taking life, sometimes in circumstances which seem quite monstrous to us. (Remember how Saul

¹ April 2004. Accessed on line at http://www.interchurchbioethics.org.nz/wp-content/euthanasia_1.pdf

displeased God by not carrying out the genocide of the Amalekites.) There are limits to citing chapter and verse in a complex ethical debate, however Christians can note that the biblical witness is that human life has a particular significance, that each human life should be weaved into the fabric of community and should be afforded protection.

The Sovereignty of God and Human Freedom. The Bible presents an understanding of life as being a gift of God; a gift that includes sharing in some way in the Divine nature.

“ ... *Let us make humankind in our image according to our likeness ...*”²

Both the beginning and end of human life are to be understood as within the scope of the Divine intention.

“ ... *Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*”³

For other biblical references on this theme see Genesis 2:15-17, Psalm 104:24-30, Jeremiah 10:23-24, Acts 17:24-28, Romans 14:7-9, Philippians 1: 20-22.

There is a real sense in the biblical literature of our lives not being truly our own, of our existence being within the scope of the providence of God. This is central to the general resistance of the churches here and overseas to legalising assisted suicide.

Social Responsibility and Individual Rights. *Aotearoa* New Zealand is a fusion of cultures, however *Pakeha* New Zealanders, who are the greater part of our society and who have formed much of the structure and institutions of state and society, are inheritors to a broader “western” culture which has levels of individualism which are quite without precedent. While we can rightly celebrate the freedoms and possibilities this brings we need to be aware that the biblical texts were written for and received not by individuals but communities. Individual freedom cannot be separated from social responsibility, our actions and choices happen in a social milieu.

In Exodus 20: in the Ten Commandments we read in Ex 20:12-13 “*Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder.*”

In 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 and 10:31-11:1 Paul exhorts the church in Corinth to seek not individual advantage “*but the advantage of the many.*” We could ask what this means in the context of the debate on medically assisted suicide. It challenges us to see that no story, however moving or compelling, is told in isolation and that what is permitted here or there is not discreet and contained, but happens in a society and has implications for that society.

Suffering⁴ The harsh reality of suffering is at the heart of our debate about assisted dying. We heard compellingly in the case brought by Lecretia Seales of the profound suffering and distress she experienced in the face of her terminal illness and how the prospect of the next stage of her illness, was utterly unbearable. Not all pain, even physical pain, can be adequately dealt with by medical intervention. Though we can rightly celebrate the growth of palliative care as a medical and nursing speciality it cannot always provide the peace and acceptance necessary for a “good death.”

Critics of Christianity accuse Christians of a tendency to sentimentalise suffering, even of looking at the suffering of others as edifying somehow. In the words of Jonathan Romain; “*It is a cruel God who uses human agony as a divine blackboard for relatives looking on*”⁵.

² Genesis 1:16a.

³ Job 1:21.

⁴ For relevant texts see Ps 10:14, Luke 22:63-24:53, John 18:1-20,31, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:13-18, Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:14-16.

⁵ Jonathan Romain. *A Jewish View of Assisted Dying* in **Modern Believing** Issue 56, Vol 2, 2015. P.106.

We can reject the generalisation that Christians sentimentalise suffering while acknowledging there are excesses in certain forms of Christian spirituality which may be mawkish or even psychologically unsound.

It is important when looking at the biblical witness on suffering that we look clearly at the harrowing reality of human suffering. We must acknowledge the reality of it and honestly accept that there are limits, even now, to how well physical, mental and spiritual suffering can be addressed in those in the latter stages of terminal illness.

The Christian paradigm for understanding suffering is found in reflection on the death and resurrection of Jesus; Gerald Lutzenberger reflecting on this wrote; *“Suffering may still evoke confusion and darkness, but a Christian understanding of suffering, in the light of Jesus’ resurrection, will interpret it ultimately as an occasion on which one is not abandoned by God.”*⁶

As Christians we may assert the truth of this, but carefully and with humility. Doing theology on suffering is not the same as experiencing it. Those of us engaged in pastoral care who have worked with the dying and the loved ones they leave behind will attest to this. Also most New Zealanders do not share our faith and while we might draw meaning from this understanding it is a weak argument in influencing public policy.

It is important to place the suffering person at the centre of our reflection about suffering and our actions to alleviate it. Suffering is never to be an example, even an inspiring one.

The Nature of Compassion⁷. Every Holy Week we ponder the story of Jesus in Gethsemane⁸, in acute mental distress at the prospect of his imminent death, here is Jesus in need of the reassurance of loving friends who cannot stay awake, even in the face of his evident pain. Compassion demands presence and engagement, it is not a simple awareness and feeling for. It is a standing with one who suffers.

The Gospels present the ministry of Jesus as one of bringing in, of inclusion, of restoring people from the very margins of life to the community. We might reflect on what this means to us in terms of how we should engage with people facing the prospect of their dying.

Other Concerns – Dignity. A lot of the debate around assisted dying focuses on the concept of dignity. Margaret Somerville⁹ writes that dignity tends to be defined differently across the debate. For those opposed to change human dignity is intrinsic, it is of the very nature of our being human whereas for supporters dignity tends to be extrinsic; it is about the conditions and possibilities of a life. For Christians this intrinsic dignity is rooted in our sense of life as gift and of human life being somehow made in the Divine image.

