

The Right Reverend John H. Chapman  
Bishop of Ottawa

Son Excellence Monseigneur John H. Chapman  
Évêque d'Ottawa

Episcopal Office, Diocese of Ottawa  
Anglican Church of Canada

Bureau épiscopal, Diocèse d'Ottawa  
L'Église anglicane du Canada

*With God's grace, the mission of our ministries  
is to enable people to know Jesus Christ,  
to live and share the good news,  
to grow in faith and to serve God's world.*

## **Pastoral Letter # 3 Feast of St. Benedict of Nursia, 2011**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Holy Orders

May I say first that it is always an honour, indeed a privilege to write a pastoral letter to you the clergy of the diocese. Each and every day of my ministry I thank God that I have been blessed with such capable, wise and prayerful clergy. I've said this before, but I was new in office. I suppose my newness might take some of the shine off of comments and commendations with the thought, "wait until he's been around a while and he may think differently." Well, it is over four years since you elected and honoured me as your Bishop. So I say it again but this time with four years of experience behind me, I am honoured to share ministry with such able clergy. Thank you for your ministry and thank you for your ongoing prayers of support without which I would be lost.

I am pleased to be able to offer you my third pastoral letter. It will focus your thinking and practice on four issues currently in need of clarification:

1. Services of Induction,
2. The Blessing of same-gendered couples civilly married,
3. Open table (Communion of the nonbaptised),
4. Protocols to be observed by departing Incumbents.

### **1. Services of Induction**

I have asked the Doctrine and Worship Panel to examine our current practice of Induction Services or Celebrations of New Ministry. They have recommended to me that we retain the use of the two options available in the book of occasional services and add one further option that allows for the induction to occur in the context of Evening Prayer (see Appendix 1). I appreciate their work and recommendations and commend them to you to guide current practice. We have adapted the service from the Evening Prayer Supplementary to the BAS and the services in the Book of Occasional Services.

Regardless of which service you choose for the induction please keep in mind the following:

The wardens can read the letter of appointment in the office before the service and simply say that they have done so at the appropriate time in the service.

Every effort should be made to avoid the appearance of the congregation handing over their ministry to the new priest. The emphasis in the prayers is our joint ministry. Not all the symbols need to be included but those symbols allowed for in the liturgies are the only symbols authorized for presentation. If a parish wishes to present a "fun" or locally appropriate gift that reflects something personal about the new incumbent or parish, these may be offered during the reception or party that may follow. Please remember that an induction service is a service of the whole church, it does not belong to the incumbent or parish corporation.

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## 2. The Matter of Blessing Same-Gendered Couples

As I mentioned in my Charge to Synod 2010, *General Synod 2010 was one of the highlights of my life as a Christian and in my time as your bishop. In a manner that was typically Anglican, and dare I say, Canadian, we managed to find ways to live together in the midst of difference and diversity of opinion and practice. It was a grace-filled conversation that everyone present, regardless of their politics, bias, theology or fear, felt the Spirit of the living God present and working in our midst.*

On the matter of Same-Gender Blessing, a formal statement was prepared by General Synod 2010. It included the consensus that was reached regarding the following: First, we decided that it would not be helpful for us to make any legislative decision, so we did not. Second, there was unanimous acknowledgement that pastoral practice will vary from time to time in different parts of our church. This is the very nature of the Canadian Anglican Church - diversity will always characterize our church in all of its richness. Third, imposition of a decision or practice by one party over another will not help us move forward. Fourth, we will "... *live together sharing in the mission of Christ entrusted to us, accepting that different local contexts call at times for different local discernment, decision and action.*"

As a community of faithful followers of Jesus, respecting the missional context of our Diocese, we have, for some time now, prayerfully and diligently sought a response that is pastoral to all our parishioners, including our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ.

To this end, I gave my permission for one parish in our Diocese to bless permanent, intimate and loving couples of the same gender, civilly married, and to do so with the full protection of conscience, and with the pastoral support of Episcopal ministry. I said at the time that this would allow us to 'test the Spirit' and to see where God is leading us with respect to this matter which our faith community faces at this time in history.

I have been pleased with the experience St. John the Evangelist, Ottawa has had and, following further consultation, inclusive of a wide spectrum of viewpoints within our Diocese and the wider Church, I now feel confident and comfortable to offer other parishes this pastoral courtesy, individually and free of precedent. That is, if a priest and community feel that a request for a blessing from a same-gendered couple civilly married is appropriate, the priest, with the full support of corporation and council, will request permission from me, in writing. Permission must be sought for every occurrence. No priest and parish in the Diocese of Ottawa will receive authority to proceed with same-gendered blessings without written permission from the Diocesan Bishop.

