

The South Australian Dialogue of the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches



...to study, reflect, pray, communicate, respond, liaise...

Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches

A Resource Paper prepared by the Dialogue of the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches in South Australia

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades church leaders in both the Catholic and Uniting Churches have recognized that we have arrived at a new historical moment that invites new ways of ecclesial activity. This also involves a fresh exploration of ways of ministry for the life of the whole Church. In reflecting on this task, Pope John Paul II said:

The Church of the third millennium will need to encourage all the baptized and confirmed to be aware of their active responsibility in the church's life. Together with the ordained ministry, other ministries, whether formally instituted or simply recognized, can flourish for the good of the whole community. (Novo Millennio Ineunte, #46)

Further, in considering the future of the pastoral life of the Church, Pope John Paul II reflects on the new task of what he calls the "new evangelization" in these words,

Today in particular, the pressing pastoral task of the new evangelization calls for involvement of the entire people of God, and requires a new fervour, new methods and a new expression for the announcing and witnessing of the Gospel. (Pastores Dabo Vobis, #18.)

The future of this new expression of evangelization and Gospel witness must be essentially ecumenical. As Pope John Paul II recognizes, it is a task that involves the "entire people of God."

In its Basis of Union, the Uniting Church echoes much of what Pope John Paul II has said. This is about the responsibility inherent in Baptism and the diversity of ministries within the baptized community.

The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ incorporates people into his body by Baptism. In this way Christ enables them to participate in his own baptism, which was accomplished once on behalf of all in his death and burial, and which was made available to all when risen and ascended, he poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Baptism into Christ's body initiates people into Christ's life and mission in the world, so that they are united in one fellowship of love, service, suffering and joy, in one family of the Father of all in heaven and earth and in the power of the one Spirit. (par 7: Baptism)

The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service; all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ. (par 12: Gifts and Ministries)

Both our traditions make it clear that it is not only the ordained ministry but all the baptized, the entire people of God, who are commissioned to witness to Christ and announce his gospel to the whole world.

There are not only theological, but also practical reasons why both churches need to rediscover the richness of lay ministry. In the past decade, there has been a serious shortage of priests and ministers to give spiritual leadership in congregations and parishes. As we seek the Spirit's guidance in discovering new ways of 'being church' in this third millennium, we are invited to reflect upon the way the first generations of Jesus' disciples lived together and proclaimed the story of Jesus, and our theological appreciation of the triune life of God and baptism as the foundation for ministry.

1. What part of the introduction speaks to you of your own congregational situation?
2. In the light of the shortage of Ministers and Priests, what do you see as some future directions in ministry for lay people in your own congregation?
3. In what ways has your congregation been planning their future in ministry over the next 5-10 years? How would lay people contribute to these directions?

PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE

The group who prepared this discussion paper intended it to be used to stimulate discussion in congregations of both Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches in South Australia, either as separate groups or involving members of both denominations. The paper grew out of a concern about the reduction in numbers of people offering for ordination in both denominations, which have the same understanding that baptism brings with it a responsibility for engaging in the ministry and mission of the church, the whole people of God. Both denominations are placing increasing emphasis on the ministry of the laity. Given the covenant between all the member churches of the National Council of Churches setting out the ways in which they will work together, it was considered appropriate to examine some

practical approaches to cooperation between the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches to address these concerns.

In the light of these considerations, what follows is set out in two parts:

1. Theological foundations for lay ministry, based on our shared understandings of the nature of the God we worship and of baptism, and
2. The practice of cooperative lay ministry as it is already occurring in a range of settings.

The group engaged in a series of interviews with people from varied backgrounds who have been involved in ecumenical action in the past. The insights emerging from analyzing these interviews have been included in section B, to illuminate the suggestions.

Discussion questions are included in the text (in orange) . These are intended for use by small ecumenical or congregational study groups formed to consider these issues.

PART A

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR LAY MINISTRY

1. The Triune Life of God

Mutual reflection on leadership and ministry is firmly grounded in our appreciation of the triune life of God. The mutual, communal, diverse and unified life of the triune God is commonly affirmed by and agreed upon by our churches.