Some concern is expressed that an extrinsic concept of dignity leads to categories of lives being seen as “not worth living” and to create space for a wider medical termination of life. Some of this concern might seem alarmist to us, however we should ask what sense of vulnerability might be heightened amongst older, frail people or people living with significant disabilities.

Professional Integrity. Some resistance to assisted dying is about its impact on the medical and nursing professions, both of which are vested with high levels of trust by the public. They each have traditions of ethical reflection about their disciplines in which there is no place for the intentional ending of a human life. Legally sanctioned assisted dying would require the involvement or complicity of doctors, nurses and pharmacists.

Resistance to assisted suicide does not mean life must be extended, or dying deferred, as long as humanly possible. An opposition to legalising assisted dying does not mean that we

⁶ Gerald H. Lutzenberger. **An Introduction to Christology in the Gospels and Early Church.** Mystic: Twenty Third Publications. 1998. p.257

⁷ For relevant texts see Matthew 8:5-13, 9:35-6, 15:32, 20:29-34. Mark 1:40-42, Luke 4:18, 7:11-15.

⁸ Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46,.

⁹ Cited in Helen Bichan. The Euthanasia Debate – Why Now? Interchurch Bioethics Council. Accessed on line at <http://www.interchurchbioethicscouncil.org.nz/wp.content-ICBCeeuthanasiaSummary4pub.July11.pdf>

assert a life must be prolonged by every available means in every circumstance. Upholding the sanctity of life does not mean prolonging the dying process – that stage at the very end of life where it is clear that an individual is close to the end. We do not need to endorse “artificially or officiously prolonging life¹⁰” in the denial of the clear immanence of death.

The InterChurch Bioethics Council notes that there is a “*significant difference between actively /assisting in killing another person and withdrawing (or withholding) treatments so that the person dies as a result of their illness.*”¹¹

How does this work in practice? A person with terminal cancer may be told that another course of chemotherapy may give them a little more time but knowing the impact of the treatment she or he might quite legitimately decline it, trading a little extra life for less physical and emotional distress.

You have probably heard of the medical instruction “Do not resuscitate.” There are clearly situations where intervention might not be appropriate. A frail elderly person with pneumonia may not be a good candidate to receive CPR.

It is important to keep clear the distinction between not prolonging life, or prolonging the dying process, and ending life. To resist assisted suicide is not to assert that each and every life must be prolonged for as long as medically possible.

An Alternative Voice: Christian support for Assisted Dying. It would be erroneous to claim Christians are of one mind on this issue. There are Christians who support steps towards legalising Assisted Dying. The Australian Catholic philosopher Max Charlesworth writes; “*it is not playing God to seek freely to control the direction of my life, and it is not playing God to control the mode of my dying.*”¹²

However in reading some material I find there is confusion between the implications of resisting assisted suicide and seeking to prolong life as far as can be done. Even in a quote cited from Hans Kung; “*.. I am not so concerned by the endless prolongation of life – certainly under conditions which are no longer compatible with human dignity.*”¹³

In response it could be said that, especially in a hospital situation, active taking of life and the passive permitting life to come to an end are not as easily and clearly delineated in practice as they are in theory.

Some Christian support shows a tendency to read the Bible and tradition for personal meaning over community narrative and a “buy in” to the language of rights with the choice to die when faced with suffering being an exercise of a right. It could be argued that in the face of our suffering and dying the language of rights has little to say that is congruent with the Christian tradition.

There is no justice in our suffering and dying, what there can be is compassion and mercy and our tradition gives language and resources to nurture this response in the face of our dying.

Christians who believe there is some place for assisted dying could cogently say how the “mind” of the Christian community has moved on over time. It is instructive to note that while most mainstream Protestant churches would always regard abortion as not just another surgical procedure, but a serious consequential choice their members would generally not advocate for a return to the days when the procedure was illegal and would acknowledge that there are cases where the choice to terminate a pregnancy is clearly a compelling one.

¹⁰ Massachusetts Council of Churches. **Physician Assisted Suicide: A Christian perspective from the Massachusetts Council of Churches.** November 30 2000. Accessed on line at http://www.masscouncilofchurches.org.doc_suicide.html

¹¹ Interchurch Bioethics Council. **Press Release regarding Euthanasia.** Accessed on line at <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out> 2015.

¹² Cited on the website of Christians Supporting Choices for Voluntary Euthanasia. <http://www.christiansforve.org.au>

¹³ Ibid.

Some Christians are uncomfortable with how the use of images and language to talk about God is used by opponents of change. To some progressive or liberal Christians talk of a “sovereign God” who is “like a feudal king determining the beginning and end of life” is unconvincing and unhelpful¹⁴. Also some would argue that to talk of human beings as sharing in the “*Imagio Dei*” – the image of God – implies autonomy and the ability to engage in painstaking and complex ethical reflection.