In seeking to meet the pastoral needs of gay and lesbian couples in our parishes, we all recognize the tension between the "gracious restraint," called for in "The Windsor Report" (embodied in the three-fold moratoria<sup>1</sup>), the "pastoral generosity" called for by the national House of Bishops in their 2007 Pastoral Statement and, the General Synod 2010 call for mutual respect, even in difference. At the heart of these guidelines is the call of our baptismal covenant for all Christians. We live within our covenant with God, embodied in the tenets of our faith outlined in the Creed and in the daily practice of our lives. We seek to grow in integrity and sanctity as we reflect the life of Christ in ourselves and in our relationships, through worship, reconciliation, proclamation, witness and action. I understand blessing of same gender couples in light of their intention to grow into the fullness of Christ, individually and in their relationship, through faithful reflection of the gifts of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23). *What follows is a pastoral response to the matter and not a legislative binding decision.*

I find comfort in the knowledge that Church history teaches us that oftentimes, social, anthropological, scientific and indeed, medical developments, revealed by God allow the church, with due prayer and reflection, to

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<sup>1</sup> Three-fold moratoria include: 1. consecration of clergy to the office of Bishop who are living in same gender relationship, 2. the authorization of public rites of blessing for same gender unions, and 3. intervention by Bishops into ecclesiastical provinces other than their own.

discover new mission criteria. When this discovery is placed in the context of a faithful response to baptism, hope is invigorated and justice understood in a new way.

Some may think that what I have stated above goes too far and others may feel it does not go far enough. Please be assured that there are strong affirmations and a continued and honoured place in all aspects of diocesan life for those who do not agree with this pastoral direction.

### **Practical Guidelines**

1. Permission must be sought from the Diocesan Bishop, in writing and signed by the Incumbent and Wardens with the concurrence of the Parish Council.
2. The same-gendered couple, civilly married, must be in an existing pastoral relationship with the clergy and parish.
3. At least one of the couple must be baptised.
4. Consistent with the moratorium and reflecting gracious restraint, no formal liturgy will be outlined or sanctioned by the Episcopal Office. However, the following guidelines must be observed:
  - a. The act of worship, prayer and blessing will be entered in the Vestry Book only.
  - b. The service of Blessing may not occur at the same occasion or day as a civil marriage so as to allow each event to be distinct and clearly understood.
  - c. Introductory remarks must be made that reflect the theological difference between the act of blessing and the sacrament of marriage.
  - d. The blessing of the commitment may include a statement of commitment and symbolic expressions of that commitment but these may not resemble those typically used in a marriage liturgy.
  - e. Celebration of the Eucharist is encouraged but optional.
  - f. In order to distinguish the act of blessing from marriage, it is not appropriate to ask for an exchange of consents. As well, blessings typically used in a marriage liturgy will not be used nor will a declaration of union be made. The act of blessing consecrates before God the partnership that already exists between the couple; mutual love and lifelong commitment one to the other in Christ.
  - g. As the blessing itself is the cornerstone upon which all of the prayers and readings rest, an appropriate, theologically sound and carefully crafted blessing will be offered. This blessing will typically reflect the couple's mutual love and affection, the covenant they share before God and the people of God, and their rightful and honoured place together in the midst of Christ's full community.

This pastoral response and guidelines will be in place throughout the Diocese of Ottawa until such time as they are revoked, altered or embellished by me or my successors.

### **3. Open Table (Reception of Communion by the Nonbaptised)**

The House of Bishops met during Lent of this year and unanimously agreed to the following, in response to recent conversations regarding 'open table.'

*We have been made aware through media articles and pastoral visits by bishops that in some parts of Canada, a practice of 'open table' has begun. This involves admitting people to Holy Communion before baptism. We recognize that this practice arises out of a deep concern to express Christian hospitality. However we unanimously reaffirm our understanding that the Eucharist is the sacrament for the baptised. We do not see this*

*as changing for the foreseeable future. At our next meeting, the bishops will discuss and offer guidance to the church on Christian hospitality and mission and how these relate to the Table of Christ.*

As you can imagine, conversations at the House of Bishops was lively and actually quite good. A number of resources were presented from a variety of sources making the case for both positions. Our own Canon Theologian, Dr. John Gibaut was one such resource. In fact his conversation on the subject, particularly from the ecumenical perspective, marked the turning point and carried the day. Each bishop prayerfully and thoughtfully contributed toward the unanimous decision that the Eucharist or Holy Communion will be offered to the baptised only. The Bishops also recognized that this is a practice that cannot nor should not be 'policed' in any way. Rather, it is a position that should be articulated clearly as the teaching of the church by our leadership. That is as much as we might expect from our priests, deacons and lay leaders. And, if this is to be our teaching, then it is not appropriate for parish leaders to invite the nonbaptised to receive Holy Communion in writing (e.g. bulletin announcements) or through public spoken announcements.