The following explores the implications of our mutual belief in the Trinity. It also examines how this theological truth is the basis for further reflection and exploration of shared leadership and ministry across our respective ecclesial traditions. This ministry is linked and enhanced by a realization that God's triune life is unified, diverse, mutual, communal, hospitable and respectful. This life permeates our ecclesial institutions and makes them "one, holy, catholic and apostolic."

The kind of theological exploration offered here, especially in terms of our mutual understanding of the triune life of God, will become increasingly more pressing as we look for ways that mutually respect each other's ecclesial traditions, share each other's physical resources and, in circumstances which are becoming more usual, consider ways in which our publicly recognized and ordained leaders can be of service to each other's ecclesial community.

Unity and Diversity

The theological description of God as Trinity is a second century understanding that builds upon the experience of the earliest Christians who encountered God as one. This occurred through their experience of Jesus as God's anointed one, filled with God's spirit who called God "Abba." Jesus spoke God's prophetic word and revealed God's spirit through his teaching and healings. In Jesus, the early Christians encountered the saving action of God. Later generations of Christians explicated the action of God revealed through the Word and Spirit in response to the Arian controversy. They formulated their theological understanding in the Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381). The Cappadocian theologians, especially Basil of Caesarea (ca 330-379), further enunciated the doxology that expressed the equality and mutuality between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in his doxology of praise: "Glory be to the Father, with the Son together with the Holy Ghost."¹

Basil's doxology honoured God's unity of divine being and radical communion (expressed in the Greek term, *koinonia*). God's divine intercommunion and indwelling confirmed particularly in John's Gospel (Jn 14:10-11) was given the expression *perichoresis* by John Damascene (675-749). *Perichoresis* is the Trinity's "being-in-one-another" and suggests "an encircling embrace...a being present to one another in radical intimacy — a mutual presence in love. It is close to, but distinct from, a word that means to dance around the other."² This divine dance in the heart of God, expresses both God's unity and diversity and affirms that God is essentially relational. Friendship is at the heart of God's being.

Institutional Expression and Ecumenical Collaboration

The unity and the diversity of the Trinity, affirmed by Church theologians, especially those from the East, is the foundation of the primary ministry of the Church: the proclamation of the good news of God, revealed through Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit. This proclamation essentially concerns God's friendship with humanity and the whole of creation. It is this central proclamation which affirms that the inner life of the triune God spirals outwards to embrace the whole cosmos. The world reflects the action, power and presence of the triune God. The Church, in its diverse expressions developed throughout history, also reflects the union and diversity of the triune God bound in the perichoretic dance that embraces all creation. The Church is bound to a unity, a communion, of faith in Jesus as God's self-revelation. At the same time and in different cultural and geographical settings, the Church also expresses its diversity. The ministerial activity of the churches in their variety of expressions in each setting, publicly acknowledged and affirmed, reflects this Trinitarian unity and diversity. Within the local setting, such as South Australia, the unity and diversity of the triune life of God finds its historical, cultural and geographical expression in the ecclesial and ministerial activity of the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches today.

Our conviction of the central truth of God's life revealed in our world and active through the ecclesial communities founded on Jesus leads us to assert that our future in ecumenical collaboration is still unfolding. We continue to allow God's spirit to be revealed through the gifts and ministerial talents of women and men in our respective churches. We affirm the importance of this role and of the ordained ministry within our churches, though considered differently given the historical genesis and development of this ministry in our traditions. We

¹ Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (New York: Orbis, 2006), 68.

² *Ibid*, 72-73.

affirm that the Spirit draws us further into ecumenical collaboration and cooperation as we seek to proclaim the Gospel within South Australia

Community and Mutuality

Our belief in a Trinitarian, perichoretic God, gives rise to our vision of the church embodying the relational ideals of a community of mutuality. The images of the dance and passionate embrace are here moving and inviting us into giving a privileged place to communion, mutuality, reciprocity and connection in our relations within and between congregations and across denominations. The church is thus engaged in a dynamic process, in imitation of our dynamic God, of developing relationships between persons that recognize distinctiveness, diversity, otherness and mutual respect. The notion of the Spirit's role drawing us into new and deeper forms of interconnectedness as the spirit of mutuality is a life force drawing us together.³ The Spirit draws us into relationships of more reciprocal and just relations, across our seemingly separate denominations, into discerning how we can work together in community, without necessarily working for organic union. This enables us to offer to the general community and the world an image of that community and mutuality which is God's will for the whole creation. We strive to be a reconciling and reconciled community, brought about by God's grace. The focus is not on the Church as an institution, but on the Church as a community of people whose diversity is endorsed and celebrated.⁴