Questions for Reflection

1. Whose life, whose body? Who does your life, your body, “belong” to? How might your answer to this question impact on how you think about the question of assisted suicide?
2. How does culture determine our answer? A *Pakeha* understanding might be different from a Maori, Pacifica or Asian understanding where, in different ways, more emphasis is placed on the person as a member of a family with specific roles related to their age and life stage.
3. Are you clear in your own mind about the difference between an intervention to end a life and not intervening in order not to prolong the dying process?
4. What is a “good death” to you?

APPENDIX THREE

ANGLICAN-METHODIST DIALOGUE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT AND PROPOSAL TO CONFERENCE

THE INTERCHANGEABILITY OF ORDAINED MINISTRIES AND RECEPTIVE EPISCOPACY

“Unity is a gift of God that permits within it both liberty and diversity, while the mission of the Church in the world provides motivation for the recovered unity.”¹⁵

The objective of this paper is to further the mutuality and interchangeability of ordained ministries between the Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa*, and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tirenī, Ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa*.

An understanding of interchangeability has been offered by the Joint Implementation Commission of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant between the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Church of England as:

A situation in relations between churches whereby the ordained ministers of one church are eligible to be appointed to ministerial offices in the other without undergoing re-ordination. The ministerial orders or ordinations of each of the churches concerned are mutually recognized as meeting all the requirements of the other for its own ministry.

John Wesley’s ability to accept and draw on various traditions is reflected in his sermon on “The Catholic Spirit”. Here he states:

Every wise man, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, ‘Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?’ I dare not therefore, presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical; but my belief is no rule for another. I ask not therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church, of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government and allow the same church officers with me? Do you join in the form of prayer wherein I worship God? I enquire not, Do you receive the supper of the Lord in the same posture and manner that I do? Nor

¹⁴ Glynn Cardy. Physician Assisted Dying, a sermon on Col 3:12-15, Luke 5:25-34. The Community of St Luke. <http://www.stlukes.org.nz/sermon/physician-assited-dying> 2015

¹⁵ J J Lewis, A K Petch and R D Rakena, *The Search for Unity: Methodism and Ecumenism in NZ*. Auckland – Wesley Historical Society, 1983. p12

whether in the administration of baptism, you agree with me in admitting sureties for the baptized; in the manner of administering it; or the age of those to whom it should be administered. Nay, I ask not of you, whether you allow baptism and the Lord's supper at all. Let all these things stand by. We will talk of them if need be, at a more convenient season. My only question is this, 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?'

This paper and proposal is infused with this ethos or *mahi* of Wesley's affirmation of variegated richness as we share in the ecumenism pilgrimage. This was reinforced by the Methodist Church of New Zealand in the 2004 Conference statement *To be Methodist is to be Ecumenical*,¹⁶ which includes the affirmations:

Methodism has always seen itself as part of a greater whole. In our history, concern for unity has seldom been absent.

Through ecumenical encounter we have come to cherish our roots and our distinctive way of being church. Participation in ecumenical bodies and dialogue with sister communions has immensely enriched the life of our Church. We have not yet received all that is offered. Nor have we exhausted what we have to give from our tradition. ...

We declare our resolve to reform our common life and structures to allow sister communions to see more clearly the apostolic faith and mission among us.

We note and celebrate that deep ecumenical dialogue shows each partner something of itself. We affirm the challenge of dialogue in prompting us to re-frame and tell something of our story in new ways which recognise the deep Christian witness of the other party and respond to its challenges to us. As Methodists we honour and acknowledge steps taken in Anglican ecclesial theology to affirm the authentic faith, authority and true ministry of other churches.

From whence we have come – The Anglican – Methodist Relationship as Pilgrimage.

In 2008 a Covenant was agreed between the Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa*, and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tireni, Ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa*, on the basis of our shared history, our agreement on the apostolic faith, our shared theological understandings of the nature and mission of the church and of its ministry and oversight, and our agreed vision of a greater practical expression of the unity in Christ of our two churches.

Like many other agreements internationally between Anglican and Methodist churches, there is much that we already affirm in common. The Covenant reminds us of the agreements that have previously been achieved:

1. Acceptance of each others church as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. (AGS 1976 / MC 1980)
2. That the ministry of each of our churches is a real ministry of Word and Sacrament. (AGS 1976 / MC 1980)
3. The apostolic content in the ordained ministry of each of our churches. (AGS 1986 / MC 2004)
4. That each church exercises a ministry of episkope. (AGS 1986 / MC 2004)
5. The commitment of our churches to seek a unification of ministries. (AGS 1980 / MC 1980)
6. A mutual recognition of baptism and church membership. (AGS 1980 / MC 1980)
7. That baptised members of each church are free to receive the Eucharist in each other's churches. (AGS 1980 / MC 2004).¹⁷

We acknowledge a relationship that has existed much longer than the formal Covenant of 2008. History bears witness to two denominational identities at times in mutual competition, and times exercising fraternal forbearance; but always in the background an awareness of common origins, compatible theologies, parallel liturgies, and collegial missionary outlook.

¹⁶ See http://www.methodist.org.nz/mission_and_ecumenical/to_be_methodist_is_to_be_ecumenical

¹⁷ The Anglican Methodist Covenant (Aotearoa - New Zealand), 2008.