I invite you to read carefully Appendix 2 which contains a portion of a paper written by our Canon Theologian on the subject.

#### **4. Proper Protocol that must be Observed by Departing Incumbents**

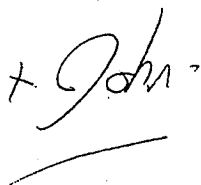
May I remind all departing incumbents of a traditional protocol that has been observed in Anglican parishes for well over a Century.

I am well aware, and have experienced myself, the very deep bonds of affection that exist between you as a departing incumbent and parishioners. How can one not accommodate a pastoral request made from a previous parishioner when so much has been shared and such affection exists? This is of course a problem that will always be with us. We have been well formed to respond pastorally to all in need yet, it also rests upon us to do all that we can to assist new clergy in a parish as they too begin to form deep bonds of pastoral affection for those people of God entrusted to their Godly care. It is our duty to our colleagues as well as our previous parish to help the process along as best we can. You know the practice well. I expect that many of you have been on the receiving end of this transition when it is done well and when it has been done poorly. You know what a bad transition feels like so allow that experience be your guide.

In this spirit may I implore upon you that all departing incumbents will first, help your previous parish understand priestly function and responsibility as they prepare for transition. Second, rather than accommodate a pastoral request yourself, help your previous faithful parishioner to contact their new incumbent – make the introductions. Third, if you have developed a friendship with a particular parishioner that goes beyond a pastoral relationship, then behave as a friend not a pastor to them. For example, why not sit with them at a funeral of a loved one as friends do. You don't need to be up front; rather you need to share their grief as a friend. This same analogy could apply to a variety of other situations. Remember, above all your task is to help a previous parishioner develop a relationship with their new priest.

These matters discussed above are not new. You know the protocols well but it is in our nature as humans and as pastors to alter normal practice when it involves ourselves. Please my brothers and sisters, honour your colleagues by observing a respectful transition when you have been called to a new parish or called to retirement.

Yours in Christ,



## APPENDIX # 1

### An Evening Prayer Service Celebrating New Ministry

#### Opening Hymn

#### The Gathering of the Community

*All stand.*

*Officiant* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all

*People* **And also with you.**

*Officiant* My brothers and sisters in Christ,  
NN has been chosen to be incumbent\* of  
this parish of N.

After prayerful consideration,  
and according to the practice of this diocese,  
I have (or the bishop has) appointed N  
to this position of leadership  
in our common ministry.

This ministry continues the good work  
done through the years in this community,  
and is part of the work and witness  
of the whole church.

It is a new beginning  
because N brings particular gifts  
to our ministry together.

As we stand in God's presence  
let us pray that grace will be given to N,  
and to all of us in this ministry,  
that we may fulfil the responsibilities  
which are ours.

*Silence is kept.*

*The officiant sings or says the following:*

Almighty God,  
by your grace alone  
we are accepted and called to your service.  
Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit  
and make us worthy of our calling;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you

and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

*People Amen.*

*Officiant* The Lord is our light and our life.  
*People O come, let us worship.*

Hymn: O Gracious Light (Tallis Canon) *Metrical versions such as "All people that on earth do dwell," and "O gladsome Light," may be used.*

**O Gracious Light** *tune: Tallis' Canon*

O gracious Light, Lord Jesus Christ,  
in you the Father's glory shone.  
Immortal, holy, blest is he,  
and blest are you, his holy Son.  
Now sunset comes, but light shines forth,  
the lamps are lit to pierce the night.  
Praise Father, Son, and Spirit: God  
who dwells in the eternal light.  
Worthy are you of endless praise,  
O Son of God, Life-giving Lord;  
wherefore you are through all the earth  
and in the highest heaven adored.