Hospitality

The Church is not a closed community in which some are in and others are out, but is a community where everyone is welcome, without exception. The heart of God is that of friendship and hospitality. We are called to reflect this welcoming spirit just as Jesus reflected this same spirit in his ministry to others. Members of our churches reflect an openness to each other and celebrate our diversity. Our churches respect and seek dialogue with people of other Christian traditions. We also respect and seek dialogue with those of other faiths.⁵

We may ask whether our institutions, rituals, and administrative practices foster elitism, discrimination, and competition, or whether our churches reflect God's household: a domain of openness, hospitality, inclusiveness, interdependence, and cooperation, according to the model of perichoresis within the triune God.⁶

4. a. What sections, sentences, phrases or thoughts above did you find especially helpful?

b. What does the theology of the Trinity tell us about who we are as "church"?

³ Mary Grey, *Sacred Longings: Ecofeminist Theology and Globalisation* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 112.

⁴ Grey, *Sacred*, 119.

⁵ Grey, *Sacred*, 119.

⁶ Catherine Mowray LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 402.

2. Baptism

Our baptism as Christians means fundamentally, that we are initiated into the Church's mission. This mission is not something imposed from without but constitutes the Church's very essence, originating as it does in the Trinity: a God who sends forth the Word and Spirit as expressive of God's love for the world.

Hence the Church's mission is the mission of Jesus who came to serve, to proclaim and to realize the coming reign of God through the power of the Spirit. The call to such discipleship is the mission of every baptized person. It is about "putting on Christ" as 'the' way of seeing, of be-ing and of loving our world. Every ministerial expression whether ordained or lay, is at the service of this overarching mission. All Church ministry exists for this purpose.

Priesthood of the Baptised

How does baptism equip us for this mission? To be initiated into the Church is to take one's place within the community of the baptized. As John Zizioulis, an Orthodox theologian puts it, "there is no such thing as non-ordained persons in the church."⁷ This means that the fundamental ordering of the Church occurs in baptism. In baptism we are ordained into a set of very specific ecclesial relationships. These relationships involve a person's communion with God in Christ through the power of the Spirit, a relationship with one's brothers and sisters in baptism as a communion of believers and thirdly, a movement outwards toward the world as one sent in mission.

The primary priesthood is that of Jesus. From this flows the priesthood of all the baptised, from which comes the priesthood of the ordained minister.

How Jesus taught and preached (prophet), how Jesus sanctified and made people holy (priest) and how Jesus was a leader and guide (king) – these are what constitute the foundational model for the ministry of bishops, priests, deacons, and all other special ministries in the Church.⁸

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the documents of Vatican II acknowledge this threefold identity of priest, prophet and king as pertaining to every baptized person. Nevertheless they stated that there was an essential difference between on the one hand, bishops, priests and deacons, and on the other, the laity in special ministries, without explaining what this difference is. This has resulted in an unresolved relationship between the baptismal ordination of the people of God and the ordination of priests. Nevertheless, both traditions emphasize the foundational importance of the laity in the mission and ministry of the Church.

⁷ John Zizioulis, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985).

⁸ John Risley, *The Ministry: Lay and Ordained*, as cited by Susan K. Wood (editor), *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood* (Collegeville, Min: Liturgical Press, 2003), 206.

Recognition of Our Common Baptism

Back in the early 1980's, a number of Australian churches agreed to recognize the validity of each other's baptismal practice. The number of churches participating has now increased to ten. It means that these churches have examined each other's doctrine of baptism and liturgical practice and agreed to recognize their validity. The Australian Consultation on Liturgy published a common certificate of baptism for use by the participating churches.

This was a great leap forward in ecumenical endeavour. It means that a person transferring from one ecclesial tradition of the Church to another may have to be confirmed again in the other tradition, but not re-baptized.

Among the members of the Dialogue group, a constant phrase in our sharing is 'the mutual recognition of each other's baptism'. It is an ecumenical milestone for which we give thanks to the one Lord of the whole church.