Our denominational *whakapapa* in Aotearoa includes our linked origins in the United Kingdom. Methodism began as an evangelical movement within the Church of England; its founders remained Anglican clergy and laity.

The origins of Christianity in Aotearoa lie with Anglican and Methodist missionary endeavours. Our relationship is further grounded in the longstanding relationship of the two churches dating from 1819 when the Wesleyan missionary Samuel Leigh linked with the Anglican missionaries in the Bay of Islands. The ministry activity of the early nineteenth century gave rise to at times urgency and pragmatism that invoke the first witness to the journey of unity. The collegial relationships between Anglican and Methodist missionary workers in the early days has ever remained a thread of connectedness linking our two churches.

Further, from this period of history is the relationship of Methodist and Anglican missionaries with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. The close relationship of both churches with the Treaty can also be a challenge to our churches today in working together to live out the nexus of covenant represented by *Te Tiriti*. Do the Anglican and Methodist churches owe a relationship with and to each other as 'godparents' to the arising of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*? Is that relationship only vertical between the individual churches, the Treaty and Maori; or also horizontal between each other as being commonly related through the Treaty?

Though the 1960's and 70's saw both the hopes and disappointments of ecumenical work towards the Plan for Union in New Zealand, the 1967 Act of Commitment by the five negotiating churches symbolised a strong desire on the part of many towards being brought into one church. The statement included:

...with the obedience we offer, we acknowledge our obligation to receive new insights and now do together many of the things which in the past we have done separately.

Our action in mutual mission has been witnessed through the shared life of Cooperating Parishes (the first being the Glenfield Anglican-Methodist Cooperating Parish in 1975), as well as the common location of our theological colleges. More recently ecumenical hospitality has been expressed since 2011 at Conference through the invitation for an address by Bishops at the Induction Service of the Presidential Team, and since 2012 Presidents have been invited to address the General Synod / *Te Hinota Whanui*.

Since 2009 there have been various combined services under the Covenant, including an annual service in Auckland hosted alternatively between Pitt St Methodist Church and Holy Trinity Cathedral, and a five-year anniversary service of the Covenant's agreement was held at Napier's Waiapu Cathedral in 2013. The Covenant has also been the basis of corporation of the Board of Administration and more recently the Wesley Historical Society with their Anglican counterparts.

If we were to be imagining the creation of a *tukutuku* panel to represent our Anglican-Methodist journey, what would it be looking like? If we were building a *whare karakia* to represent the coming together of our prayer for unity, *taonga*, *whakapapa*, insights and gifts; as well as a place to hear Christ's prayer that we might be one that the world might believe: would this *whare* look something like that which Rt Rev John Bluck shared in his sermon at the service to mark the signing of the Covenant in 2009?

Will the new ecumenical space this covenant creates help us to listen more carefully and respectfully to each other and the communities we serve? Will it help us to get out of the house for a while, our church houses, and into places where New Zealand values and directions are being shaped? ... Who knows, this covenant might take us all out of ourselves, out of our own Anglican and Methodist importance and closer to the heart of the living God, the God who waits for all his different people to realize they are one in Jesus Christ.¹⁸

¹⁸ Terry Wall, 'The Anglican Methodist Covenant in New Zealand', in Wesley Historical Society *Journal*, Vol 96 (December 2013). 40.

Our relationship in Covenant

The Anglican-Methodist Covenant agreed in 2008 builds on our longstanding relationship, to invoke a *mahi* that seeks a visible unity for our two churches that receives and cherishes all the gifts, insights, and treasures, and holds them together in a creative way that serves God's mission in the world. The challenge remains for lifting the words from the paper and to progress real dialogue and action that is tangible and concrete, including the issues that presently prevent closer communion between our two churches.

Moves towards removing the barriers of ordained ministry between the two churches are viewed as significant to the mission of the churches from the flax-roots through to national levels; and addresses such anomalies as currently existing with the willingness of the Methodist church to receive Anglican priests into Full Connexion but not a corresponding Anglican recognition outside of Co-operating Parishes. It is acknowledged that there is more that can be done to strengthen ecumenical relations between the two churches at all levels of the churches.

What can we learn, receive and address, with integrity, from dialogue with other church traditions? What more do we need to discern of each other, and of ourselves, that can move us towards the prayer of Jesus?

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20-21, NRSV)

In asking and acting upon these questions, might we be moving in ways that could open up new possibilities in relation to our unity in Christ. The questions invite us all to consider and address the challenges within our own traditions through learning from other traditions; and learning more about ourselves through listening to others.