**The Proclamation of the Word**

*The psalm is said or sung, concluding with  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now and will be forever. Amen.*

*The first appointed reading is read, the reader first saying  
A reading from...*

*After the reading the reader shall say either  
The word of the Lord.  
(or Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.)  
People Thanks be to God.*

Song of Mary (Hymn: My Soul Proclaims Your Glory Lord or other Call and Vocation Hymn may be sung  
in place of reading the Canticle.)

## **Song of Mary**

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; \*  
for he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed: \*  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,\*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, \*  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

*The second appointed reading is read, the reader first saying  
A reading from...*

*After the reading the reader shall say either  
The word of the Lord.  
(Or Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.)  
People **Thanks be to God.***

*The Song of Simeon may be  
said or sung. Metrical versions of these canticles may be used (BAS  
p. 89; cf. Service music of Common Praise).*

## **The Song of Simeon**

Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; \*  
your word has been fulfilled.  
My own eyes have seen the salvation \*  
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;  
a light to reveal you to the nations \*  
and the glory of your people Israel.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

*The congregation stands for the Gospel reading. The reader says*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to...

*People* **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*At the conclusion the reader says*

The Gospel of Christ.

*People* **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Homily*

### **Covenant in Ministry**

*The officiant, standing with the new minister and the churchwardens  
before the congregation, a churchwarden, or other official, may say,*

I (we) certify  
that the required oaths and declarations  
have been made,  
and the letters of appointment and license  
have been read in my (our) presence.

*The officiant asks the new minister,*

Do you,  
in the presence of this congregation,  
commit yourself to the responsibility  
entrusted to you?

The new minister replies,  
I do.

*The officiant asks the people of the parish or congregation to stand  
and says,*

Do you, the people of the parish of N,  
commit yourselves to share with N  
in the ministry of this parish?  
People We do.

*The officiant asks visitors to stand, and says,*

As brothers and sisters in the body of Christ,  
will you support N and the parish of N  
in their ministry together?  
People We will.

Hymn may be sung

The symbols of ministry may be processed to the chancel during the hymn and placed on a table visible to the community or the symbols may be placed on the table before the beginning of the liturgy. No explanation of the symbols need be offered. Symbols of ministry: Bible, water, oil, BAS, bread and wine.



*Officiant N*, these symbols of the Eucharist, Baptism, Scripture and the Prayer Book be signs of the ministry which is mine (the bishop's) and yours, and is shared by all the people of God.

*The new minister replies,*  
Amen. May we find joy together  
in the service of Christ.

*Officiant I* present N as the leader of your ministry,  
and I invite your welcome.

*The congregation may respond.*

The new minister says,  
Dear friends in Christ,  
let us pray that this ministry we share  
may accomplish the purpose of God's grace.  
Let us pray for the world,  
the universal Church,  
and for ourselves.

*Members of the community may lead the congregation in prayer for the Church, for the world, and for all people.*

### **The Prayers of the People**

*The Prayers of the People may be led by members of the congregation. The following prayers may be adapted as required. The fourth suffrage may be offered by the new incumbent. The litany of the Holy Spirit, p. 123 in The Book of Alternative Services, may be used instead of this form of prayer.*

Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
we are called to proclaim  
the story of God's love and mercy  
and, above all, the Gospel of our Saviour Christ:  
I ask your prayers for N who has come among us  
to preach the word of God and to teach the faith.

*Silence*

Leader Lord in your mercy,  
People Hear our prayer.

We are called to be a sign and witness  
of God's purpose for all the human family:  
I ask your prayers for N who has come among us  
to share our joys and sorrows,  
to counsel, reconcile, and comfort;  
to nurture this community of faith.

*Silence*

Leader Lord in your mercy,  
People Hear our prayer.

I ask your prayers for the committees and organizations  
of our church and community,  
and for N, that in wisdom and humility,  
in discernment and good humour  
he/she may join with us  
in working for the building up of Christ's Church.

*Silence*

Leader Lord in your mercy,  
People Hear our prayer.

I ask your prayers for us all,  
that together we may learn the ways of the kingdom,  
patterned in worship and practiced in love.  
Together may we welcome strangers,  
stand with outcasts,  
and support those who are broken,  
in the pattern of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Silence*

Leader Lord in your mercy,  
People Hear our prayer.

Other petitions for the world, the Church, the local community, the sick,  
friends and family of those present, and the departed, may be offered.

*Silence*

Leader Lord in your mercy,  
People Hear our prayer.

*The officiant may conclude in these or similar words.*

We are the body of Christ; in the one Spirit we were all baptised  
into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and  
builds up our common life.