5. "Remember your baptism and be thankful". What does your baptism mean to you?

6. Are there people in your congregation with special gifts for lay ministry (eg professional training, charisms, personal graces)? In what ways could your congregation assist people to discover their ministry, following their baptism?

7. How could you enable the congregation to engage in a process of recognising people's gifts and graces for lay ministry? e.g. valuing their life and experiences for ministering in administration, council membership, pastoral team, Sunday liturgy leadership, leader of a small group, secretarial responsibilities to a committee, task group, a leadership team, or priest/minister?

PART B

THE PRACTICE OF LAY MINISTRY

In this section, we summarize the history of cooperation developed over decades by the National Council of Churches in Australia and its predecessor, the Australian Council of Churches, culminating in the covenant signed by fifteen churches in 2004. Then follows a description of the lay ministry approaches taken by the two denominations involved in the work of the Dialogue group. The final section of the paper summarizes the responses of people interviewed in the "Appreciative Inquiry" process, identifying some aspects supporting cooperation and linking these to further practical examples.

1. Australian Churches Covenanting Together

The National Council of Churches in Australia (formed in 1994) has worked together to form a Covenant Agreement entitled “Australian Churches Covenanting Together” which fifteen churches signed in August 2004. The full document sets out what each denomination is able to do ecumenically. The following sets out only what the Catholic and Uniting Churches are able to do together, or will continue to explore together.

Covenant in the document means:

- Cooperation and commitment between the signing churches;
- ‘permission-giving’ – being open to what is possible if we go to the limits of what is permissible;
- mutual responsibility and solidarity with one another;
- deepening relationships with one another;
- working together towards the fulfilment of our mission of common witness, proclamation and service;
- partners on the ecumenical journey;
- engaging in an ongoing process of growing together towards unity, whatever form that may take.

In the covenant agreement between the Catholic and Uniting Churches in Australia, the two churches specifically agreed to:

- join in common prayer with one another;
- intercede and care for each other;
- explore with one another our Christian connections and their present application;
- support initiatives for sharing physical resources, such as buildings, and to encourage consultation between the appropriate governing bodies of our churches before new major developments are undertaken;
- explore with one another issues and strategies for mission, so that the possibility of common mission is recognized as a priority, information is shared, issues of mission are discussed, and strategies for evangelization are planned in consultation;
- seek to develop clear and sensitive guidelines dealing with how our churches together can best meet the needs of people in local (especially rural) situations;
- recognize the Sacrament of Baptism administered in each other’s church, and promote the use of the common Certificate of Baptism;
- continue to discuss and articulate within our churches the meaning and significance of our involvement in the quest for a more suitable expression of unity and the possibility for further engagement in ecumenical partnership;
- explore together such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christian people in this country.

It should be noted that it is not possible for members of Catholic and Uniting Churches to receive Holy Communion from the same altar or holy table. It may be that many in the Uniting Church see sharing in Holy Communion as a ‘means’ of expressing their love for fellow

Christians and as a deeper expression of the unity for which Christ prayed. However, the Catholic Church currently sees full Eucharistic fellowship as the 'end' or 'goal' of our ecumenical endeavours, to be realized when there is agreement on basic tenets of faith and a reconciliation of orders of ministry. Inter-communion at the same altar is a longing and hope for the distant future.

8. Given that there are 15 Australian churches who have signed the Covenant Agreement, which of the suggestions in Part B 1. above could be explored or initiated with the congregation or parish of the other tradition in your local community?

9. In what ways have the National Council of Churches, South Australian Council of Churches or the Heads of Christian Churches in SA enriched the life of the churches and/or your congregation?

2. Experiences of Ecumenism and Lay Ministry Today

Within the Roman Catholic Church more people are being formed for lay ministry, that is, publicly authorized ministry that complements the ministry of the ordained. This occurs in more formal roles and ministries as well as informal leadership of which there are many examples below. In recent years, within the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, a programme of formation has been established to prepare appropriately discerned candidates for lay leadership in our Catholic communities. Several men, both single and married, have begun formation within the permanent diaconate and more women have become pastoral associates. Pastoral directors, both male and female, have been appointed in several parishes to minister in a spirit of collaboration with the ordained. A programme of formation for lay leadership in a rural setting has also been established.