Receptive ecumenism – gifts from other conversations and observations

The World Council of Churches 1982 convergence document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* ('BEM') gives a challenge to continue the task of convergence in understandings and agreements on episcopate. The function and reality of episcopal ministry has been preserved in many churches with or without the title of 'bishop', and with or without maintaining the historic episcopate. BEM notes the basis of frank conversations where:

Churches which have preserved the episcopal succession are asked to recognise the apostolicity of ordained ministry in those churches which have not, as well as their inherent episcopate;

Whereas churches without the episcopal succession might recognise that they may not lack the continuity of the apostolic tradition, could episcopal succession commend itself to them as a strong sign for deepening unity.¹⁹

The Methodist Church of New Zealand responded to BEM:

*We are also challenged to look closely at our understanding of ordination and ministry, and of the way episcopal oversight is exercised. We must also be open to the different styles and emphases in ministry.*²⁰

Further, the British Methodist Church reflects whether Methodism:

*... regard[s] episcopacy as a gift which other churches can confer on her and which makes up some lack in Methodist church life, or does Methodism regard episcopacy as a feature of Methodism already which simply needs to be overtly expressed and ordered in a way that episcopal churches recognize?*²¹

¹⁹ World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982 (2007)), paraphrasing §25 and 53.

²⁰ Max Thurian (ed.), *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" Text*, Vol. 1, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 80.

²¹ British Methodist Conference, "Methodism and Episcopacy," in: *Statements of the Methodist Church on Faith and Order 1933-1983*, (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1984), 202.

Methodist theologian Geoffrey Wainwright responded to BEM with four important points regarding relations between diverse church expressions of *episcopate*:

1. BEM does not encourage laxity in the transmission of ordained ministry as reflecting continuity in the apostolic tradition, which it commends as rightly taking precedence over any one particular model as the means intended to achieve it;
2. Biblical scholarship highlights however that no particular form of ordained ministry can be directly attributed to the will and institution of Jesus Christ; and the variety of forms expressed in the New Testament do not support exclusive claims of structures;
3. That the threefold ministry itself was observably prone to 'decay', and that later departures can be seen as positive responses to particular crises; and,
4. Even so, non-episcopal churches potentially could appreciate episcopal succession from the ancient church as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the continuity and unity of the Church.²²

WCC's 2013 document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV) affirms that though there has been variation in the development of structures of episcopate, "all communities, whether episcopally ordered or not, continued to see the need for a ministry of episcopate," and that there is converging affirmation that the faithful exercise of such ministry is fundamentally important for the Church's life and mission, and serves the continued maintenance of apostolic faith and unity of life.²³

We are not alone - observing other Anglican-Methodist dialogues

As international multi-lateral and bilateral dialogues have repeatedly observed, a key issue between Anglicans and Methodists is that of mutual recognition of ministries. The international Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission (AMICUM) 2014 report *Into All the World – being and becoming apostolic churches* (IATW) summarises the dialogues to date, and offers resources to assist further convergence.

Various Anglican-Methodist dialogues, particularly in the United States, Britain, Ireland, and AMICUM combine into a continuing convergence on episcopate which reflects the work that BEM encouraged. (Our own New Zealand dialogue is also contributing to this convergence). These commonly undergird the importance of historical episcopal succession for Anglicans in dialogue with the episcopate of Methodism, giving regard to the historical divisions associated with the arising of diverse expressions of episcopate, which challenges both traditions towards both self-recognition and mutual-recognition of legitimate diversity in expressing episcopate.

The Anglican tradition has defined its self-understanding based in the 1888 Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, with its four marks of unity:

- The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- The Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.
- The historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church.

The elements are not read individually but rather integrally bound together as reflecting the interconnectedness between provinces in the Anglican Communion. Lambeth Conference 1998 affirmed these as the basis on which Anglicans would enter into negotiations with other churches for the eventual visible unity of the Church worldwide. The fourth element is often the key point of contention in ecumenical dialogues as a non-negotiable Anglican position for unity.

²² Geoffrey Wainwright, "Reconciliation in Ministry." In *Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Geneva: World Council of Churches. 1983.132-134.

²³ World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), §52.

The Anglican Communion's body for ecumenical dialogue invites:

*For the sake of the restoration of visible unity and as a sign, though not a guarantee, of apostolic continuity, churches which maintain an episcopal ministry (episkope) without the title 'bishop' or where there has been a break in the historical succession are free to recognise the value of the sign and embrace the historic episcopal succession without denying their own apostolic continuity.*²⁴

Nonetheless the Church of England's House of Bishops has observed that convergence on the matter of the historic episcopate in some dialogues has highlighted that:

*... representatives of a number of traditions have come to recognise on the one hand that the apostolicity of the Church is wider than the historic Episcopal succession and on the other hand that integral to the ministry of oversight is the service of helping to maintain the church in the faith of the apostles and that orderly continuity of ministry of oversight is one of the means given by God for maintaining the Church in the faith of the apostles.*²⁵

They conclude discernment "that even seemingly insurmountable questions may find resolution if we are faithful to our calling and open to receive God's gift of unity."²⁶

Anglican theologian Christopher Hill encourages that "[Anglicans] listen with some theological attentiveness to what our ecumenical partners are saying about the sufficiency of unity in an assembly of Christians where the Word is proclaimed and the sacraments are celebrated."²⁷ Hill reflects that contemporary Anglicanism might indeed be shifting from arguments based on historic succession to the sign of catholicity.

Hill commends 'ecumenical catholicity' as advocated by Miroslav Volf: that the minimum requirement of catholicity should be openness to other churches; whereas churches that close themselves off from other churches deny their own catholicity.²⁸ Thus the optimal expression of catholicity is to maintain and deepen ties to other churches past and present; with a view to an eschatological future catholicity. Such catholicity is visible through episcopacy, though other understandings may be compatible.