### **The Collect of the Day**

**or this collect:**

God of fresh beginnings  
You make all things new  
In the wisdom of Jesus Christ.  
Make us agents of your transforming power  
And heralds of your reign of justice and peace,  
Send us forth in your Spirit, renewed and restored  
That together we may proclaim your good news  
In ways and words that all will understand and believe

This we pray through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit

One God, now and forever,  
Amen

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
*People* And also with you.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Officiant* Gathering our prayers and praises into one,  
let us pray as our Saviour taught us,  
*All Our Father in heaven,*  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.

*Or*

*Officiant* And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,  
we are bold to say,  
*All Our Father, who art in heaven,*  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

**Blessing:**

We are the people of God  
A holy nation  
A royal priesthood

Gathered together in God's presence.  
May God  
Gracious Creator  
Living Word  
Loving Spirit  
Bless us all in this calling  
Now and always  
Amen

*A concluding hymn may be sung.*

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord (Alleluia).  
*People* Thanks be to God (Alleluia).

### **Readings and Psalms Suitable for the Celebration of a New Ministry**

*The readings are those of the day, or may be chosen from the following list.  
This list is intended to be helpful, but not restrictive.*

#### **Old Testament Readings**

*Numbers 11.16–17,24–25a (Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel)  
Jeremiah 1.4–9 (Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you)*

#### **Psalms and Suitable Refrains**

*84 (Happy are the people whose strength is in you)  
119.33–40 (Give me life in your ways)  
146 (God keeps his promise for ever or Allelujah)*

#### **New Testament Readings**

*Romans 12.1–18 (We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us)  
2 Corinthians 4.1–6 (We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord)  
Ephesians 4.7,11–16 (To equip the saints for the work of ministry)*

#### **Gospel Readings**

*Luke 10.1–2 (The Lord appointed seventy others)  
John 14.11–15 (If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it)  
John 15.9–16 (Love one another)*

## APPENDIX 2

*Dr. John Gibaut, Canon Theologian, Diocese of Ottawa*

### Open Communion

Questions about who may, and who may not, receive Holy Communion at the celebration of the Eucharist are not new. Early Christianity understood baptism and the Eucharist as integrally linked together as sacraments of Christian initiation, the only repeatable element of which was the weekly reception of Holy Communion. Until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, infant baptism in Western Christianity, celebrated by a priest, included the reception of Holy Communion, which for new born babies meant only a small amount of Eucharistic wine and, Eucharistic bread would come when they could masticate. Once the chalice was removed from the laity at that time, the ancient connection between baptism and the Eucharist as integral parts of an integrated rite of initiation was severed, at least in the West, and the time between baptism and first communion gradually become longer and longer. Reception of the Eucharist at baptism remains part of the rites of initiation of Eastern Christianity. Late medieval Christians questioned whether baptism was the sole sacramental requirement for the reception of Holy Communion, or whether baptism and confirmation together constituted the sacramental requirement. English synods in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century English church opted for baptism and confirmation, further distancing in time the connection between baptism and receiving Holy Communion, given the lack of visitations by bishops. Within the late medieval period a variety of discussions were underway across Europe about the proper age for the baptised (and confirmed) to receive Holy Communion, with a variety of proposals as to what constituted the “age of discretion.”

The late medieval limiting of Holy Communion to those baptised and confirmed was enshrined in the English Prayer Book tradition from 1549 onwards. Some manoeuvring room was added in the 1662 Prayer Book with the inclusion of the words “or those desiring” to be confirmed; by the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of English colonialism clearly not all Anglicans had access to bishops and confirmation, and were not, thus, to be deprived of Holy Communion.

Since the 1960s and the need to revitalize and renew patterns of Christian initiation across the Anglican Communion, some of the older questions have resurfaced. In some Anglican provincial churches, such as the Anglican Church of Canada, the result of such reflection has been the restored practice of communion of all the baptised, including newly baptised infants; some other provinces continue to limit Holy Communion to the baptised and confirmed. A reflection of this at the level of the Anglican Communion is found in the documents of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation:

Baptism is the sacramental sign of full incorporation into the body of Christ. Thus, all who are baptised should be welcomed into the Eucharistic fellowship of the church. We affirm the statement, “Children and Communion,” of the 1985 Anglican Liturgical Consultation in Boston.

Communion of all the baptised represents a radical shift in Anglican practice and theology. Over the past two decades there has been an increasing acceptance of this practice in the Anglican Communion, although some provinces continue to require confirmation for admission to communion. We encourage provinces to reflect upon baptismal theology and Eucharistic discipline and to implement the recommendations of the Boston Statement.