Within the Uniting Church in South Australia, there are some rural areas where a congregation (or several congregations working together in a parish-like structure) are unlikely in the future to be successful in calling a minister of the Word or deacon to a full-time placement, because of lack of financial resources as well as the shortage of ministers. In these situations, a congregation may, with the assistance of the Presbytery, appoint a Lay Ministry Team, or a lay person as a Pastor. In certain situations, the Moderator and Presbytery may also give permission for the ministry team to celebrate the sacraments. Many of these congregations served by a ministry team rather than a minister have reported an increase in numbers attending worship and a renewal of vitality within the life of the congregation.

The Catholic Church is currently taking a serious look at rural parishes and support for rural communities. The Rural Ministry Formation Program has recently begun and this will in some areas be particularly about supporting leadership teams in parishes

The Adelaide College of Divinity was founded jointly by the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches. In addition to preparing seminarians and candidates for ministry, the College offers a wide range of study for lay people in theological, biblical, liturgical, church history and pastoral subjects. These are offered at the College and in distance education mode.

Examples of Cooperation

What follows are some examples of ecumenical cooperation.

Data was gathered through some qualitative research conducted by the Dialogue of the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches in South Australia in structured interviews with some people engaged in ecumenical endeavour, through (a) an "Appreciative Inquiry Process" and (b) personal experience. Interview responses illustrated the desire for ecumenical cooperation and how this could be encouraged.

Within the inquiry, it was discovered that some of the qualities of people who engage in ecumenical endeavours are: humility, enthusiasm, compassion, honesty, generosity, and sensitivity to others across traditions. They have, respect, empathy, an ability to listen to people without judgement, to support from one's own life experiences and openness to new ways of doing things and a learning attitude. They have good communication skills, are pastorally creative, genuine, evangelistic, prophetic, patient, relational, committed and faithful.

These qualities are visible in the following ways:

A shared ministry in schools is an area of significant mission. Often through the oversight of the local Inter-church Council, chaplains are appointed to schools, and seek to serve children from all churches, and also those of no religious affiliation, in a supportive way -- This entails a significant amount of fund-raising, as well as a team to assist the chaplain in the fulfilment of agreed responsibilities.-- Lunch time and after-hours children's groups may be part of this outreach ministry to the community.

The role of pastoral support to people in hospitals and aged care facilities is often undertaken on an ecumenical basis in many country towns and communities. This can include visitation on a regular basis, leadership of times of worship on a roster basis or an ecumenical team (which may also be supplemented by the sacramental ministry of clergy or other authorized representatives from a particular church), and some special times of gathering for people or events. -- This ministry is greatly appreciated by the whole community.

In some places Christians from a number of churches join together for prayer and worship, at a time other than Sunday worship. -- These are often valuable for gaining a fresh appreciation of other worshipping traditions, and provide an opportunity for fellowship for those involved. -- Prayer and study groups are common meeting points, and the popularity of Lenten study groups has been an important time in many places. -- Certainly people from different churches value this shared fellowship.

The various fellowship groups in different churches may also support each other in a number of ways. Fundraising for the Bible Society, or a mission project, regularly attracts wide support -- Projects such as the Samaritan's Purse Christmas boxes are often an ecumenical activity which involve people from several denominations.

The growth of ecumenical ministry is particularly important in rural areas where it is sometimes difficult to have ordained leadership, or there may be significant gaps between ministers and priests leaving and new appointments being made. -- This is an opportunity for sharing resources, and for building on the shared ministry which is already occurring in many places.

In the structured interviews, people were asked to look deeper in to their own experiences of involvement in ecumenism to understand the conditions that made these experiences possible. Some of the responses identified that the conditions were historical, due to post-Vatican II theology allowing involvement in the ecumenical movement. Many were due to relationships, such as building and sustaining strong ecumenical friendships, a common desire to help others as part of their common mission and love for one another, mixed marriages and modelling in families. Some were due to life experiences such as working ecumenically overseas, receiving support from people of different religious traditions through tough times, experiences over time of working ecumenically that developed a commitment. Another important condition was the spiritual, being together in the presence of the Holy Spirit with openness to the Holy Spirit, to allow what will happen to happen without being too task oriented, and praying together. Acceptance of unity in diversity not through uniformity also allowed for change.