In the breadth of world-wide Methodism, there is tendency of two streams of expressing *episcopate* – one following the British tradition of Presidents exercising leadership, the other following the American model of Bishops. For both streams the Annual Conference has been a central aspect to the life of Methodist Churches since Wesley instigated them in 1744 as a means of organising oversight of the early Methodist Societies 'in connexion' with Mr Wesley. Subsequently Methodists understand apostolic tradition as being continued within the spiritual life of the church, but with the *episcopate* exercised through the Conference and through the person of the President/Presiding Bishop when Conference is not in session.

Methodists agree that a ministry of word and sacrament are essential elements in the church, and we exercise a ministry of oversight, from the corporate *episcopate* of the Conference to the personal pastoral oversight of our structures and our ministers. The issue is how the ways in which we do this is recognized by other churches (this applies, for instance, to any conversation we might have with Lutherans as well as Anglicans). The ministry of oversight for the world's Anglicans is what they term 'the historic episcopate'. In recent reports, they have made it clear that this does not involve a tactile succession of episcopal hands in a line from the apostles, nor that the episcopate alone is a guarantee of the faithful passing on of the apostolic faith. Apostolic succession is more than this.

Apostolic tradition in the Church means continuity in the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles: witness to the apostolic faith, proclamation and fresh interpretation of the Gospel, celebration of baptism and the Eucharist, the transmission of ministerial responsibility, communion

²⁴ Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical, *The Vision Before Us: The Kyoto Report of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations 2000 - 2008*, (London: The Anglican Communion Office, 2009), 87.

²⁵ House of Bishops Occasional Paper, *Apostolicity and Succession*, (The Church of England, 1997), 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁷ Christopher Hill "Seeing the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church: do bishops exhibit or obscure it", in Avis, Paul (ed.) *Path to Unity: explorations in ecumenical method*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 122.

²⁸ To Methodists this resonates to the ethos expressed by John Wesley's sermon "The Catholic Spirit".

in prayer, love, joy, and suffering, service to the sick and needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each.²⁹

Nevertheless, the role of bishops within the church has been a stumbling block. Various reports have addressed the breadth and variety of understandings of this role: a Methodist bishop is a bishop in the *whakapapa* of his/her own tradition. *Episcope* does not take one form; it can be expressed in ways particular to the story and place of a church, but the form in one church needs to be recognizable by another if mutual exchange of other ministries is to be achieved.

We are reminded that more than 90% of Methodist churches around the world now include in their ministry a person called 'bishop.' An episcopal structure is not a foreign concept to the wider Methodist and Wesleyan family, indeed it is increasingly normative. Notably Methodists in the USA proudly affirm their episcopacy, which arose in the historical crisis following the American Revolution yet related back to John Wesley and the then Anglican context of the Wesleyan movement.

Is this direction a way for Methodists of Aotearoa New Zealand to heighten our self-understanding? As such we would reflect insights from ecumenical theology such as the World Council of Churches documents *BEM* and more recently *TCTCV*, our Methodist sister churches as well as our ecumenical covenanted partner.

It is also worth noting that in 2013 the Lutheran Church in Australia and New Zealand adopted the title of bishop for the roles of President and District Presidents. This was done in order to better convey the actual nature of the role, especially to other churches and to the wider community locally and abroad. The Lutherans also affirmed the heritage of the title of bishop in the New Testament and the early church, which continues to be used by many churches around the world. They further affirmed that the designation of bishop was not questioned during the 16th century Reformation, when the role of bishop, properly carried out, was affirmed.

Similarly, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in 1989 adopted the title of Presiding Bishop for the President of Conference, and Bishop for the Chairmen of District. In doing so, it felt that episcopacy was not implied as essential for the apostolicity of the Church, but none the less conveyed a linking to the universal church through the ages and was of immense value for ecumenical relationships. It also affirmed that the title of bishop held a scriptural connection (rather than one derived from secular practice), yet did not threaten the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers any more than did the existence of ordained ministers or the office of President or Chairman.³⁰

Drawing on the amassed reports, Covenants and dialogues that involve various Methodist and Anglican churches with each other, and also with other denominations, the AMICUM report *Into All the World – being and becoming apostolic churches* makes a number of affirmations that are significant for our dialogue. These include:

- Both Anglican and Methodist churches, as human institutions are incomplete, frail and provisional, and will be so even if united. (§50)
- Our churches are both one, holy, catholic and apostolic now, in certain ways, in varying degrees of faithfulness across time, and we will be, by God's mercy, that Church of God's promise, together with all whom God calls. (§51)
- There is sufficient agreement on core or central doctrines for us to agree that each faithfully bears a living witness to the apostolic faith. (§57)
- The fact of bishops does not by itself guarantee the continuity of apostolic faith. A material rupture in the succession of presiding ministers does not guarantee a loss of continuity in apostolic faith. (§64)
- Whether a church claims an episcopal succession from apostolic times, or whether a church has formed a new pattern for itself out of its experience and particular need, its intention, we believe, has been to safeguard the faithful witness to the Gospel (§65)

²⁹ Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission, *Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches*, (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2014), §52

³⁰ See *Into All The World*, 41.