Unbaptised persons who through faith in Christ desire participation in the Eucharistic fellowship should be encouraged to make their commitment to Christ in baptism, and so be incorporated within the one body which breaks the one bread.<sup>2</sup>

This striking restatement of the bond between baptism and Eucharist in both Anglican sacramental theology and pastoral praxis both reflects, and gives rise to, an ecumenical perspective on the baptism.

In short:

- Baptism and the Eucharist belong together as the fundamental sacraments of Christian initiation, in which receiving Holy Communion is the repeatable part.
- Giving communion to all the baptised, whether confirmed or not, or whether small infant or aged member of the community, is a restoration of earlier Christian practice.

### **The Ecumenical Experience of Admission to Communion**

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new questions around admission to Holy Communion were posed from the emerging ecumenical movement. Can Christians from other churches receive Holy Communion at Anglican celebrations of the Eucharist, many of whom may never have been (episcopally) confirmed? Deeper questions around the restored Eucharistic communion between the churches became the expressed goal of the ecumenical movement. Historically, the lack of communion between the baptised gave rise to a sense of scandal which initiated the ecumenical movement in the first place.

Yet until the mid-twentieth century, the possibilities of Eucharistic hospitality were limited, and indeed, considered "irregular." From the 1960s, questions around Eucharistic hospitality in its various gradations have been immensely complicated for Anglicans. An important bench mark is the resolutions of 1968 Lambeth Conference. Once again, the nexus of baptism and the Eucharist is central, forming the basis of an expanded Eucharistic relationship with the members of other churches. Resolution 45 states:

The Conference recommends that, in order to meet special pastoral needs of God's people, under the direction of the bishop Christians duly baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity and qualified to receive Holy Communion in their own Churches may be welcomed at the Lord's Table in the Anglican Communion.<sup>3</sup>

The theological basis for this shift in the discipline of Eucharistic hospitality in both the 1968 Lambeth Conference resolutions is the perception of a degree of Christian unity based on a common baptismal unity. As Thomas Ryan, a well-known North American Roman Catholic ecumenist and sometime member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada, has commented:

The Anglican attitude to Eucharistic sharing has changed as the Anglican attitude to baptism has changed. As baptism has been recognised as the universal sign of Christian belonging, Anglican attitudes to Eucharistic sharing have softened and changed. This is a development of only the last few decades. The Anglican intuition now is to view baptism and Eucharist as inseparable; to affirm and even rejoice in the common baptism shared with others and then to

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<sup>2</sup> *Walk in Newness of Life* Section One: Renewal of the Theology of Initiation, 10, 11, 14; reproduced in David R. Holeton, ed., *Growing in Newness of Life: Christian Initiation in Anglicanism Today* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1993), p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Coleman, *Resolutions*, p. 166.

deny that common life at the Lord's table is seen as depriving baptism of its meaning theologically.<sup>4</sup>

In short,

- The ecumenical movement has led the separated churches to a degree of mutual recognition as churches because of the recognition of baptism; this recognition is one of the great ecumenical achievements.
- The recognition of the scandal of Christian disunity arises from a mission perspective, a barrier to common witness to justice and peace, but also a sacramental one: because of the ancient connection between baptism and the Eucharist, the lack of Eucharistic communion between churches becomes a sacramental absurdity.
- Ongoing efforts to restore full Eucharistic communion, which for Anglicans have included agreements of interim communion between churches, and later an invitation to those who are baptised and communicant in their own churches to receive communion at Anglican celebrations of the Eucharist, is predicated fundamentally on the recognition of baptism.

### **The Admission of the Nonbaptised to Communion**

What the ecumenical questions and the internal liturgical and pastoral Anglican questions have in common is an elemental assumption that we are never not talking about the communion of baptised persons. In recent years, however, new questions have arisen around the admission to Holy Communion of people who have not been baptised.

It is important to clarify what the issue is actually about. In many places the communion of the nonbaptised probably happens more than we could possibly ever know (or admit), particularly in larger communities where there are many visitors at celebrations of the Eucharist. At such celebrations, few would argue for an inquiry of every stranger as to whether or not she or he is baptised.

The explicit situation which needs to be addressed is when the nonbaptised are expressly invited to receive Holy Communion through verbal invitation by presiders, printed instructions in bulletins on websites, and the like. In these instances the admission of the nonbaptised becomes articulated policy, in contradiction to the inherited practice and the current of the Church. Moreover, the invitation to the nonbaptised to receive communion marks a departure from the common faith and practice of baptism which Anglicans share with Christians of different traditions around the globe; baptism is our common ecclesial inheritance, not an Anglican possession.