People in communities are often pleased when seasonal activities are led by an ecumenical group. These occur at Easter and Christmas in many places. --Palm Sunday, Good Friday, early Easter Day, and Pentecost services are often undertaken on an ecumenical basis. Other services at Anzac, or activities which highlight an Anniversary or event may be led by a group from the Inter-church Council.

The provision of emergency assistance to people in a town or area is also undertaken on an ecumenical basis in many places. This may involve referral to a particular person or agency, or financial support by the churches to those engaged in this ministry on behalf of the churches.-- This may also be important in times of disaster/crisis when the pastoral role of the churches is undertaken by representatives from participating churches.

In many places people are joining together for teaching or speakers on specific topics. The opportunity to gain valuable assistance on pastoral care, grief counselling, or family issues, is often undertaken by a church for people of all churches in an area.

Hope for the Future

In a further part of the inquiry, participants were asked: "What dream was expressed for the ecumenical movement?" A common response was a desire to be able to share the one bread and cup in any Christian Church. Another was around leadership with a desire that there be an understanding of the role of clergy and laity, in ministry that everyone finds acceptable, and that all lay people will be empowered to take a more significant role in leadership, especially women.

Some hoped that Christians would be known by their love for one another with young and old all concerned for each other and responding to needs. There was also a hope to come together without division within religions and to come together in peace, and that signs and trends will not be poverty, but a richness of spontaneity directed by the Holy Spirit.

Finally the participants were asked “What will ecumenical outreach look like to make this person proud?” Their responses included that they could see a future where there was openness to difference, shared unity in thought, word, worship and pastorally prophetic deed. Pastoral care would occur across denominations within neighbourhoods, with growth in grass roots community and in finding common ground in working together.

There would be shared facilities in Liturgy of the Word or home services and people would share Eucharist together, in Spirit filled joy, knowing and experiencing God’s love and finding love in the church. Shared commitment to the poor, and a willingness to share other resources would also be evident. Churches would have been successful in lobbying the United Nations to say that there must be no more genocide in places such as Darfur. People would care for each other in the ordinariness of life just by noticing their neighbour and seeking to know them and to form relationships with them. People would know each other and have a trust that gives permission for the other to care and take action when it is required, a reciprocal relationship and not charity.

10.a. In the above section, which of the responses relate to the way you appreciate ecumenical life now?

b. What response(s) would you make to the reported questions from your own experience? In what ways would this have been different for you 20-50 years ago?

11. Given that both our denominations affirm the Bible as an essential source of faith nourishment, how could the season of Lent reinvigorate ecumenical study of the word of God?

12. Explore and discuss ways of celebrating the Liturgy of the Word on Sundays when a priest or minister of one of the ecclesial traditions is not available.

13. Would it be possible for a representative group from your congregation or parish to make an occasional or regular visit to a Sunday or regular worship service of the other tradition? After such a visit, it may be helpful to meet together ecumenically to share responses, using such questions as:

What parts of the service seemed familiar and helpful?

What parts seemed different to what you are used to in your tradition?

What parts of the service did you find moving, beautiful, awe-inspiring?

What have you learned from this experience for your own practice of worship?

CONCLUSION

The church that

...knows that its life and faith are founded exclusively with Jesus Christ must be humble and gracious. Ultimately we are saved by grace. The experience of working together in community can assist the discovery of grace and the emergence of a more gracious Christian community.⁹

We are all members of a church on the way toward the full realization of God's life; communion is an eschatological hope.¹⁰

Lay ministry is becoming more important in the Catholic and Uniting Churches. The theological foundations for lay ministry are based on our understanding of the nature of God, baptismal theology and the calling of Christ to us to become one for the sake of the world. The areas of practical cooperation in lay ministry are growing, and are a sign of the search for unity for which both churches are committed in the future. We hope this resource paper will assist in this endeavour.

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⁹ Terence Corkin, "The Uniting Church in Australia." In *With a Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*, edited by Thomas F. Best, (Geneva: WCC, 2004), 74.

¹⁰ Catherine Mowray LaCugna, *God for Us*, 403