- Because we moved apart from a common milieu, both Anglicans and Methodists sought to justify positions, and in the process tended to caricature the other. (§45)
- It is important that we do not demand of each other a greater uniformity of interpretation than we experience in our own separate communions. (§59)

IATW also makes the observation in its preface,

*If we are honest, we are often willing to be friendly as long as nothing changes. If we do act ecumenically, we do it minimally, watching every careful step. Or, in our unity discussions we ask of each other an impossible perfection.*³¹

Yet we (Anglican and Methodist) are challenged as to what really prevents us from make the next steps? Do we miss the point that unity is not of our own making, but the receiving of a gift of Christ himself.

Moving forward in Aotearoa-New Zealand

Since 2011 the current phase of the New Zealand Anglican-Methodist Dialogue's foremost concern has been the outstanding questions relating to the mutual recognition and interchangeability of ordained ministries. The Dialogue has engaged conversations at Conference, General Synod, Faith & Order, the House of Bishops, the Council for Ecumenism, and the General Synod Standing Committee.

A two day Hui held in Auckland in September 2015 brought together members of the Anglican-Methodist Dialogue to make significant progress toward an agreement on mutuality of ministry. The hui also included representatives of the Methodist Faith & Order and the Anglican Council for Ecumenism committees, Rev Michael Hughes (Anglican General Secretary), Bishop Victoria Matthews, a member of the Anglican Communion's commission for ecumenical relations, IASCUFO – Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order, Bishop Kito Pikaahu (Tikanga Maori), and Rev Robert Gribben, chair of the World Methodist Council's ecumenical relations committee and co-chair of AMICUM.

As has been outlined in previous reports to Conference, an agreement based on the 'Irish Model' has been favoured by the Dialogue to give ordained Anglican and Methodist ministers equal recognition and interchangeability between churches, through the mutual recognition of the episcopal ministry of Anglican bishops and the Methodist presidential team (in particular the ordained presbyter who is President or Vice President). The affirmation of the interchange of priestly/presbyteral ministry is further grounded in the recognition that, relative to each of the two churches, ordinations to the ministry of Word and Sacrament equally occurs in the context of the liturgical presidency of an appropriate episcopal minister (Anglican Bishop / ordained presbyter member of Methodist Presidency).

This requires a drawing together of the two churches in mutual receptivity. The two churches are encouraged, in the spirit of the 2008 Anglican-Methodist Covenant, to take further steps to accommodate the concerns of their partner in the dialogue to achieve the mutuality of ministry in a journey towards Full Communion.

In a pilgrimage of 'receptive episcopacy' how can we further the expansion and enrichment of the episcopal space and visibility of *episcopate*? How might the Methodist church consider strengthening our witness to the belief that in the Presidential Team there is represented the episcopal ministry that is transmitted over time and place, as a measure of conciliar ecumenism not only with the Anglican Church, but with our fellow family of Methodist churches? How might the Anglican Church respond, and assist with this discernment as together we learn to express and understand a conciliar episcopate? Can Methodism offer towards a conciliar understanding of episcopacy the affirmation of *episcopate* being reflected in a lay-ordained partnership, as expressed in the Presidential Team and layers of Methodist ecclesiology? As we respond to these questions, no one church should feel compromised or subsumed into another church's model, but both sense enrichment of how we share our common faith that we pass on the faith of the apostles.

³¹ *Into All The World*, x.

The proposal to MCNZ is similar to those of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Anglican Church of Ireland, where it has been discerned there is sufficient consonance between the understandings of a threefold ministry in each tradition. The collegial episcopate, communal episcopate, and personal episcopate is recognised in the person of the Irish Methodist President (who is always ordained), his or her predecessors and successors. The title 'Episcopal Minister' is now used within the polity of the Methodist Church in Ireland to give expression to the personal episcopate that has always been present in the role of the Methodist President.

This was not creating a new concept by the Methodist Church in Ireland, nor imposing language from the Church of Ireland. Rather, it is an articulation within the Methodist Church in Ireland as to how it understands itself, helpfully providing the Church of Ireland with the language of 'episcopal', over and above the real substance of recognising personal episcopate in the role, office and ministry of the Methodist President, successors and predecessors.

In accepting the title of 'episcopal minister' as part of the role of President, MCI has not adopted the title of bishop as the term being seen as sufficiently expressing an episcopal ministry. The convergence enables Bishops of COI to welcome MCI Presidents as sharing in consonant order and ministry, in the same way that the MCI Conference of COI Bishops. This is signified through Bishops participating alongside Past-Presidents in the 'laying on of hands' for the installation of all MCI Presidents; and the President and Past-Presidents likewise invited to join other bishops to participate in the ordination of bishops. Further, the mutual recognition of the consonance between President and Bishop allows for a President or former President to be considered for the office of Bishop without further ordination.

Ireland has achieved an important ecumenical convergence that is both self-affirming as well as mutually-affirming for churches expressing different models. The outcome arguably represents a response to BEM through the two churches respectfully listening to each other. The need for the mutuality of ministry of priests and presbyters is acknowledged as being dependent on the mutuality of presidents and bishops, achieved in a conciliar manner.