The motives for the communion of the nonbaptised are mixed. In evangelical traditions the motives are conversion and encouragement for any or all who seek or love Jesus. Within more liberal traditions, communion of the nonbaptised is encouraged on the understanding that the Eucharist must be grounded in the radical meal hospitality of Jesus. Here, the nonbaptised may well include members of other faith traditions, who clearly do not seek or love Jesus, as well as seekers who attend Anglican celebrations of the Eucharist. There are two dimensions of this question: the admission of nonbaptised seekers to Holy Communion, and second, the admission of members of other faith traditions to communion. While these are vastly different questions, sacramentally and ecclesologically they are the same.

What the various approaches share in common is a sincere concern *not* to be perceived as inhospitable to visitors. For understandable reasons, some Anglicans may feel that in Christ the boundaries which separate common humanity are undone, and that consequently, the Eucharist is open to all. The instinct is correct, but the sacrament is misplaced: from a mission perspective, what is open to all is baptism. There are many ways of

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Ryan, "Eucharistic Sharing: Why the Churches Act Differently," *Ecumenism* 110 (June 1993), p. 32.

making the visitor, the seeker, and the stranger welcomed in our communities, without asking the Eucharist to bear that weight.

If Anglicans, with other Churches, posit officially that receiving Holy Communion is integral to Christian faith and ecclesial identity, and is part of God's plan of salvation, those who offer Holy Communion to faithful members of other religious traditions will be causing more harm than good. If proponents of the admission of the nonbaptised to communion believe that some degree of Christian identity is shaped by Eucharistic communion, is there a kind of indiscriminate sort of Christian imperialism going on in terms of Eucharistic practice that once characterized baptismal practice of another imperialist phase in Christian history? If not inviting the baptised is understood as refusing them salvation, there implication is a very narrow sense of salvation.

I wonder whether Anglicans who invite the nonbaptised to communion, would expect the same level of hospitality when they visit other religious communities at prayer. There are often boundaries, which Christians may well transgress, which does not foster good relation, on the contrary. Or, as Ottawa Jewish leader, Rabbi Reuven Bulka, once commented on "open communion" from an interreligious perspective in *The Ottawa Citizen*:

Unless I am mistaken, communion is more than full participation. It is full embrace of the faith. If that is the case, then it would hardly make sense for a member of a distinct faith community to wade into another faith, unless it was for the purpose of conversion. Otherwise, the interchangeability is an insult to the integrity of the faith in question.

Good relations between faiths are not achieved via interchangeability. Instead, they are achieved through the profound respect that faith communities have for each other, a respect for the faith and the delineating borders that preserve the uniqueness of each faith.<sup>5</sup>

If Anglicans believe what their liturgical formularies, canonical texts, convergence texts with ecumenical partners, and historic Anglican teaching on baptism and the Eucharist, there are a number of pastoral issues which can be identified that question the practice.

- A failure to recognise and honour the boundaries of the other religious traditions; is the Eucharist being used as a means of proselytism and conversion. Could it so be perceived by interreligious communities, who, like Rabbi Bulka, clearly understand what is at stake in the Eucharist?
- Imputing a sense of ecclesial and Christian identity to people who may not be aware that this is at stake, or desire it, cannot be good pastoral practice or even an authentic welcome; if we ask people who are ready to say "amen" to the gift of the Eucharist in word and deed, do we encourage a sort of liturgical lying?
- The Eucharist is being asked to bear the weight of welcome and hospitality that may be woefully lacking in other ways.
- It raises the questions about removing boundaries which are in place to honour people and their commitments.
- It confuses the openness of baptism and Eucharist.
- If the nonbaptised have regularly received Holy Communion, what repeatable part of the rite of initiation has been taken away from them after unrepeatable sacrament of baptism? Baptism is the commitment; the Eucharist is the ongoing recommitment.
- They have lost the opportunity for "first communion."

### **Ecumenical Considerations on the Communion of the Nonbaptised**

Given the importance of baptism and Eucharist within the ecumenical agenda, the admission to communion of the nonbaptised warrants an assessment from an ecumenical perspective. For instance, the report of Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church noted the following ecumenical consideration:

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<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Reuven Bulka, "Ask the Religion Experts," *The Ottawa Citizen* **date?**



The unauthorized practice of "open communion" is at apparent odds with the official teachings of this church on Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. In official dialogues between this church and others, our appointed members are to represent the official position of this church. In light of the increasingly widespread practice of "open communion," it is increasingly difficult for them to do so with credibility. Further, the practice appears to invite members of other churches to receive communion when to do so is contrary to their own church's Eucharistic discipline.<sup>6</sup>

The journey toward Christian unity presumes the sequential and integral relationship between baptism and the Eucharist. The most widely received ecumenical text remains the 1982 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* text from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. On baptism, BEM affirms:

Administered in obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity.<sup>7</sup>

On the Eucharist, BEM affirms:

The Eucharistic communion with Christ who nourishes the life of the Church is at the same time communion within the body of Christ which is the Church. The sharing in one bread and the common cup in a given place demonstrates and effects the oneness of the sharers with Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places.<sup>8</sup>

The theological and ecclesiological bases for admitting other Christians to Holy Communion in the various plans of "full communion" and "reciprocal communion" are consistently predicated on recognition of the baptismal reality of other churches, whose members enjoy degrees of Eucharistic hospitality with Anglicans. The recognition of a common baptism has made ecumenical ventures not only possible, but imperative. Such a vision is reflected in the BEM document:

When baptismal unity is realized in one holy, catholic, apostolic Church, a genuine Christian witness can be made to the healing and reconciling love of God. Therefore, our one baptism into Christ constitutes a call to the churches to overcome their divisions and visibly manifest their fellowship.<sup>9</sup>

Policies which admit the nonbaptised to Holy Communion are not only irreconcilable with the hard won ecumenical consensus on baptism and the Eucharist, and the relationship between the two dominical sacraments, but effectively undercuts, threatens, and in the end denies basic ecumenical tenets that have been the hallmark of Anglican ecumenical commitment for nearly a century.

There are three ecumenical issues that bear on the practice of admitting the nonbaptised to Holy Communion for Anglicans. In summary:

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<sup>6</sup> Resolution A089 "Open Communion," in *Reports to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Convention* (New York: Church Publishing, 2003), p. 150.

<sup>7</sup> "Baptism" II.D.6, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111), (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> "Eucharist" II.D.19, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111), (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 14. The commentary on D.19 states: "Since the earliest days, baptism has been understood as the sacrament by which believers are incorporated into the Body of Christ and are endowed with the Holy Spirit." p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> "Baptism" II.D.6, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p. 3.

- While liturgies and practices around baptism and the Eucharist may rightly bear the stamp of an Anglican heritage, the fundamental nature of these two dominical sacraments belongs to the whole Church, across time and space. The formal admission of the nonbaptised to Holy Communion implies a radical discontinuity with the wider Christian community across time and space.
- A cornerstone of the modern ecumenical movement has been the recovery of a real, though imperfect recognition of fundamental Christian unity, and indeed, communion, through a commonly recognised baptism. In light of this, the degree of Christian Eucharistic disunity is the scandal which the ecumenical movement seeks to heal, the recovery of full Eucharistic communion in faith and love the expressed goal of the ecumenical movement. While earlier Anglican and present Roman Catholic and Orthodox policies understand Eucharistic communion as the goal to full communion rather than as a means to it, present Anglican polity allows for a measure of Eucharistic sharing with other Christians who are at Anglican celebrations of the Eucharist. Such Anglican latitude, as well as Orthodox and Roman Catholic reticence, rests on the ecumenical recognition of the deep nexus between baptism and the Eucharist which even the varying degrees of Christian division cannot overcome, and indeed, has become the ecumenical goal. The practice of admitting nonbaptised people to the Eucharist overthrows a century of ecumenical insight and growth.
- Given the centrality of both baptism and Eucharist on the ecumenical agenda, Anglican credibility is threatened when Anglican theological, liturgical and canonical texts say one thing, while Anglican praxis may suggest another. Our ecumenical partners deserve the same consistent Anglican convergence on questions of baptism and the Eucharist that Anglicans have demanded from their partners. Anglicans have been members of both multilateral and bilateral dialogues with other churches, which have said important things about baptism and the Eucharist, and the relationship between the two. The ongoing process of reception of these dialogue statements can only be impaired if Anglicans are saying one thing to ecumenical partners, and something very different in pastoral praxis. Lastly, if Anglicans in certain contexts need to challenge our own dialogue partners, whose official policies include the communion of the nonbaptised, it would ring more than false if the practice is unchecked within our own communities.