In June 2014 the incoming President of MCI was consecrated as an Episcopal Minister, with the involvement in the laying-on-of-hands of Past-Presidents as well as two COI Archbishops and a Bishop. In January 2015 the President and two Past-Presidents of MCI participated in the laying of hands for the consecration of the COI Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe. Of key importance to the living out of this agreement is that this mutual participation is more than the extension of the invitation, but is intended to be acted upon at each occasion through participation.

It is significant that IASCUFO has warmly commended the work in Ireland as a basis for other Anglican and Methodist churches to achieve the interchangeability of ordained ministries precisely because it entails the reconciliation of, and thus interchangeability between, episcopal ministers.³²

The Proposal

For Methodists the proposal is of an awareness and affirmation of episcopal ministry exercised corporately by Conference, and collegially and personally through the ordained presbyter in the Presidential Team.

Practically this would not change the powers or authority of the ordained President or Vice President. In many ways this would affirm Methodist existing understanding, but would give stronger recognition through the historic sign of laying hands on the presbyter in the presidential team during the induction service. It would also mean that past Methodist ordained Presidents/Vice Presidents would have some enduring status in the life of the church as a father or mother of the church (rather than a person assuming the role only for the term of office, there is an ongoing service given to the church).

For Anglicans, the question will be whether they can recognize in the ordained presbyter in the Presidential team an episcopal ministry; an authentic episcopate. In the reconciliation of ministries which this process implies, the Anglicans will be invited to give the visible sign of continuity which they have historically required: the laying on of hands by Bishops of their own and of churches in

³² IASCUFO letter to the General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Aotearoa, dated 20 February 2015.

communion with them. In this act, they are committed to recognize the episcopal ministry of the Methodist Church of NZ – *Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa* as they do their own. They may, as with the Church of Ireland, also extend that recognition to all who have held the office of an ordained President or Vice-President. We should not underestimate the significance of these steps for Anglicans: they will offer the sign which will break down the barriers which have stood between Anglicans and Methodists since the time of John Wesley. The implications for mutual mission in Aotearoa-New Zealand are very great indeed.

There remain differences in the structure and nature within both churches of the probationary period that occurs (usually) between completion of a ministry formation process and the priestly/presbyteral ordination. In Methodism, this is the period and status of an individual having been inducted as a Probationer; in the Anglican Church it is the period of having been ordained a Deacon as a transitional period towards ordination as a priest. In both cases certain limitations and expectations apply, but for the moment the differences between the role and status of a Methodist Probationer and an Anglican (transitional) Deacon suggest that they cannot be regarded as interchangeable. Thus our proposal applies only to the mutuality of episcopal ministry and the interchangeability of presbyteral and priestly ministries.

With regard to the ordained permanent or vocational diaconate, both churches affirm this as an order of ministry in its own right. There is further opportunity for our two churches to work together on a common understanding of model and mission.

The above suggested actions will enable a unique, visible and powerful witness to the seriousness with which each partner Church holds the Covenant; at the same time the rights and protocols of each Church in respect to the employment and deployment of ordained clergy are in no way compromised. Our respective ecclesial integrities remain; our capacity to exercise ministry and mission will be enhanced.

Through the mutual recognition and accommodation of diversity without enforcing one model on another, such convergences are significant for the wider ecumenical hope of our time: that of affirming 'legitimate diversity'. The Methodist and Anglican churches can share recognition of ecclesial apostolic reality in spite of clearly perceptible variations in the expression of episcopacy. Ecumenism is not intended to "find ways of uniting Christian diversity, but rather to recognise, celebrate and learn from the legitimate diversity of our given oneness."³³ The challenge is not of diversity-reducing unity to create uniformity, but rather of encompassing more of the diverse richness within the common Christian heritage. Paul Avis, Anglican theologian and member of IASCUFO, expresses:

*Diversity is not opposed to unity, the opposite of unity is not diversity but division. The opposite of diversity is not unity but uniformity. If we set our face against division, on the one hand, and uniformity on the other we should find ourselves steering a course towards communion in diversity.*³⁴

Mutuality of episcopal and ministerial ordination is not the end of the dialogue towards greater unity in mission. A future phase of our Covenantal relationship will include asking – are there further steps that we need to take before we together affirm that we are in Full Communion? There is more that can be done to strengthen flax root mission and ministry; as well as inter-church relationships in social services, boards, and governance.

Therefore we ask of Te Haahi ...

Could these affirmations and changes be offered as much for our own life as for any other ecumenical relationships, and let it grow until such time as other churches can see the equivalence?

Might *Te Haahi* regard episcopacy as a feature of Methodism already which simply needs to be overtly expressed and ordered in a way that episcopal churches recognize? Is the term 'Episcopal Minister' seen as a sufficient title, rather than 'Bishop'?

³³ Michael Kinnamon, *The Vision of the Ecumenical Movements: and how it has been impoverished by its friends*, (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 51.

³⁴ Paul Avis, *Reshaping Ecumenical Theology: The Church Made Whole?*, (London: Continuum, 2010), 32.